

# Observer

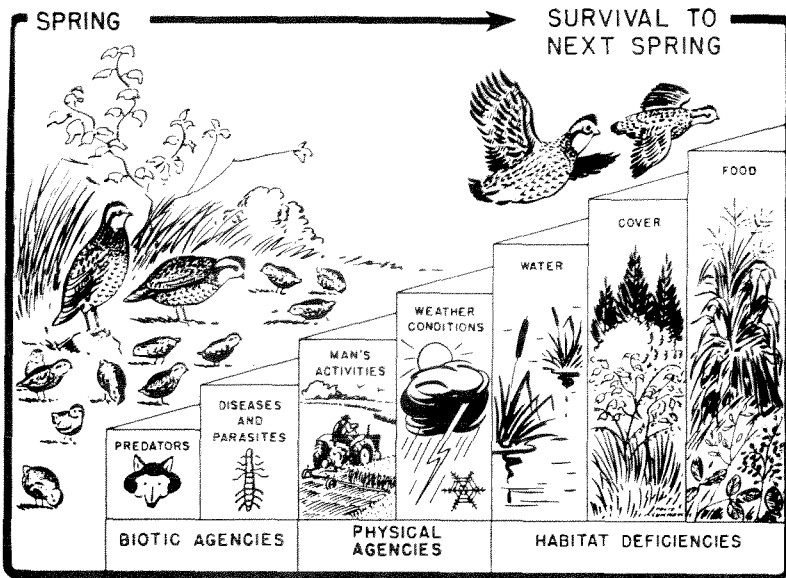
January 1992 CAS Newsletter \*\*\*\*\*  
Columbus, Georgia Audubon Society  
President ---- Priscilla Phillips

OBSERVER Editor/Typist - Sam Pate

Answering Service ----- 571-6014

\*Thanks to all who helped with the CBCs. Info on totals in February OBSERVER. Enjoy the winter birds!

\*Your backyard will have some the wonders of the universe during the winter. Plants and Animals! There are no better examples of nature's wonders than you can easily OBSERVE by just looking and listening.



## January Program

Hey, our own Roger Birkhead will be our speaker! Roger is attending Shorter College. (Remember that he is a recent recipient of a Columbus Audubon Scholarship!) His program will be a fun way to spend part of a Sunday afternoon! Roger will show you more, and tell you more, than you can ever see in just one hour. His plant interests, and his interest in the world of animals, will be very obvious as he takes the audience on trails of fascinating facts about our natural world. Come and hear Roger, and learn about "From Harris County to the Adirondacks". Bring somebody with you. Plants and Other Wild Things!!!!!!

Sunday 1-5-92 Columbus College E.B. Turner Center January 5 2:30 pm

## January Field Trip

will be held on 1-25-92, at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge. Mark McIntosh will lead the group. Meet at the Turner Center parking lot at Columbus College at 8 a.m. for carpooling. January!--an exciting time to visit the refuge! (Don't forget that the area of "Bottoms" by the river (Alabama side) is a sanctuary during winter. The Refuge Manager can remind you of -- "No Entry" areas -- in the refuge. The vast majority of the refuge is open to the public, except for duck hunting days, etc. Always check at the main office before entry to make sure.) Thanks to Mark for being our guide in January. Look for a great trip!

## Having a Good Bath

A nice thing on a cold day, and on a hot one!  
This past November, Florence was looking out at a bird bath up at Lynn Haven. It is not uncommon to see quite a number of different species using bird baths in the area. What amazed Florence was that both the Ruby-crowned and the Golden-crowned Kinglets were bathing! She had observed the Ruby-crowns bathing before, but had never, ever seen Golden-crowns taking a bath in all of her years of "intense nature watching." The day that Florence got her new "life bath bird" was a very unusual one. The humidity was incredibly low. (Several years ago, this editor and Mike and Bill were driving through the Lower Rio Grande portion of Texas. The threesome heard a slight thud as they passed a low area with water and willows. Believing that they had hit a grackle, Mike turned his car around to check on the bird. It was long, and black, and looked grackle-like, but it looked like Charles Bronson in the face. It was a Grooved-bill Ani, also known as the Groove-billed Ani! The men discussed keeping the DOR specimen in their ice chest for the remainder of the trip. The reason? They were going to take it to Lynn Haven and place it under Florence's feeders!)

The Fox Sparrow had returned to Lynn Haven by November 16, when Florence had the report of a wintering bird at her place. This sparrow is usually the biggest possible wild sparrow that can be seen in this part of the United States. It is a natural treat to encounter.

The editor heard the high-pitched wheazy whistle of the Cedar Waxwings on 12-5-91. The birds were tree-hopping a few blocks from the Chattahoochee River. There seems to be an abundance of berries for these far-north nesters this winter. They have a very delicate feather pattern. Have you ever seen one of them close? The "wax" on their bodies really does look like bits of red wax dripping at their feather tips.

A Cooper's Hawk was brought in by a young student, to the editor, during the first week of December. The bird was 19 inches long, with a  $33\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wingspread. You might wish to check your field guide to see how those numbers match up. The accipiter had been killed when it hit a window. The editor suggested to the student that he give the bird to Dr. Bill Birkhead at Columbus College. It was a beautiful specimen.

The Cooper's Hawk is apparently making a bit of a comeback in some areas. However, when a single bird of this species is killed, especially a female, it reminds us of the several young that the bird may have fledged over the next several years.

The Whooping Crane that was killed in Texas this year may have raised one or two young each year for the next 25 years! (It is a lucky year when a pair raises one!) The \$14,000 that the man was fined will do more for helping to prevent more stupid killings than most anything the judge could have done. Having to spend several weeks in a federal prison will possibly serve as a deterrent, too! There are always a few folks with more bullets than brains who mess up everything for all.

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Bob Grier made a trip down to Boca Raton, Florida this fall. He checked out several roadkills along the way. Among them were raccoons, armadillos, and other "unrecognizables". Bob got a big kick out of seeing numerous vultures (alias buzzards), including about 100 in one large active landfill. "I haven't seen such a flock of buzzards since I was a boy in Columbus, seeing hundreds of them at the 'Fortune Hole' on the river bank, just east of 10th Avenue."---exclaimed Bob! (One other interesting thing that Bob reported relates to the demise of the Florida orange groves. He said that the large orange groves along the Turnpike have been replaced with pines for a large part, with very few being replaced with orange trees. "So, I reckon that the next crop of oranges and grapefruits will be a mite high-priced," lamented Mr. Grier. The last big freeze just about got 'em!

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PMT! Pine Mountain Trail As of December, 1991, about 64,000 hikers had signed in at one the two registers on the PMT! This, of course, doesn't include the numerous folks who don't "sign in" when they hike. The PMT Association urges you to Please Sign the register when you enjoy the Trail next time. Thanks to Neal Wickham, and the dozens who have helped him keep up this famous southern trail!!!! Several folks have reported recently that this trail is one of the cleanest natural trail systems that they ever encountered! LITTER-No! ENJOY-Yes!

A creature was seen on the PMT in December that had 50 teeth and 13 nipples! It had no toe nails on the big toes on its back feet! It was homiothermic, plantigrade, quadruped, viviparous, and altricial, with an omnivorous diet! Its classification was Animalia, Chordata, Vertebrata, Mammalia, Marsupialia, Didelphidae, Didelphis, virginiana. It was the famous southern animal called the Va. Opossum!

American Kestrels seem to be a bit more "common" this winter, at least in the Columbus vicinity. On a recent winter day four of them were reported the same afternoon. One was at Peachtree Mall, two were seen along Bradley Park Drive, and one was near the river bridge/North Columbus Bypass. It makes us wonder how many ... are in the entire area. Several kestrels have been shot by dove hunters in this area in recent years. Thinking a falcon is a dove is a huge error in "nature observing"! Why not huge fines for killing falcons?...and the judges to back them up.

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Cooper Creek for a Walk? Get your DDPPBs (Domestic Duck POOP-PROOF BOOTS) and your binoculars for an adventure out at Cooper Creek. Lots of woodpeckers, gulls, a few wild ducks in the lake, and even a few mammals are good possibilities for observations. An occasional "odddity", such as an OLDSQUAW duck is possible. Watch out!

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Nest Boxes, Dead Trees, Water Plant Ponds, and Other Wild Ideas!

You are guaranteed to see more species, and have more fun, if you set up any of the above during the winter and early spring! A section of a dead tree can be placed in a hole and used for a natural woodpecker and nuthatch attractor. Suet and seeds can be placed in holes in the tree during the winter. There is a desperate need for dead tree sections in subdivisions. Woodpeckers are out of luck in them. A small pond of water plants and tiny fish (and snails!) can be absolutely fascinating! Any shallow container, painted dark, with overhanging rocks or vegetation, will do for a starter. The little fish should include a few mosquito larvae eaters. Roving cats find it difficult to catch fish in ponds with a few floating bits of vegetation. Build a tiny wildlife refuge of plants around the pond! Have fun with your very own "refuge"!

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2581 Birds Were Banded at Jekyll!

For the past 15 years, Don and Doris Cohrs have headed up the highly successful bird banding station at Jekyll Island, Georgia. Over that time a total of 110 species of birds have been banded and sent off to parts unknown, to possibly be caught again for the purpose of scientific study. A few of the birds may be found dead, and have their bands returned to U.S. Fish and Wildlife at some future time. Don said that about 80% of the banded birds (this year) were warblers, including 21 species. A total of 53 species of birds were captured and banded this fall. The only new species for the 15-year program this year was a Vesper Sparrow. All of us who have a sincere interest in a sane use of our natural resources owe a big debt of gratitude to Don and Doris and all of the truly dedicated folks who really care about our wildlife. They literally brave the wind and rain to add their efforts to our vast natural history studies. Thanks to all of you who help, in any way, to EDUCATE!

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Wetlands Protection! Rare/Endangered Species! Esthetics!

Using all of the above reasons for protecting wild lands for wildlife and for us!...doesn't seem to be working very well. Economics may be a better approach. For example, the Cape May (New Jersey) Bird Observatory reports that birders spent more than \$10,000,000 in Cape May this past year! If that seems a bit incredible, you may also be amazed to hear that 90,000 birders visited the Cape May peninsula in 1988! Birding groups are quite an important part of our present economic structure. Just ask Cape May!

"The study of birds and other wildlife is just Greek to me!" Have you ever heard a beginner get a little distressed, and utter something like that? If you think about it, a study of nature is Greek, and Latin, and German, with some good old English thrown in. Season Platt, Interpretive Naturalist at Callaway Gardens, gave an example of this in her great article called "The Night Hunter", in the Gardens' Winter Newsletter. "Throughout time, the owl has been attributed with mystical powers and great wisdom. Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and courage, carried an owl as her constant companion," wrote Season. On 10-16-91, Season signed in at one of the registers on the Pine Mountain Trail, in an area where it is possible to encounter the four nesting owl species that she mentions in her article. The Barn Owl, Barred Owl, Great-horned Owl, and the Eastern Screech Owl are all possibilities along the trail, especially very early or very late in the day. In winter, even the Long-eared Owls...and Saw-Whet Owls are possibilities. However, these two species are incredibly rare to spot, and should be photographed, if possible. But, you just never know what you will encounter!

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Snowy Owl Invasion? As of December 11, the Cape May, New Jersey Bird Observatory Hotline had received reports of 13 Snowy Owls in different parts of Jersey. Other sightings included Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane, Kittiwake, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Gyrfalcon, Short-eared Owl, Gannets, a Baltimore Oriole, and many other interesting/unusual sightings. During the cold days of winter a call to their hotline can be mighty interesting. (609) 884-2626 Messages are recorded/updated.

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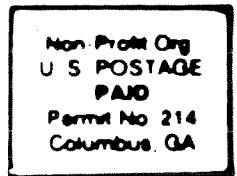
River Walk When the walkway along the Chattahoochee is completed in the next several months, it just might add a good observation pathway for your enjoyment. Some mighty interesting creatures can be seen right in downtown Columbus. Terns, gulls, herons, cormorants, kingfishers, spotted sandpipers, ducks, hawks, and dozens of other avian species, along with amphibians and an occasional mammal, make the river an exciting place.

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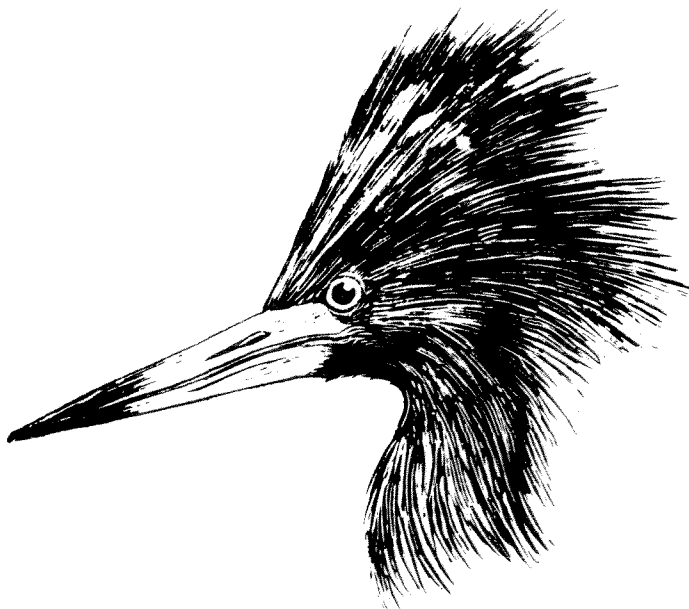
A Holiday note in the Callaway Newsletter reminds of the astounding numbers of "things" we humans use. For example, did you know that 34,000,000 trees are used by Americans and Canadians every December for the Christmas season? That is enough trees to cover the state of Rhode Island in a forest! Don't forget to recycle your tree. How about a living tree!

\*\*\*\*\*Send info to Sam via Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808\*\*\*\*\*

**Observer**  
Columbus Georgia Audubon Society  
c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808



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February 1992

Columbus Audubon (Ga.) Newsletter

President ---- Priscilla Phillips

OBSERVER Editor/Typist - Sam Pate

\*Answering Service ----- 571-6014

\*Mail Info for OBSERVER to...  
S.Pate, Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808

\*Important Dates to Remember...  
February 2 February 22 March 1st

February Program Meet us at Columbus College on Sunday, Feb. 2, for a fascinating program on METAMORPHOSIS! Hear from our speaker, Sue Landa, about the wonderful life cycle of butterflies! Sue lives in LaGrange. She has delighted school and adult groups with a unique approach to the BUTTERFLY WORLD. The metamorphosis of these wild and magnificent creatures is one of the most intriguing of the miracles of nature. This will be a Sunday afternoon well spent! Bring a friend! Room 118 \*2:30 p.m. Turner Center Columbus College 2-2-92\*

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February Field Trip Saturday, February 22, 1992! Meet Dr. Luther Roberts by 8:30 a.m. at the Georgia Welcome Center. This is near Exit 8(off I-185) in north Columbus. Dr. Roberts will walk with you along some of the trails on his property. If time permits, the group will go across the road to Dr. Bill Birkhead's property to see his unusual cabin.

#####

Looking Ahead...The March Program will be on Sunday, March 1, at 2:30 p.m. Columbus College Turner Center Room 118 Plan ahead! Bring friends!

This will be a real treat for our group. Christine Shumock, a talented naturalist who lives in Auburn, will come to share her story-telling talents with us. She has recently appeared at The Eufaula Arts Council, The Columbus Museum, Callaway Gardens, and at many festivals in Alabama and Georgia. She plans "an environmental flair" in her program for us.

#####

The EDITOR wishes to give a special THANKS to Peggy Bone for getting the programs into him on time. (Wasn't Roger Birkhead's program a good one!) Thanks, especially, for the "in advance" March program. Great Programs!

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Thanks to All Who Helped with the three area CBCs this winter! Callaway had a total of 74 species. Columbus had 92 species. Eufaula had 121. This follows the same pattern as in the past 20 winter surveys. Callaway is inland, without a river and huge lake system. Columbus gets several birds, like Spotted Sandpiper, DC Cormorants, Herring Gulls, etc., because of the Chattahoochee River and three big impoundments/lakes. Eufaula gets the prize for its huge wet habitats and vast duck-attracting areas. It is exciting to help survey at all of these sites. Plan ahead for next winter! Contact LuAnn Craighton at Callaway, or Sam Pate. Help us next year!!!!!!

Bald Eagles excited the Sherwood Colwell family on January 5, 1992 as Mr. Colwell told his children to come outside to look at the EAGLES! Two mature Bald Eagles and an immature Bald Eagle were flying over his property, just a few miles from Bartlett's Ferry Dam. The editor had a very interesting conversation with Sherwood, who had called after the Ledger had included the Bald Eagle article on the front page. One of the most impressive things that can happen in "nature" is to have a parent show his children something very special in the world of nature. Sherwood said that he understood that it might be a once-in-a-lifetime chance for anyone to watch three eagles fly over their property. THANKS to Mr. Colwell, and all adults who are helping to educate, and excite, our most precious natural resource.....our children. Three eagles! Wow!

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Wild Turkeys! Forty of them! Bob Beard, now of Martin, Tennessee, took a picture of a big flock of Wild Turkeys at his farm during New Year's week. 40 birds were in the flock! Bob may have one of the world's largest "bird feeders" on his property! He planted 25 acres of sunflowers to sell for bird seed, but planted them a little late to make enough to pay for combining them. So, Bob just decided to leave them in the field. Bob has seen Bobcats several times in recent weeks, and has seen turkeys "a lot during this season." Bob has reminded us on several occasions of the exciting Eagles and other wildlife around the Reelfoot area. If you are ever up his way, contact him to see if he can get with you for...some wildlife observations. (His address is 108 Clark Street, Martin, Tennessee 38237.) Thanks, Bob, for the info!

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Great-horned Owls Screech Owls Great Blue Heron ...at Lynn Haven. Florence reports that Great-horns and Screech Owls are in the nesting mode at her place in Harris County. The Great-horns are nesting in a big hollow of a tree, with the Screech Owl taking over the same nest box as last year. 12-26-91, a Great Blue was observed at the pond at Lynn Haven.

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A Green-backed Heron flew over the editor's house at night on 1-1-92. The bird was giving off its unusual squawk for the entire time of its passage. Two nights before, on 12-30-91, another unusual bird sound came from above, as a goose call rang through the night sky. For about 1½ minutes the editor listened to a strange sound that was given off from some unknown "goose." It wasn't quite like a Canada. It is still under investigation by the LASBI (Local Audubon Society Bureau of Investigation!). You just never know what will come over your house, day or night!

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JIBS The Jekyll Island Banding Station Don and Doris Cohrs have run this important research unit at Jekyll for several years, spending a vast amount of their time on the project. With many helpers and volunteers, they have now banded the huge total of 23,537 birds along the Georgia coast. They welcome visitors to their migration-time banding sessions, but you need to call ahead, via 912/437-3333. (JIBS c/o D&D Cohrs, P.O. Box 1908, Darien, Ga. 31305) The Banding Station would be a wonderful consideration for a donation from Columbus Audubon. D&D Cohrs are seeking help to fund a computer for storing their data. They have massive factual info that must be studied with a computer set-up. Georgia's DNR has helped them some with money for updating some basics, such as mist netting. They could certainly use our assistance. Their research/banding will help "nature" for years to come!

As the Editor was looking up info in current magazines, to comment on the Spotted Owl, the timber controversy in the northwest, and other in-the-news items, he noticed the excellent write-up in The Fall Line. (That is the Bulletin of Ocmulgee Audubon Society, Macon, Georgia.) The Editor is Ken Clark. We will "borrow" both the timber article and the reminder about the Georgia Conservancy meeting. Thanks to Ken and all!

Down With Environmentalists (Macon Telegraph, Dec. 7, 1991)

"Our goal is to destroy, to eradicate the environmental movement." So speaks Ron Arnold, Executive VP of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise and originator of the "Wise Use" movement that believes the planet's resources were meant to be exploited for human gain and profit. They believe old growth forests should be harvested, national parks should be reduced or eliminated (they tie up resources), the Arctic National Wildlife refuge should be opened to oil drilling and the Endangered Species Act should be repealed (it gets in the way of development). They claim 125,000 supporters nation-wide, and a growing constituency of disgruntled loggers, ranchers, industrialists, developers and far-right conservatives.



Timber Myths Exposed

The Wilderness Society has released the results of a two-year study of the economic & environmental infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest that gives lie to the claim that environmentalists are to blame for the loss of jobs in the timber industry. The real causes are (1) increased automation, (2) exporting whole logs for foreign processing, and (3) the movement of capital investment and manufacturing capacity to the southeast because of cheaper operating costs.

Between 1980 and 1988 timber industry employment fell 14% while production of lumber and plywood rose 19%. Some 26,000 timber jobs in Washington and Oregon were eliminated because of automation and improved productivity before a single acre of spotted owl habitat was protected. Over 19,000 timber workers lost their jobs in the decade of the 80's because 25% of all trees cut were exported unprocessed. Georgians are well aware that Georgia-Pacific, Weyerhaeuser and other timber giants have increased their operations in the southeast in recent years, as GP's impressive headquarters in Atlanta attests.

Nevertheless, industry and labor lobbyists, and the likes of Ron Arnold and his "Wise Use" cabal, are aggressive and vocal in their opposition to protecting old-growth forests or halting the exploitation (at tax payer's expense) of public forest resources. While the debate continues, so do the loggers' chain saws. In time, if something isn't done, the issue will become moot as irreplaceable habitat disappears forever.

There are two bills before congress that address the problem in reasonable ways. In the house Congressman Jim Jontz (D. Indiana) is sponsoring HR 842, "The Ancient Forest Protection Bill of 1991." In the Senate, Senator Brock Adams (D. Washington) has introduced S. 1536, "Pacific Northwest Community Recovery and Ecosystem Conservation Act," which addresses both the economic and environmental impacts. It is important that your senators and representative in congress know your views on this legislation. Believe me, they are hearing from the anti-environmentalists, and meanwhile, the trees keep falling.

Georgia Conservancy's 25th Anniversary Conference, Callaway Gardens, Feb 28-Mar 2. Donald Keough, President and COO, Coca-Cola Co., James Mackay, Georgia Conservancy's founding chairman, Governor Zell Miller - and a dozen other distinguished scholars, scientists and environmental leaders highlight this exciting week-end. For information call (404) 876-2900.

On a rainy Saturday, 12-28-91, Tom Breazeale wrote to let us know how things are at his place in Harris County.

"In the last few months we have really had our share of deer. We've always had many does, but this winter we have several nice bucks. There are five 8-pointers, a 4-point, a couple of spikes, and who knows what feeds after we turn off the lights! I've been taping the deer. Some are within five yards of our bedroom window! Not only do they feed at night, they sometimes feed in the middle of the day. The birds are late this year. What is the problem? We have 6 pet turkeys, and it is amazing to see the wild wintering birds feed with them. I guess that they all know that they are birds of a feather." Lots of nature views!

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Over in Alabama, Gusty Walker reported quite an "Owl Day" on 12-7-91.

He saw a Barn Owl, Great-horned Owl, and a Barred Owl! The two dark owls, Barred and Great-horned, were observed at night, while the "monkey-faced" owl, Barn Owl, was seen as it flew from a barn at about 9 o'clock in the morning. Gusty said that as the Barn Owl flew from the barn, a pack of crows chased the owl for quite a way. Quite an Owl Day!

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Goose Flock Right In City! Three days before Christmas, Nan Pate was driving in north Columbus when she was amazed to see a sizable flock of Canada Geese overhead. She pulled off to the side of the street to count them. There were 28 of the honkers!

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Kestrels in Georgia Dwight Harley needs your sightings of Kestrels seen in Georgia from mid-April through July. He is trying to determine the rate of decline of these little falcons as permanent residents in the state. We see several in Columbus in winter, but their population drops off rapidly when the wintering birds move back to the north in spring. Dwight needs the date, location, number of birds, and any other details that you think he might be interested in. Send to:  
Dwight Harley, Rt 3, Forsyth, Ga. 31029 (912) 994-1438

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Nature in a warm place! The bookstore at Peachtree mall has some odd and unusual books in many natural history areas. Even if you don't buy something to take home, you can learn a lot by browsing. If you get too comfortable at Peachtree, why not wander over to Cooper Creek Park. Some mighty interesting creatures are out there during winter.

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Columbus Georgia Audubon Society

c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808

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# Observer

March 1st 1992

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Mountain Lions, Bison, and Red Wolves once lived along its banks. American Indians depended upon the river for food, travel, and recreation. Strange and wonderful animals have used it as home for thousands of years. Beavers and Mink roam its waters. Otters and Muskrats raise their families within its valley. Sirens and Eels silently carry out their unusual lives along-side Bass and Catfish. Ospreys catch their prey by dropping feet first into its waters. Bald Eagles feed upon its fish. The Chattahoochee is wild!

Eels and Elvers! One of the most unusual fish on our planet lives in the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries. The eel lives much of its adult life in the river. When it comes time to have young, the eels swim down the river to join eels of the Flint River. Down the Appalachian River they travel, past wild hogs, kites, garfish, and river birches. Swimming into the brackish waters near the Appalachian's mouth, they encounter flounders and other marine forms. The most bizarre is yet to come! The eels swim down the west coast of Florida's Gulf of Mexico, through the Keys, and then into the South Atlantic Ocean! Days later they finally enter that place of mystery, the Sargasso Sea! Meeting eels from England and Europe, these Chattahoochee River creatures spawn in the upper layers of the ocean. It takes about one year for its young, called elvers, to swim back to the lower end of the Appalachian. Only a few inches in length, these little fish have moved along an incredible gauntlet of survival. Some have survived!

Bison Swam The River! Possibly the most numerous huge herd animal to ever walk the earth, the bison lived for thousands of years in the Chattahoochee River Valley. This massive mammal may have lived in herds numbering more than 70,000,000 when Columbus arrived in this part of the world in 1492. Sometimes achieving a weight of over 2000 pounds, bison once roamed from Alaska at least as far south as present-day Miami, Florida! Local Indians killed and ate many bison.

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The March Program will be on Sunday, March 1, at 2:30 p.m.  
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March Field Trip An interesting outing is in the planning stage for this month of wind and sunshine. (The editor had to get the OBSERVER into the printer very early this time.) The info for the Field Trip will be announced at the March Program on March 1st. If you wish, you can also get information via Answering Service (571-6014).

Have you seen the following creatures in these parts? You may wish to check off the ones that you have encountered. Maybe in spring migration you can add a few to your "list"! Check 'em out!

- Long-tailed Weasel
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker
- Double-cr. Cormorant
- Swallow-tailed Kite
- Mississippi Kite
- Belted Kingfisher
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Great Blue Heron
- Green-backed Heron
- Yellow-crowned N. Heron
- Black-crowned Night Heron
- Great-horned Owl
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Chuck-Will's-Widow
- American Woodcock
- Southern Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier Hawk
- Broad-winged Hawk
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Long-billed Curlew
- Mammal with 50 teeth!  
(Opossum)
- Mammal with poisonous  
saliva! (S-t. Shrew)
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Black-thr. Green Warbler
- Black-and-White Warbler
- Precocial small bird  
(Quail)
- Altricial large bird  
(Red-tailed Hawk)
- Anadromous Fish  
(Look it up! Ha!)
- Gray Fox or Grey Fox?
- Southern Flying Squirrel

## Martins head for Alabama

During January and February each year, purple martins return to Alabama from their winter migration sites looking for spring nesting sites. Gourds are one of their favorite choices. Martin enthusiasts prefer well-dried gourds with thick skins and short necks, at least eight inches in diameter.

Martins are migratory songbirds that arrive in Alabama every spring. The earliest known sighting was in Birmingham this past Jan. 19, but the birds usually show up in February and will nest as late as May. Martins are members of the swallow family, and are most commonly called purple martins.

The purple martin is a beneficial cavity-nester that readily accepts the interior of a hollowed-out gourd as its nesting site. It will also use man-made nesting compartments the way bluebirds and wood ducks do. Purple martins are colony nesting birds, so it's best to provide at least eight nesting compartments, birdhouse structures or gourds. Nest boxes or gourds should be erected on a metal pipe or a wooden pole at least 10 to 15 feet off the ground.

Martin fans often grow their own gourds, which grow from vines on the ground, similar to the way watermelons grow. The gourds should be harvested in fall, but only after their stems have dried. They can then be stored and will dry in time for the arrival of martins in late winter and early spring.

To prepare gourds for purple martins, all dark-colored mold should be sanded away or removed with a wire brush. Martin fanciers sometimes apply clear varnish to the exterior of their gourds to preserve their longevity. About two or three years is as long as a good gourd will last. I recommend painting gourd exteriors white, using a good exterior house paint. The white color helps searching male martins locate the gourds, and the color also reflects hot summer sunlight.

The next step in preparing gourds for martins is to cut one 2 1/4-inch round entrance hole in the side, about 3 to 5 inches up from the gourd's bottom. Remove all pith and seeds from inside the gourd.



**Outdoors**

Jerre Peak

Since martins use gourds to rear their young, bore at least four 1/4-inch holes in the gourd floor for rainwater drainage. Approximately 3 inches down from the gourd neck and encircling it, bore a couple of 1/2-inch holes for air circulation. Heat build-up in improperly prepared gourds can cause the loss of baby martins from suffocation.

Attracting the beautiful and cheerful-sounding purple martins to your home for the first time is easier with properly prepared gourds. After successfully attracting nesting martins with gourds, you may want to erect longer-lasting martin houses.

Gourds have a proven success rate for attracting purple martins and they have been used for many, many years in the South. Martins seem to have "imprinted" on gourds as long ago as colonial days, and even further back to a time when Indians erected hollow calabashes around their teepees. Imprinting refers to the ability of the young of any wildlife species to fix indelibly the memory of surroundings, environment, or even structures in which they have been reared. So if martins select your gourds, they may become annual visitors to your backyard.

□

Jerre Peak is the Outdoor Editor for the Anniston STAR in the city of Anniston, Ala.

This article appeared in the Sunday Edition on 2-9-92.

Hey!...Why not compare your plans and ideas in the martin house world.

If you have wildlife facts about Alabama, you might wish to contact Jerre, c/o Anniston Sporting Goods, 223 J Street, Anniston, Alabama 36201.



\* \* \* Announcement \* \* \*

First Annual  
**NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT**  
 9 MAY 1992

Have you ever wondered "What is the Shape of migration?". It all depends on your viewpoint. Waterfowlers have benefitted from the extensive studies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in their role for managing the Nation's game species resource. Hawk watchers may think of it as "Rivers" and space themselves on ridges and prominent peninsulas like the Marin Highlands, Whitefish Point, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Cape May, to count the flow. Shorebirders look at it as "Island Hopping" and go to the "islands" of Bodega Bay, Mono Lake, Bear River, Galveston, Cheyenne Bottoms, Higbee's Beach, and Pea Island. All of these have lead to efforts to preserve and protect critical habitat for migration: we now have the National Wildlife Refuge System, Hawk Mountain, and the Delaware Bay Beaches. But what of Songbirds?

By what paths do neotropical migrants move from Central and South America to their breeding grounds? Do American Redstarts line up in military style and move north in a solid front, leaving occupying forces along the way? Perhaps Wood Thrushes are like blood flowing through major arteries before anastomosing into capillaries. Think of Kingbirds lining up like the runners in the New York Marathon and visualize the spread after the starter's pistol. Maybe Purple Martins move like ducks, geese and swans, with colonies making a series of short hops along a predictable route. It may seem wild, but do Bobolinks move like shorebirds, with a series of widely spaced discrete essential stops?

Most of you have participated on the Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by the National Audubon Society. The rules are simple: spend a day in the field counting birds in a specified area, and keep track of hours & miles on foot, car, boat, feeder watching. The **North American Migration Count** is like the Christmas Bird Count, but with a few twists. The Area for any one count is not a 15 mile diameter circle, but an entire County [Parish in Louisiana]. The big twist is the timing: unlike Christmas Bird Counts, which are spread over several weeks, this count is done on just a single day across the entire 48 States.

The choice of the Second Saturday in May has been made to try to find the peaks of movement of neotropical species while they are still in the Lower 48 States. It will not be peak everywhere: the Northern States will be getting the first glimmer of Spring and the Deep South will be in early breeding season, but the overall goal is of importance to everyone.

At the moment this is a Grass Roots project which can succeed with your help. Organize a Count for your County or all of the counties in your State.

For more information contact:

Jim Stasz  
 NAMC Coordinator  
 P.O. Box 71  
 North Beach, Maryland  
 20714

p.s. Pass this along.

Tom Breazeale has sent us a great deal of interesting info for many months! Now his Dad, the other Tom Breazeale, is being of great help to us in a very educational way. Tom Sr. brought the editor two dead specimens recently, that were put to quite an educational use. The Bluejay and Ruby-throated Hummingbird were seen and studied by numerous students. "Like Father, Like Son" is obvious in this case! Thank You...to both Toms, for helping to observe and educate.

#####

A Bald Eagle was observed at Goat Rock Dam on 2-9-92. Several young folks saw the huge bird. It is great to know that about a dozen Bald Eagle nests are now within the State of Georgia, with a scattering of others around the southeastern states. The Bald Eagle is now in these parts year 'round. It is always special to observe!

#####

A Big Tom and Five Hens! Florence Lynn still has her 14 turkeys out at Lynn Haven. In early February, something wild happened. A big male gobbler showed up, complete with five hens. Big Tom fanned out his beautiful tail, strutted his stuff, and impressed all six females, the five hens and one Lynn! Florence said that the number 14 must be magic among turkeys. Joe Posey has had a flock of 14 out at his place. One other observer reported to Florence that he had seen a flock of turkeys in another area. The number?...Fourteen!

#####

Ooooo! Oooo Oooo The editor got to visit his favorite place, his birthing place in L.A., on 2-7/8-92. (Lower Ala.) As he arrived at night, the first nature sound he heard was that of a Bubo virginianus, better known as the Great-horned Owl! The next morning, before daylight, the same sound woke him up! Ooooo! Oooo Oooo Oooo

#####

A Rufous Hummingbird appeared at the feeders of George and Nancy Vartanian, in Alpharetta, on Dec.1st, 1991. Richard Cole, who owns Bird Watcher's Supply in Roswell, verified and documented the tiny bird. Last year a Black-chinned Hummingbird was banded at Cole's store by Bob Sargent of Trussville, Alabama, an official bander of hummingbirds. Sargent said that the Rufous is the 13th one that he has records for in this area. The Black-chinned was the first record for Georgia. (Thanks to Jean Sendelbach, for sending us the above article from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Thanks to all for keeping us posted!)

#####

Bluebirds Up, Pipits Down Jim Shirah reports Kestrels sometimes seen about one per six poles along the highway to Perry. Quite a few Shrikes were seen! Plenty of Bluebirds! Pipits may be declining.

#####

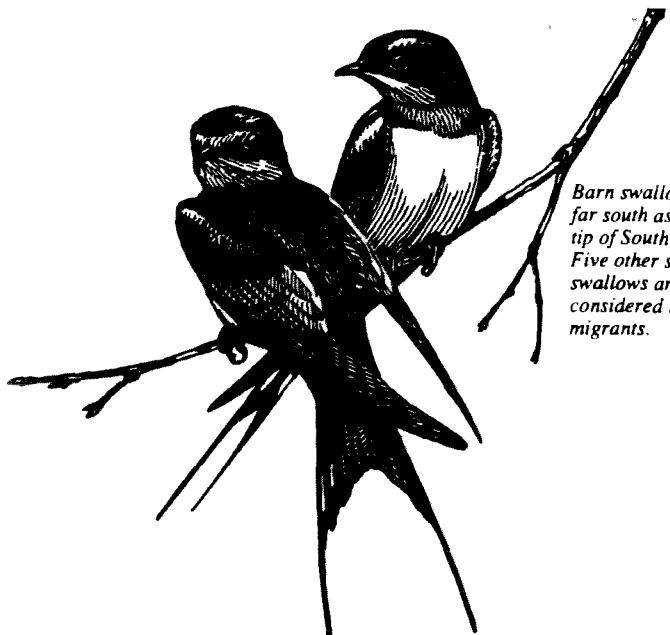
# Observer

Columbus Ga. Audubon Soc.  
c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808

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Columbus, GA

April  
1992!

# Observer



*Barn swallows winter as far south as the southern tip of South America. Five other species of swallows are also considered neotropical migrants.*

Monthly Newsletter of CAS  
Columbus Georgia  
Audubon Society

President ----- Priscilla  
Phillips

OBSERVER Editor - Sam Pate

Answering Service ---  
571-6014

Remember April 4th and 5th!  
Migration and Nature Month!  
Programs, Field Trips, Fun!

April Program! Hear Henderson Traylor of LaGrange, Ga. as he presents slides and a lecture on Birds of Our Georgia/Alabama Area! He will feature the Eastern Bluebird and an array of other avian friends in this part of the world. Members and the general public are all invited to the presentation. This is a great time to hone up on your nature interest as springtime is here! April 5, 1992 Sunday 2:30 p.m. Turner Center Rm.118 Columbus College

April Field Trip! On Saturday, April 4, 1992, we will enjoy an outing at Lynn Haven. (The "Thursday Trailblazers" saw a record eight Wood Ducks on the "Haven Lake" on February 5th!) Meet at the Georgia Welcome Center, just off I-185, to leave for Lynn Haven by 8:30 a.m. The Center is near Exit 14 in north Columbus. Mandy Barton will meet you at the Welcome Center to lead you to Lynn Haven. Her group of car-poolers will meet up with those already at the Haven to be led by Mandy and Florence along the trails. Migrants are hopping already! (As the Editor was typing this page on 3-21-92, Florence Lynn called to report a Parula Warbler seen by Lyle Bundt on 3-20-92, and a twosome of R-t Hummingbirds seen by Walter Holland on 3-21-92! Wow! The Northern Parula Warbler winters in Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala, and the Caribbean! Now just where do you think Dr. Lyle Bundt's Parula spent the winter? Pat Sajak may have sent Parulas down there for the winter via "The Bird of Fortune" program!) Don't miss the Field Trip or the April Program! This is the exciting time of year for creatures!!!

Linblad Explorer! Dr. and Mrs. W.D. Varner, Sr. had one of those trips of a lifetime! In early March they returned from the Antarctic! Enjoying the incredible beauty of the lower part of our wild planet with 88 "explorers", the Varners saw awesome sights for five days in the world of ice and penguins. Can you imagine a better place to go!

Red Crossbill in Columbus! Danny Hisaw called the Editor to report a great sighting on February 24! Danny was house-sitting for friends in east Columbus when he saw a startling sight. A male Red Crossbill was at the friends' feeder! Danny said that he got a very good look at the bird's twisted beak from a very good vantage point. (You just never know what will show up in your own backyard!!!)

"Oh BOY!...there goes a TURKEY!!" "Was that a HUMMER!?!? What WAS it??" Those are just a few of Florence's happy and wild comments as the Editor was talking to her in mid-March. Isn't it nice to have Florence BACK!!! Come to Lynn Haven on April 4th for a REAL Trip!

## NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

George Shillinger, *Partners in Flight* Nongovernmental Organization Coordinator

I am a San Diego, California native and University of Pennsylvania graduate. My academic and career interests include international environmental policy and efforts that further protection and conservation of natural areas and biodiversity. To this end, I have worked with the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, the World Wildlife Fund, the Homeland Foundation, Conservation International, and The Nature Conservancy.

I am the U.S.-based Pan American Program Officer for the International Council of Bird Preservation (ICBP). Our three-person Americas Program Team also includes Dr. Martin Kelsey (Cambridge, England) and Roberto Phillips (Quito, Ecuador). I cooperate with the Pan American Continental Section (PACS), conservation organizations, private foundations, federal agencies, and multinational lending agencies, to strengthen and develop ICBP's role in the Americas.

Currently I am serving as Coordinator of the Nongovernmental Organization Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Committee, and vice-chair of the International Working Group.

— George Shillinger, Pan American Program Officer, International Council for Bird Preservation, c/o World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037 (Phone: 202-776-9563).

### NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

National Audubon Society combines the strength of its 600,000 members with staff expertise in science, policy, education, and grassroots activism to effect wise public policy for the environment, especially in major issues which bear on wildlife and wildlife policy. Audubon's focal issues rise out of the organization's traditional concerns: birds, wildlife, and habitat protection. Thus, in 1991 Audubon initiated its *Save Our Songbirds* program directed at establishing protective strategies for songbird species, particularly those wintering in the neotropics.

*Save Our Songbirds* advances the overall mission of *Partners in Flight* through creation of a lasting infrastructure of citizen activists working throughout the Western Hemisphere to influence policies for the protection of critical breeding, stopover, and winter habitats. The goals of *Save Our Songbirds* include: protection of internationally significant breeding, stopover, and wintering habitats in Canada, the United States, and Latin America; a large network of skilled activists working for protection of critical songbird habitats; strong local, state, national, and international policies supporting nongame birds and their habitats; an international network of Audubon chapters and other Latin American partners working on migratory bird conservation; citizen science monitoring and research programs on both the breeding and wintering grounds. *Save Our Songbirds* integrates staff expertise in Audubon's Government Affairs, Regional Activities, Education, Science and Sanctuaries, and Conservation Departments.

Contributions to *Partners in Flight*:

- Coauthoring the Smithsonian/Audubon Migratory Bird Information Kit.

- Publishing "*Mystery of the Missing Migrants*" by Chris Wille in *Audubon*, May, 1990.

- Publishing the inaugural Spanish issue of *Adventuras Audubon*, a newsletter on migratory songbirds for Costa Rican children.

- Publishing *2001 Bird Species that Won't be With Us: A Last Chance Report*, in *American Birds*, Winter 1991.

- Establishing education exchanges between students from St. George's School in Newport, Rhode Island, and three schools in Trinidad. Projects include creating and maintaining computerized bird monitoring programs, organizing bird exhibits, and teaching elementary school students.

- Leading efforts to list the golden-cheeked warbler and the subsequent development of the Balcones Habitat Conservation Plan, Travis Audubon Society, Austin, Texas.

- Coordinating migratory bird presentations by Dr. Russell Greenberg, Dr. George Powell, and Jane Lyons to over 800 citizen activists at the 1991 "Audubon in Americas" convention.

- Hosting, at the "Audubon in Americas" convention, an international migratory bird forum for 25 Latin American activists from Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Belize, Brazil, Mexico, and Guatemala.

- Using satellite imagery and field studies to quantify rates of migrant habitat change in the wet tropics of Central America with George Powell, Steven Sader, and John Rappole.

- Participating in six Working Groups.

Submitted by: Susan Carlson, Chapter Program Director, National Audubon Society, 666 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C. 20002 (Phone: 202-547-9009).

### NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a unique, not-for-profit organization established by Congress to act as a catalyst for conservation on behalf of the Nation's fish, wildlife, and plant resources. The Foundation is independent of the government, but is eligible to receive funds from Congress that must be matched on at least a 1:1 ratio by nonfederal funds. These monies are then used to support habitat protection and restoration, research and policy development, education, and applied conservation projects. In Fiscal Year 1991, the Foundation committed \$6.9 million in federal funds that was matched by \$14.9 million in nonfederal funds. The Foundation has helped initiate 498 conservation projects with 227 partners and a combined federal/private investment of over \$58 million since 1985. Neotropical migratory bird conservation is one of four major initiatives at the Foundation.

Contributions to *Partners in Flight*:

- Initiating the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program in 1990.

- Co-sponsoring the Neotropical Migratory Bird Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service.

- Producing the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program brochure, *Partners in Flight*, with the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- Working with Congress to recommend first ever appropriations for neotropical migratory birds of \$1,200,000 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and \$2,850,000 for the U.S. Forest Service.

- Publishing annual federal agency fish and wildlife conservation budget recommendations that highlight needs for neotropical migratory birds.

- Funding 46 neotropical migratory bird projects in 1989-1991 with \$1,238,704 in federal funds matching \$2,126,439 in private challenge funds. Sixteen of these projects were in the neotropics.

- Receiving \$500,000 from the U.S. Agency for International Development to support research, monitoring, and education projects benefitting neotropical migrants in Latin America.

- Editing and publishing the *Partners in Flight* Newsletter, current circulation 12,000.

Submitted by: Peter Stangel, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20036 (Phone: 202-857-0166).

\*\*Mail info for OBSERVER to Sam  
via Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808

The Screech Owl nest box plans on page four appeared in the Home & Garden section of The Atlanta Journal/The Atlanta Constitution on 3-6-92. You may help the screech owl by taking the time to build 'em a home!

Partners In Flight - Aves de las Americas, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program, began a year ago with a big meeting in Atlanta. More than 150 scientists and resource managers met to develop a conservation program to make a huge effort to benefit neotropical migrants. Realizing that neotropical birds were in great trouble, the large group began an amazing amount of work aimed at helping migratory birds recover from loss of their populations and/or habitats. Page two of this OBSERVER contains only about one-thirtieth of the data presented in their first report, the 1991 Annual Report. The report contains hundreds of reminders of the great concern of thousands of people as we all begin to work together for the plight of hundreds of species throughout the world. If you would like to be put on the mailing list for this great publication, write to Peter Stangel, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20036. Ask to be put on the mailing list for the Partners In Flight reports and other materials. (This OBSERVER will include more of the ideas and materials from the report in coming editions!)

Sightings from our Members and Friends! Whip-Poor-Wills were first reported by Helen Stutts across in Alabama on 3-7-92. Tom Breazeale, III heard his first in Harris County on 3-17-92. Mary Budnaitis reported that her nest of Mourning Doves were hatched on 3-19-92. Florence Lynn had a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on 3-9-92! Jim Shirah reported Buffleheads, Harriers, Shovelers, 9 pairs of Ground Doves, and an Oldsquaw on 3-4-92, at Eufaula NWR. Jim also got a good look at an Osprey as it caught a large catfish in a pond between Warm Springs and Pine Mountain, Georgia. A "sighting to behold", said Jim! The Editor had a good view of a Snowy Owl as it flew across the runway at Logan Airport in Boston, Mass. on 2-17-92! Sid Chhokar and the Editor saw 45 Turkeys in Talbot County, Georgia on 2-28-92! (20 and then 25!) Tom Breazeale, Sr. reported the first Martins in his area on 2-16-92 (..in Columbus' Green Island Hills area). The Editor and students saw Martins at Brookstone School on 2-12-92. Jeff Pavlick reported a Common Loon in Columbus on 2-13-92. On 2-11-92, the Editor and ten kids observed a perched Cooper's Hawk and a perched Sharp-shinned Hawk within a ten-minute period on the Brookstone campus! (Massive numbers of Cedar Waxwings were dining on berries on campus, while the accipiters were trying to dine on them!) Tom Breazeale, III, in Harris County, said that as of 3-17-92, his Eastern Phoebe had five eggs in its nest on his front porch! (This is a yearly Phoebe activity on Tom's porch.) Tom said that he had a pair of Grey Foxes eating at his feeders for quite a number of days in March. Jake Burrus reported two adult Bald Eagles south of Eddy Bridge at Fort Benning in March. Jim Shirah reports that, on 3-14-92, Bluebirds and Shrikes were fairly common between Perry and Columbus, with numerous Bluebirds active in the Perry suburbs! (Jim sent along a plan for a Bluebird House that we will try to include later.) On 2-12-92, the Killdeer pair returned to the Editor's yard to begin early courtship and nesting preparation! Four babies hatched last year, with three reaching adulthood! Sid Chhokar reported numerous sightings of Pied-bill Grebes in town this winter. D-c Cormorants are now very common on the Chattahoochee River!

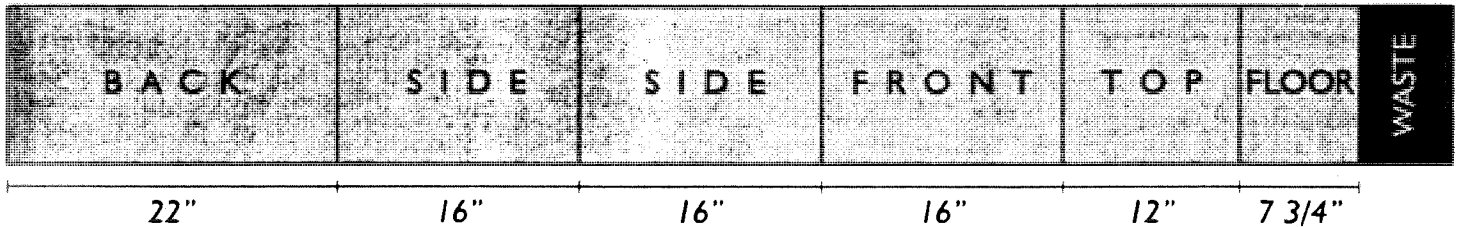
Roger Birkhead is still doing quite well at Berry, where he is using his CAS Scholarship to become an even better naturalist! He is one of the most knowledgeable young men you will ever meet!

The Barn Swallows on page 1  
are from Partners in Flight.

## STEP BY STEP

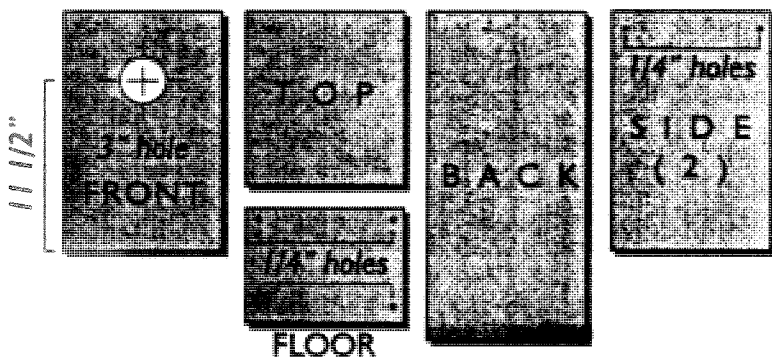
# Building a screech owl nest box

Screech owls and American kestrels will feel at home in this nest box. Cypress, cedar and redwood are naturally rot-resistant; pine, spruce and fir will not last as long. Do not use treated or creosoted lumber.



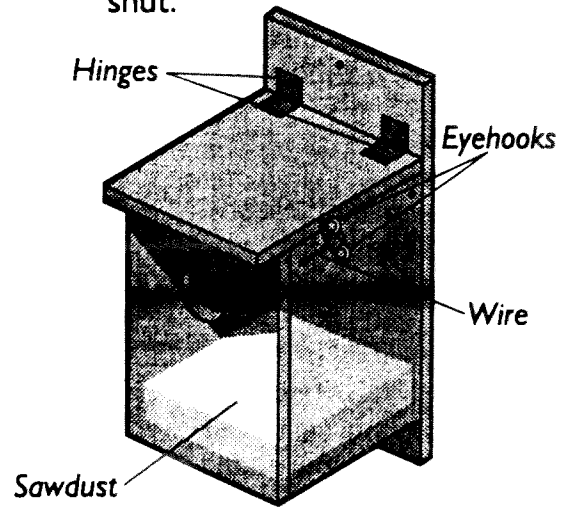
**1** Cut 8-foot-long 1-by-10 plank into lengths as shown.

**2** Drill two 1/4-inch air holes near top of each side; drill four 1/4 drainage holes in floor; drill 3-inch hole in front, 11 1/2 inches from bottom.



**4** Place 3 inches of sawdust in bottom of box. Hang at least 10 feet high, preferably near the edge of a hardwood grove.

**3** Assemble pieces with nails or screws. Attach top to back with hinge, so it can be opened for cleaning. Insert a small eye screw to a side panel and another to the top. Thread wire through eyes and wire top shut.



Source: "Woodworking for Wildlife," Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

## Observer

Columbus Georgia Audubon Society  
c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808

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# Observer

May 1992 Columbus Audubon OBSERVER  
Columbus, Georgia USA

Programs, Field Trips, Nature Centers,  
Scholarships, Wildlife Study and Fun!!

President ----- Priscilla Phillips

OBSERVER Editor/Typist ----- Sam Pate

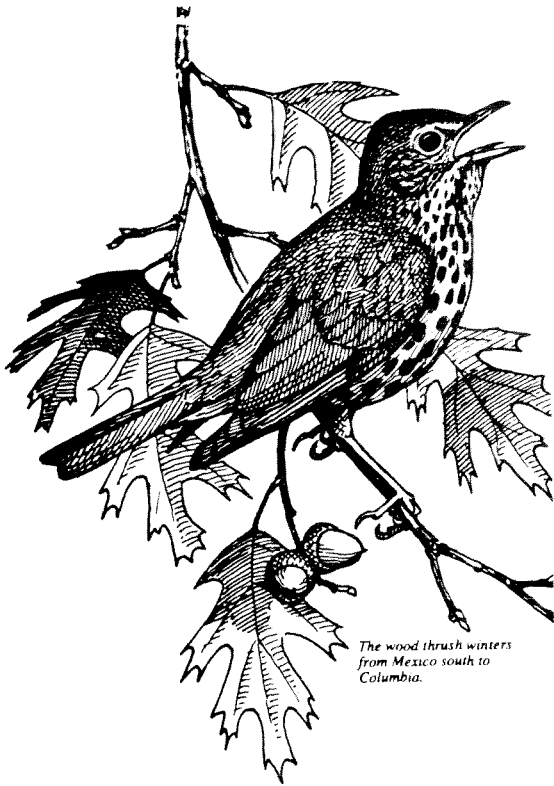
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Audubon Society Answering Service is..  
571-6014

Leave a message, make a comment, or  
tell us your wishes. Call Answering!!

Don't miss our May Program! Hawaii!!

Enjoy our wildlife all summer long....  
and share it with friends!!



*The wood thrush winters from Mexico south to Columbia.*

May Program Meet in the Columbus College Turner Center for our May Program. May 3, 1992 Sunday 2:30 p.m. Room 118

Hawaii! is the topic! Drs. Harold and Eugenia Zallen recount their visits to Hawaii, where Eugenia served as a visiting Professor at the University of Hawaii. Audubon members and the general public are all invited to this audio and visual program. Bring some friends to Hawaii! For further information, call CAS Answering..571-6014

A mature Bald Eagle was observed as it leisurely flew in the Riverbend area of the Chattahoochee River, south of Columbus, on 4-17-92. E. E. Whiteman was the lucky observer. Florence Lynn reported that 14 Wood Duck eggs were in one box, and a hen was setting in the other, on 4-4-92, at the Lynn Haven Nature Center. She had a Chuck-Will's-Widow on 4-11, and a Hooded Warbler on 4-12. Helen Stutts got a Summer Tanager on 4-12.



*The northern parula winters in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and the Caribbean.*

## NEW AUDUBON CAMPAIGN

**THE SOLAR BRIGADE** hopes to save the planet 170 million tons/year of carbon dioxide by pressuring electric utility companies to convert to 10% solar energy by the year 2000. We are asking people to send a monthly message to their utility company when they pay their bill that says "We want 10% solar in 10 years". This single stroke could wipe out 170 million tons/year of carbon dioxide and help provide a long-term future for wildlife and humans. After Audubon collects the names of these participants and their utilities, Audubon will be in a strong position to negotiate with the utilities about switching more to solar.

Public pressure has worked before - for instance, in launching recycling programs and getting environmentally friendly products in the supermarket. We want it to work again in reducing our dependence on fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) that contribute so much to acid rain, global warming, and the exploitation of precious land.

The Solar Brigade intends to create a national referendum for the safest and cleanest energy available to us - solar. Since the cost of solar technology has dropped 75% in the last ten years, utilities have no excuses. Surveys show that Americans want a cleaner environment, even if it costs a little more at first, because in the long run we all benefit. The voices of a million consumers on behalf of solar can make a huge impact.

The key to this campaign is getting as many people as possible to register their name, address, and utility with Audubon, as well as to send the message WE WANT 10% SOLAR IN 10 YEARS to their utility. Solar Power + People Power = the Solar Brigade. Act now!

To register and get brochures to distribute, call 212-759-6345, or write Solar Brigade, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.



Incredible Nature "Success Story"

The spring of 1992 was another exciting one at the Pate residence. Although spring still has a ways to go, April 13 may be far and away the best day of all! (A pair of Killdeer successfully hatched four babies for the second time in twelve months in the side yard. A few days after the little downy golf balls left the nest, their number was down to three, just as last year.)

On Monday April 13, Sam and Nan Pate decided to stay at school to watch Brookstone compete on the baseball diamond. Enjoying a rare break from a busy schedule they didn't go home for a few hours. When they did go home they got a big surprise! Little did they know that the whole afternoon would end in some wild surprises.

Warren and Shar McIntosh were sitting in their Kansas automobile in their driveway. Not since 1981, when Columbus Audubon awarded scholarships for nature study to two of his students, had Sam seen the McIntosh rancher twosome. (That was the 15th time that Sam had stopped to visit with, and learn from, the McIntosh family.) Just after the travelers got inside the Pate abode, there was a call about a desperate situation involving a young otter that was attacked by a dog. The otter was routed by a local veterinarian. Then a second call came in. Sarah Rowe called to express distress over the plight of a baby bird that was in her care. As she described the baby, it sounded like a "little downy golf ball"! Sam told her that if she could bring the bird over to his house then he would put the baby with a family of the beautiful plovers, who just happened to have babies about that same size. Sarah came over with the teeny Killdeer in just a few minutes. By this time it was late afternoon. The McIntoshes, Sam, and Sarah walked slowly around in front of the house to see if they could hear the neighborhood Killdeer family. A parent bird called a couple of times from about a hundred yards away, in the edge of woods behind the house across the street. Sam had the baby in his hand. The baby cheeped rather weakly a few times. That's when the fun started! The parent bird across the street ran into the neighbor's backyard flower bed, and then into the upper end of the driveway. Another adult Killdeer called from just west of Sam's house. The baby was placed on a ridge of dirt about twenty feet from Sam's house. Everyone moved back away from the baby. In only about a minute one of the parent birds was on the ridge! The parent Killdeer approached the baby, as the baby wobbled toward its new "Momma"! The adult slightly raised its body to allow the baby to move under it. The baby disappeared under the soft feathered belly of "Momma". Sam looked over at Sarah, who had insisted on staying to see if the baby actually was going to be accepted by the new parents. She had a tear on her cheek. Sarah probably didn't know it, but Sam did, too.

After all of the incredible adventures that the McIntoshes had shared with Sam and his wilderness companions on all those trips, complete with Swainson's hawks, prairie dogs, burrowing owls, badgers, coyotes, and Chinese ring-necked pheasants, Sam could finally share something very, very special with them. (Warren raised 400,000 pounds of sunflower seeds on his spread this past year! Imagine how many great sightings were made as folks looked out at their feeders across the country to watch birds as they dined on Warren's small black oily sunflower seeds! Your birds may be eating Warren's seeds right now!) Your yard can be an awesome experience!

As Sam was typing the above, on 4-18-92 at 8:03 p.m., he looked out his window to see a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird feeding on a mass of red honeysuckle. Beside the hummer was a Brown-headed Nuthatch that was hanging upside down, dangling!, as it drank from a goldfish pond! (You just don't have to look far to see some of the wonders of the world! Wow!)

\*\*The Wood Thrush on page 1 is from Partners In Flight, an incredible organization. (1120 Conn. Ave., NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036)

Bob Grier reported a pair of Ground Doves that he observed on 4-14-92.

Bob said that he had not seen ground doves on his property for several years before this spring. He had a good look at a Summer Tanager south of Seale, Alabama on 4-11-92. On 4-16, he heard his first Chuck-Will's-Widow. Bob is in the upper end of the Coastal Plain.

Tom Williams called the editor at Brookstone on 4-7-92. The odd thing about the call was that it was coming from Tom's Car Phone. The editor was tied up in his class, so the Principal took the call. The call involved a Bald Eagle sighting. Tom was watching the mature Eagle as he talked! He got a long look at the huge bird, perched and flying! The sighting took place in East Columbus. Thanks for the call, Tom!

Dr. Lyle Bundt has had some mighty interesting sightings this spring. On 3-27-92, he got a look at some Rough-winged Swallows as they moved into our area, to stay and nest, or just keep on migrating. On 3-29-92, Lyle heard and saw a Great-crested Flycatcher. (Remember that these birds will nest in a manmade box similar to a Screech Owl box.)

Florence Lynn has had a great array of sightings of spring migrants. She had an Indigo Bunting on 4-5-92, a Kentucky Warbler on 4-8, a Wood Thrush on 4-9, and on that same day, a face-off between a Broad-winged Hawk and a Red-shouldered Hawk, at her feeding station. (Did you know that when the Broad-winged Hawks migrate through south Texas, before they disperse into our part of the country, they travel in enormous flocks? Ornithologists have carefully estimated groups of 75,000+ as they rose in fantastic thermals, after roosting in oak and mesquite trees in the Lower Rio Grande Delta! Speaking of INCREDIBLE!!! Imagine...75,000 hawks!)

Thursday Trailblazers Florence said that on 4-9, the several women who help out every Thursday at Lynn Haven went over to Helen Stutts' Place in Alabama. Birds were everywhere! Many Palm Warblers were around that day. A Prothonotary Warbler was one of the prettiest ones observed. (If you see a tail-wagging warbler on the ground, it is usually a Palm. Except for the water thrushes, the only other tail-wagging warbler that comes through is the Prairie. Don't let a Spotted Sandpiper fool you!) Next time we will remind you of the "Trailblazers" names!

Addis (Floyd) Avary had a sighting this month that he called phenomenal! A male Indigo Bunting was near a male Scarlet Tanager! The red of a male Scarlet Tanager really is phenomenal. So is the blue of an Indigo! (Years ago, this editor was at Callaway, in the Laurel Springs area. A spring-migrating male Scarlet Tanager suddenly burst upon the scene. Having to share it with somebody!...the editor searched for someone, anybody! He saw two people walking up a trail! Share! Share! Share! He yelled for them to come over....fast!, to see something fantastic! It was a young couple. They ran!....the other way!

Chimney Swifts burst onto the scene on 4-3-92 over the editor's yard. A week later, on 4-10-92, Eastern Kingbirds were all over the place! On Monday morning, 4-13-92, Orchard Orioles were "everywhere" as the editor drove to school! On 4-12-92, after helping with the Salisbury Fair, the editor checked out the gulls that were still ganged along the Chattahoochee. Five were not "gulls"! Brilliant red bills! Pointed wings! Big birds! There sat 5 beautiful Caspian Terns. Nearby was a Common Loon. Overhead flew 44 Double-crested Cormorants! Hey!...there went a Green-backed Heron!

Florence said that she got an excited voice on her answering machine on 4-11-92. A lady said that she had seen a bluebird that blue all over! Seeing an Indigo Bunting, or a Blue Grosbeak, for the first time always seems to be a wild experience for all of us! Thanks for enthusiasm!!!

\*\*\*Your sightings are important! Send to Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808!

Some Funding Info From Eufaula NWR reveals that we owe a lot to the folks who really pay a huge amount toward our having wetlands, wildlife, and plants of all kinds, replenished and protected. \$353,400,000 was the final total for the apportionment for fiscal year 1992 under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act. A 10 percent excise tax on fishing equipment, a 3 percent tax on electric trolling motors and sonar fish finders, an 11 percent tax on sporting arms and ammunition, a 10 percent tax on small arms, and an 11 percent tax on some archery equipment were all involved in the "money raising". Alabama will receive \$3,073,203 for Sport Fish Restoration and \$2,633,853 for Wildlife Restoration and Hunter Education. Georgia will receive a total of \$3,752,872 for fish and \$3,313,933 for the Wildlife/Hunter fund. Alaska, California, and Texas all receive \$10,140,000 each for fish and about \$6,000,000 each for the other programs.

Whether you support hunting, or like to fish, or believe in handgun controll, or none of the above, you have to admit that a massive amount of funding for wildlife comes from these sources. Next time you go to Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, you may wish to ask the refuge personnel about the funding for their programs. It is fascinating to find out about the sources.

Wildlife Babies Remembering that the Killdeer "success" on page 2 is an exception to the rule, usually when we try to "help" our "abandoned" wild friends, we may be just getting in the way. Obviously, many times we really do help, but we may misunderstand the natural situation. Linda Watters, Refuge Manager at Eufaula NWR, offers the following suggestion: "While it may go against natural desires to help and protect the wildlife babies, generally, the best thing to do is to leave a young creature as you find it. Allowing nature to take its course is usually best for the wildlife and person involved. That can prevent a lot of heartache if the animal dies or has to be destroyed at a later date, as well as legal problems that do arise from unauthorized possession of live game or migratory birds."

North American Migration Count On May 9, 1992, the first ever survey of birds over the entire continent is being conducted! Where ever you are that day, please participate in this big event. The survey is being done by counties. Record the birds that you see, or hear, during May 9. Please send your info to Sam Pate, Brookstone School, 440 Bradley Park Drive, Columbus, GA 31995. We need birds, totals, county, total time observing, and beginning and ending times. It will help greatly if you get others to help in your area! They may send in their own info, or may compile it, and then send it in. (The editor will be in Madison, Wisconsin that day, and will record all the species he has the time for...up in the Dairy State!) Please help with this survey! You will be a part of the first effort of this kind in history! A One-day Survey of all of the birds! Jim Stasz, NAMC Coordinator, P.O. Box 71, North Beach, Maryland 20714, is the organizer of this interesting project. We will send him the info! Please record miles and hours on foot, car, boat, and feeder watching.

## Observer

Columbus Ga. Audubon Soc.  
c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808

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Columbus, GA

# Observer

Monthly Newsletter of the CASoc.  
Columbus GA Audubon Society \*\*\*\*

June 1992

Priscilla Phillips--President

Sam Pate--OBSERVER Editor/Typist

For summer OBSERVERS, please send info to SP, Box 157, Fortson, Ga. 31808

Hike "The" Trail this summer! PMT The Pine Mountain Trail beckons you to enjoy its great beauty and sounds of nature! Pick a cool morning or afternoon, and enjoy it with a friend. Let us know what you observe and learn, and let Neal Wickham know. The Trail is in its spring/summer splendor at this time of year. Just go on up and enjoy!

Next Year! If you have any ideas, questions, requests, or suggestions for programs or field trips for the coming regular year, leave a message with Answering Service--571-6014.



June Program No regular programs for June, July, and August. Enjoy the world of nature, and write us about it! Enjoy Wildness!!

June Field Trips These are on your own, too. The southeast has some incredible places. From your backyard to Wakulla and beyond, hundreds of animals, plants, protists, fungi, and monera are out there to be observed, photographed, and enjoyed. Did you know that in China the roots, stems, seeds, and leaves and flowers are all used for a variety of medical problems.....from guess what?.....Kudzu! When Kudzu is in bloom this summer, try to smell the blossoms. If you have not encountered the aroma of Kudzu before, you may be in for a pleasant sniff!

#####

The Bob-O-Link pictured above is a magnificent bird that only migrates through this part of the continent. Its yellow, white, and tar-black body make it unmistakable in identification. One of the best places to see them in masses is over along the coastal counties of Georgia. Rice fields, or anything resembling a wheat or rye field, are good sites. Next spring you might plan ahead to see these migrants along with others! Numerous times in spring migration flocks of these pretty avians have been spotted in fields near Louvale, Lumpkin, Cuthbert, and Donalsonville. You have to be both alert and lucky to see them. In their fall migration, they are usually extremely hard to see in Georgia and Alabama. A bit of research into the bob-o-links will give you some clues as to why. These are the famous "Rice Birds" of old Georgia. They are intertwined with our history.

#####

Four baby Killdeers were in the editor's yard on 5-21-92. This is the 2nd clutch on the property this spring! Eight Killdeer babies in one spring! Four parent birds are around to yell at cars and pedestrians and anything!

A Door Hinge? Jane Knight got to see a magnificent bird of migratory fame as it passed through on 5-6-92. She was watching for migrants in her backyard when she spotted a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. (On CNN, May 23, the Neotropical Migrants were the topic of another grim reminder of the plight of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and many dozens of other species of birds that are in trouble. Dr. Sid Gauthreaux, who studies migrating birds with radar as they move north over the Gulf of Mexico each spring, says that in 25 years the number of migrants may be down by half. His radar images are rather spectacular as the screen is filled with masses of moving spots as the migrants reach the Louisiana coast in darkness. This editor heard Dr. Sid speak in Atlanta in the 1970s. His videos of the radar images were a reminder of the great effort now being put forth by ornithologists to help put nature back on track. Some of the reasons for the decline of migrants, mentioned in the CNN clip, might be pesticides, illegal killing, disease, weather changes, etc. The main reason seems to be the destruction of habitat, not only in the tropics and semi-tropics, but in the United States and Canada. Progress is sometimes necessary, obviously, but habitat loss can be slowed down with the same "progress", if we keep making the effort. Thank you, Dr. Sid!!!)

A door hinge? That is what many folks think the Rose-breasted Grosbeak sounds like! So, if you hear a door hinge, and it just happens to be migration season, it just might be a Rose-breasted Grosbeak!

Dorothy and Bob Potts saw a large number of species of the "birds in trouble" in April. Many of the species they enjoyed observing are among the birds that scientists are extremely concerned about.

April 10: At a farm near Seale, Alabama, they saw large numbers of Palm Warblers and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Other warblers observed included Northern Parula, Yellow-throated, and Prairie Warblers. A Blue Grosbeak and a Vesper Sparrow were among the "best of all the rest." Back in Columbus that same day the Potts twosome found an Ovenbird and a Hermit Thrush.

April 18: (same Seale farm) Ten species of warblers were observed, including Prothonotary, Swainson's, La. Waterthrush, Hooded, and Common Yellowthroat. (On May 7, Sam Pate and Luke Wolff observed a Common Yellowthroat as it dined along the shore of a huge lake in Madison, Wisconsin! Also studied in Madison were Black-throated Green Warblers, tail-bobbing Palm Warblers, and a tremendous number of Yellow Warblers.) Bob and Dorothy also got to see the Wild Turkey, Bob White Quail, Orchard Oriole, Indigo Bunting, and Red-headed Woodpecker. (As the editor types this portion of the OBSERVER, he is looking at a Red-headed Woodpecker as it feeds on sunflower seeds on a hanging feeder, about 25 feet away! The birds that got out of the way, when the Redhead appeared, are also red on the head.....House Finches.)

April 23: (Highway 280 in Fort Benning) Bob & Dorothy got a good view of a Broad-winged Hawk. These hawks sometimes roost for the night, in migration, on the King Ranch near Brownsville, Texas. There are very reliable estimates of flocks of 75,000+ in funnels as they moved up to ride the thermals the next morning! You may wish to check a field guide to see the distribution of the hawks in migration and nesting areas. Remember that they nest in Columbus and surrounding areas. They have very obvious tail bands. One pair is nesting between the bowling alley and Lake Oliver, not far from Bradley Park Drive. Watch for them in your area.

April 24: 48 species of birds were studied at that place of beauty, Callaway Gardens. Both Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, Hooded Warbler, and the Canada Warbler were included in a great day of sightings! The Laurel Springs area and the Overlook area were the most productive areas for the warblers. (Thanks to Bob and Dorothy for sharing the thrill of nature!)

For About 25 Years, beginning on November 4, 1967, when he moved into his place just off Sandfort Road, near Seale, Alabama, Bob Grier has had a pair of Summer Tanagers and a pair of Brown Thrashers come to his feeders. Bob said that they have always come to feed each spring. However, he has never seen them bring young to the feeders.

You may wish to compare your area nestings to some of Bob's, as to number, date, etc. On 4-17-92, Indigo Bunting at ground feeder. 4-19: Pair of Titmouses (Titmice?) with four eggs. Wrens with nest in hanging gourd. 4-25-92: 4 of 5 Eastern Bluebirds have left nest. Wrens have three eggs. 4-26-92: Summer Tanager pair was at feeder. 5-4-92: Bluebirds have started another nest, and have two eggs. The Wrens now have five eggs. 5-7-92: American Goldfinches are in the area. 5-13-92: The Bluebirds have four eggs. The Titmouse family has feathered out nicely. Discovered a Great-crested Flycatcher nest in bird box on the power pole! 5-10/11/12/13-92: Male Towhee at feeder, but no female.

On a recent spring trip, Bob watched Grackles as they walked on lily pads in search of bits of nourishment. He got to see the works of ingenious Ospreys as they continue to build their nests on power poles in Florida and other coastal areas.

#####

May 13, 1992 The editor's biology class got involved in studying a pair of Brown-headed Cowbirds as they courted at about 8:45 a.m. The birds finally mated on the softball field. For those 20 kids, at least, they will never have to ask that age-old question again, "How do birds mate?" Within 24 hours a kid from that class had observed another species pair in the same mode. The editor remembers watching a pair of Avocets mating in Bear River Refuge, near Brigham Cith, Utah. The antics reminded him of a childhood game called Guinea, guinea, all squat. The Red-headed Woodpeckers mated in a pine in the editor's yard in April, at 8 o'clock in the morning. Pretty soon the young should begin to come to the feeder outside "The Typing Window"...Sounds like a Jane Knight book!

#####

68,232 Hikers! That number of walkers represents the folks who have signed the registers at the end of the Pine Mountain Trail. Many are believed to have never signed in. Don't forget to sign! Stop in and talk to Neal at Wickham's Outdoor World, for any questions, ideas, or info on joining the Pine Mountain Trail Association. A mighty interesting newsletter is published quarterly. Mailing address is: c/o Wickham's Outdoor World, 3201 Macon Road, Columbus, Georgia 31906

Remember that both the Chuck-Will's-Widow and the Whip-Poor-Will nest in the vicinity of the trail. Their calls are different, very different. Four species of owls nest in the vicinity of the trail. Can you name them? Several species of Rodentia live along the trail and in surrounding areas. The world's second biggest rodent lives in Harris County! Did you know that a very close relative of the Roadrunner lives near the trail? Did you know that all plants and animals encountered along the trail are members of the "In" group? They are either indigenous, invaders, or introduced species. The Opossum is indigenous to the Pine Mtn. Trail area. The House Finch is an invader from the northeastern U.S., after having been introduced to that area of the country from the American southwest. Introduced means that it was physically brought by people to the area. So, you are a part of the "In" group if you have hiked part of the PMT. You are in good company, because all of the animals and plants are, too!

\*\*\*The editor will be very busy this summer. Please send in info to Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808 as soon as you possibly can. No meetings or field trips, but the OBSERVER will be there!

Remember the Bird Call Contests we had a few years ago? David Garnett was the winner one year with a Pileated Woodpecker call that sent cold chills up our spines. David will be studying at Colorado State University during 1992-93 as he works on a Masters in Recreation Resource Management. He will study the interface between humans and the remaining forests and wilderness areas. David has recently worked with troubled teenagers on trips into some beautiful wild areas. On a trip into FDR-State Park in Harris County, he and the group heard a Common Loon as it wailed its voice of wildness. On the New River, in Appalachian National Forest near Bristol, Florida, David got to see a Prothonotary Warbler in its spring brilliance. He saw nine Barred Owls in Appalachicola in a single night! One of the Counselors called some of them out of their nocturnal hiding places! (Up at Pigeon Mountain, Georgia, David was awakened at 4 a.m. by mating Barred Owls!) He got to see Wild Turkeys and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Appalachicola NF, where the trees containing the cockaded nests were marked for easy access and study. Back up at Pigeon Mountain, David was excited to learn that Golden Eagles had been introduced to that part of Georgia. (David is another success story in the long line of "kids" that have left Columbus to pursue studies in fields that are having a great impact on our environment. We wish David the best as he continues his studies at Colorado State University!)

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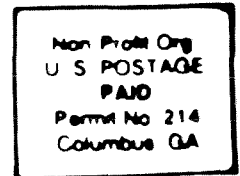
An undue regulatory burden on American Business? A 1990 law prohibits the draining of wetlands or otherwise alter wetlands "in bad faith", without the loss of federal subsidies as punishment to the farmers who do not abide by this good faith policy. Developers and farmers have constantly complained that federal protection of wetlands is too broad. The USDA may be about to allow the draining of millions of acres of wetlands from Mississippi to North Dakota. (During the 1988 campaign, President Bush said that "all existing wetlands, no matter how small, should be preserved.") Clark Williams, National Audubon wetlands specialist, declares that, "This is tantamount to the USDA's authorization of the use of taxpayers' subsidies to agriculture for the destruction of important wetlands resources." In a separate proposal, President Bush recommended on 5-22-92 that 487,186 acres of federal land in New Mexico be set aside for official Wilderness Area designation, with another 420,000 acres in New Mexico to be released from public protection. Richard Hoppe, Wilderness Society spokesman, says that this is " a ridiculous low-balling of what really needs to be protected. It will mean that more logging, mining, and grazing will be permitted in numerous ecological/sensitive areas!" (Last year the Bush Administration waded a wetlands proposal in front of members of Congress. It met with tremendous opposition! Maybe again!!!)

#####Answering Service 571-6014###Info to Box 157, Fortson 31808###

# Observer

Columbus Georgia Audubon Society

c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
 33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808



# Observer

July 1992 Columbus Audubon Newsletter  
Columbus, Georgia

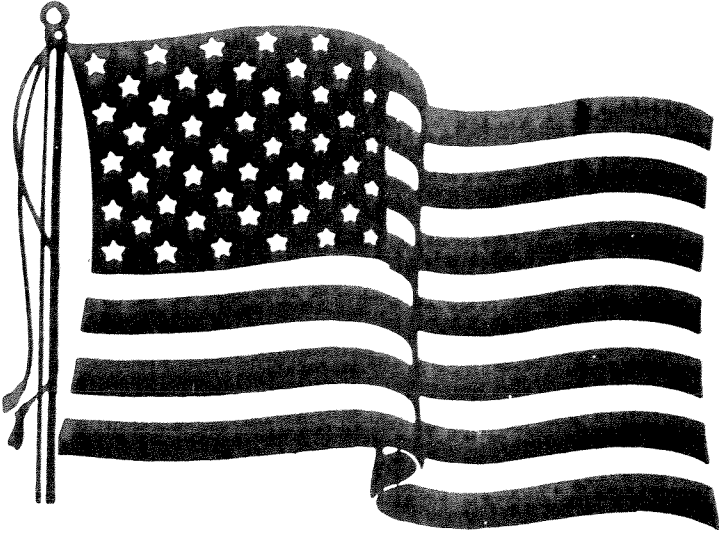
President-Priscilla Phillips - --- ---

OBSERVER Editor --- Sam Pate -

Answering Service - Audubon! - 571-6014

Thank you for all the letters, cards, and calls during the last several months! Many of you have sent in some mighty interesting information to the editor. It has all been very much appreciated, and utilized! Any sightings, strange newspaper/magazine articles, personal ideas, suggestions, and comments are always needed for the OBSERVER! Send 'em in!!!!

This Newsletter is being sent to the printer on June 12, very early! This editor is leaving for the Rare and Endangered Species sessions of National Audubon's Convention at American University in Washington, D.C. There should be incredible things to write about for the August OBSERVER! Watch for it soon!



## FLY THE FLAG!

### July Program and Field Trip

No programs or field trips are scheduled for the summer months. Pine Mountain Trail! Eufaula Refuge! Callaway Gardens! River Bend! Rood Creek! Your Yard!!!! Choose at least one of the above, and add it to your trip to Wakulla Springs and Saint Marks NWR, below Tallahassee, and you will have a great combination of things to do, and enjoy, this summer! Enjoy a trip or two soon!!!!

### Wreck! Wreck! Wreck!

A Great-crested Flycatcher occasionally sits in one of the little trees in the hot parking lot near Hardee's, near Family Mart. All of a sudden it hollers out! It is sometimes very hard to locate among the thick leaves. It sounds a lot like somebody yelling there's..been a wreck! To top it off, a Red-eyed Vireo across the way in the thick patch of trees adds to the intrigue of the scene by sticking its two-cents into the fracas.....by asking.... "Who's hurt?..That's him!..See 'em?..Who's that?..Over here!..Who're you?.. You heard!..Right now!..Tell Florence!..Call Answering!..What wreck?"

It doesn't take much imagination to really get into some rather strange "comments" and "threats" that birds and other forms of wildlife seem to be offering. Trying to put animal sounds in our "people terms" may make it a lot easier to remember some of them. If you are near a field, and hear "I don't know who you are," you are sure that you're hearing a meadowlark!

#####

During July the Black Terns that nest in the upper U.S. and Canada will be beginning to move back down south for the "winter," obviously a very early migration maneuver. Black Terns, on their breeding grounds, are magnificent flyers, and quite attractive birds. They fly right through Columbus along the Chattahoochee River. There's a lot to see with a little patience.

#####

\*\*\*\*\*Don't Forget! Send info to S.Pate via Box 157, Fortson, Georgia 31808.

Loggerhead Shrikes are apparently holding their own in Houston County, Ala.

This beautiful predatory bird is not as common, in many parts of its breeding range, as it was when the editor grew up in this southeasternmost county in Alabama. On 6-9-92, as the editor and his 86-year-old Mom Lucy drove along Highway 84 east of Dothan, there were three breeding pairs on power lines in the first eight miles. The shrike is an amazing bird, with the ability to kill snakes, mice, and other birds, along with insects and other small life forms. It commonly hangs the bodies of its victims on barb-wire fences, broken tree limb tips, and other logical objects. Two of the editor's most favorite sightings involve this bird! In the late 70's, while driving through southwest Georgia with George Lewis, a shrike flew in front of the editor's car, carrying an English Sparrow! (George is the former officer of the British Trust for Ornithology, and still lives in Birmingham, England.) Another time, near the two silos on the Georgia side of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, a shrike flew by with an adult Swamp Sparrow in its grasp! That is about like trying to jump over a hanging basket of Impatiens, as a human high-jumper, with a good-sized child in each hand!

#####

National Fishing Week was celebrated especially well at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge between June 1st through 7th. Linda Watters who is Refuge Manager, has done a good job of making a lot of people feel very comfortable while using the refuge for all kinds of activities. Whether some hikers are using the trails, or fishermen are trying their luck with hybrid white-striped bass, or some of our crew are birding the bottoms, Linda and her associates are at your service if they can be of any help, or answer your wild questions. Linda watches out for the refuge, which includes 11,440 acres of very varied habitat types. Columbus Audubon salutes Linda for her efforts in all areas of nature and wildlife activities. ENWR is a good wild experience!

Did you know that within the refuge are 4,260 acres of lake waters available for boating, fishing, birding, and other nature things? Did you know that 3,025 acres of wetlands/impoundments are available for fishing and birding? For info on refuge activities, call ENWR, 205-687-4065, or write to Linda Watters, Refuge Manager, ENWR, Route 2, Box 97-B, Eufaula, Ala. Eufaula Refuge is a great experience! Enjoy it this summer! 36027-9294

#####

Barbara Peacock said that she has been very concerned about the lack of nesting activity in her bird boxes this year. To perk things up she and Murray took the cover off of their chimney to open up the fireplace for possible avian use. Bingo! A pair of Chimney Swifts entered and started their family! On June 1st, Barbara had these observations, "Last night while 'trying' to watch T.V., the constant clamor of our chimney residents drowned out the sound of our set. We are enjoying the distraction! This morning as I was watering some flowers, I looked up to the chimney, and wouldn't you know it --- a female Brown-headed Cowbird was trying her best to get in! (I think she made it.) Uh Oh! I just looked out the window, and a Towhee is feeding a cowbird baby!" (As the editor was mowing his yard on 6-8-92, many cowbirds were feeding in the stubble..a few feet away from the loud mowing!)

In March, a pair of Mallards began nesting activity in the Peacock yard. (A lake is only two blocks away.) They nested behind shrubbery in front of the Peacock home, producing a clutch of 11 eggs. Six of the eggs hatched. On the last day of May, the female and all six of the babies, along with "Dad" showed up in the Peacock yard. Barbara said, "I think they were thanking us, and showing off their young!" Then they returned to the lake.

On the last day of May, the Peacocks noticed 14 Catbirds in their yard. Three pairs of adults were feeding their young in early June.

Richard Rusnak had a "trip of a lifetime" from April 15-28, 1992 in the wonderful birding area called Southern California! Richard observed dozens of species along the coast near San Diego, including Brown Pelicans, American White Pelicans, Surf Scoters, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Black-crowned Night Herons, Black-bellied Plovers, Marbled Godwits, Whimbrel, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Terns, Royal Terns, Black Skimmers, and numerous shore bird species. (Can you imagine being in San Diego with some binos!)

Richard spent four great days on a camping trip into desert habitats as he observed the creatures in Anza Borrego State Park. His excitement is obvious when he states that "the desert was in an awesome state of full bloom and full of water!" Some of his best finds in the desert were Rock Wren, Cactus Wren, Canyon Wren, Verdin with nest, Bushtit, California Thrasher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla with nest and young, Bell's Vireo, Wilson's Warblers, Hooded Oriole, Bullock's race of Northern Oriole, Lazuli Bunting, Lesser Goldfinch, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Brown Towhee, Black-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-winged Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Long-eared Owl, Prairie Falcon, American Kestrel, White-throated Swift, Costa's Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Western Kingbird, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, and Common Raven. In a mountain area state park called Cuyamaca he added sightings of Scrub Jays, Steller's Jays, Western Bluebirds, Townsend's Warblers, House Wrens, Mountain Chickadees, Pygmy Nuthatches, Oregon race of Dark-eyed Junco, Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Acorn Woodpecker, Violet-green Swallow, House Martin, Ruddy and Pintail Ducks, Red-necked Grebe, and numerous others! Richard got to see 58 new species on his trip! Southern California is one incredible place!

#####  
Comparing Richard's California sightings with those seen around the feeder of Tom Breazeale, III, we see what an incredible difference a different habitat, and 2000+ miles makes. Tom's feeders in June have entertained quite a variety of wildlife, including diurnal visits by Grey Squirrels, Cottontail Rabbits, Deer, Turkeys, and Chipmunks, along with the huge group of feeding small birdlife that we all get a kick out of seeing. Among the highlights of nocturnal watching are the visits of Grey Foxes, Opossums, Flying Squirrels, and Rabbits. "Daytime Birds" have included such friends of ours as Mourning Dove, Bobwhite Quail, Cardinal, White-breasted Nuthatch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Bluejay, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee, Red-bellied Woodpecker with young, Grey Catbird, Indigo Bunting, Carolina Wren, Crows, Brown Thrasher, Wood Thrush, Brown-headed Cowbird, Grackle, Chipping Sparrow, and Common Flicker. The thousands of years of genetics involved in the minor and major differences between "our" birds and those "out west" lead us into mind-boggling thoughts. The world of nature is thrilling!

#####  
POP Quiz!!! How many can you answer? All answers are in the Breazeale & Rusnak articles above. Test your skills in summer school!

1. Close relative of Yellow-billed Cuckoo is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Pygmy Nuthatch's closest relative in Harris County is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Closest local relative of the Tufted Titmouse is the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Local woodpecker called "ladder-back" is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Only bird pictured on front of Chandler Robbins' Birds of North America field guide not mentioned above is the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Four species mentioned above that involve "lumping" of two or more species of birds under one species name are \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The two jays above that may be seen at Cape Canaveral are \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.

Answers 1. Roadrunner 2. B-h Nuthatch 3. Carolina Chickadee 4. Red-bellied 5. Painted Bunting 6. House Wren-C. Flicker-D-e. Junco-N. Oriole 7. Bluejay and Scrub Jay.

\*\*Don't forget to send in info for OBSERVER! Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808 Do it!

The only ALBINO bird reported to the editor recently was a Yellow-rumped Warbler observed for three days by Barbara Peacock in her yard, in early spring. Barbara said that even the yellow on the rump was white. Seeing an albino, or partial albino, member of any species of any living thing is always a special, unforgettable experience.

#####

Checking out nature can hurt a lot, and can be very costly at times! Bob Grier had a fall of about 5 feet on a spring field trip as he was walking near a lake with his camcorder. Bob didn't fall into the lake, but his camera did! Bob had a very painful broken rib ordeal for his body's part in the episode, while his camcorder came out just about as badly. Cleaning and repair for the camcorder cost Bob \$349.49! A costly, painful field trip for Bob! On a happier note, Bob was over visiting Bobby in Byron, Georgia this spring. Bobby has a new house, and lots of birds in his yard. Bob said that he got a kick .... watching a young male Orchard Oriole with a female. Bob observed that the orioles were much brighter than shown in his Peterson guide or in other guides available. (Do you know how to identify a first-year male Orchard Oriole? Check your field guide, and look at its throat.) Bob said that the orioles were about as bright as a Goldfinch. He was watching a Great-crested Flycatcher as it was singing on a utility wire quite a ways from his house. The bird was too far away to hear when it sang. So, how did Bob know that it was singing? Bob said, "She flew up and landed on the power line. Her beak is opening and closing a mile a minute. I can't hear her, but she is obviously happy about something!"

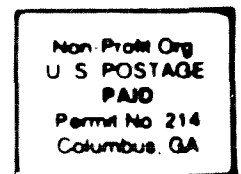
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Sambucus canadensis One of the most beautiful plants in this part of the country is Elderberry. You may agree that it looks a lot like Queen Anne's Lace on a larger scale. Germans make a tasty bread using the blooms of elderberry. They call it Elderbrot. Maybe if the German cooks read about elderberry in Medicinal Plants, a wonderful field guide in the Peterson series, they may tread lightly when using elderberry. According to authors Foster and Duke, the flowers are eaten in pancakes and fritters, and are "not thought to be toxic." However, they indicate that the unripe berries, roots, leaves, and bark are all toxic. Parts of the plant may cause mega-diarrhea, and may cause cyanide poisoning! On a happier note, the American Indians used the elderberry for dozens of purposes. They used the plant parts for laxatives, headaches, swellings, pain, eczema, colds, sweating, nausea, bleeding, and numerous other problems. On June 5 through June 10, between Columbus and Dothan, and the surrounding areas, the elderberry "bushes" were in magnificent bloom. Thousands of them everywhere!

#####

# Observer

Columbus Georgia Audubon Society  
c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808





# Observer

August 1992 Newsletter of the CAS  
Columbus, Georgia Audubon Society  
President ---- Priscilla Phillips

OBSERVER Editor/Typist - Sam Pate

Mailing Address for Sending Info  
to the OBSERVER...  
Box 157, Fortson, Ga. 31808

Education Nature Resources Fun  
Scholarships Environment Trips!  
Field Studies Sharing Wildlife!

This brief Newsletter is sent out  
to many members of National Audubon  
twelve times each year. You are  
invited to share your ideas, trips,  
concerns, and knowledge with us!!!!

Symbol of Nebraska-125 years old!!!  
Thanks to the Halouskas at Printers!  
Sandhill Cranes!

Programs and Field Trips are suspended for the summer months. Your  
challenge for the rest of the summer is to  
just enjoy nature and learn and share. Remember that the River Walk  
is under way down on the Chattahoochee. In a few months it will be a  
great place to check out creatures along the river. Black Terns were  
seen in July along the river, as usual, as they moved down toward the  
coast of Florida and beyond for the fall and winter. They are great  
to witness as early migrants each year. Remember that even Common  
Loons move down the river later in the season. Don't mistake a Corm-  
orant for one, though...they look a lot alike if you don't look closely.

#####

\*\*\* Very Special Thanks to Tony Lindo for stacking papers at the collection  
trailer while Christa Lindo was in the  
hospital part of June. Mandy Barton also helped when she could be  
spared from other Audubon projects. Thanks to both Tony and Mandy!!!

#####

\*\*\* Audubon Society of Columbus Answering Service 571-6014

#####

Jekyll Island Banding Station JIBS! Don and Doris Cohrs of Darien  
do a wonderful service for the  
world of ornithology! On September 19 at 9 a.m. mist nets will be set up,  
along with clearing net lanes, and the many other jobs involved in the  
fascinating work of banding birds in their fall migration. On September  
20th (Sunday), at 7 a.m., the month's banding will begin. Volunteers will  
meet those days at the Macy Dr. end of St. Andrews Dr., near the mansion  
that is very pink. If you are interested in learning and helping during  
this 15th year of the Cohrs' project, call them via 912/437-3333 to get  
much more info. Lodging is available in the rented cottage that JIBS  
has available near the banding site. \$12 or less per night!...per person.  
Bugs, Heat, Cold, Wind, Sun, Fun, Adventure, Fellowship, you never know!  
The Cohrs twosome will make you feel very important! They are nice folks!!

\*\*\* Contact Cohrs, P.O. Box 1908, Darien, Georgia 31305...or call them!

\*\*\*Send in info right now for September OBSERVER...Thanks!!!

Barbara Peacock has had some extremely interesting sightings this summer. An adult American Kestrel and a young kestrel visited her feeder area a few times. Kestrels are very hard to locate in breeding season around these parts. They are here in winter, and then mostly just leave, to head north to breed. Most of the permanent residents that were here 30 years ago seem to have fallen victim to DDT, or some calamity. A kestrel sighting in late spring or early summer is exciting. Even though a few kestrels nest in the deep southeastern part of the U.S., especially in north Florida, they are a long way from a viable population around here, as breeders. If you know of kestrels in your area in June and early July, please write us about them. Give location, dates, young observed, etc.

Barbara had Hairy Woodpeckers around her yard as usual this spring and early summer. This year, however, she observed young birds with them. Hairy Woodpeckers are very hard to find in the Columbus region of the country. They are at least Threatened Species in most areas of the U.S. If you are ever in New Orleans, they can be heard and spotted in the great Audubon Zoological Park and Zoo. If you are in the Concord, Massachusetts area, try listening for them in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, where Thoreau, the Alcott family, Emerson, and the Hawthorne family are all buried. In Maine some of them live in a tiny colony just west of Camden. Florence Lynn has had many visits from Hairys at her feeders over the years. (Did you know that Florence had Red-cockaded Woodpeckers visit her feeders on a regular basis a few years ago? That is almost as uncommon as having Groove-billed Anis visit local feeders!) Please report unusual wildlife to us.

#####  
Hummingbirds should build up in numbers during August. Migrants and young birds will add to the local breeders that will be visiting your feeding stations. (Don't forget that both the Black-chinned and the Rufous Hummingbirds have been verified as visitors to Georgia in recent years. It is extremely unlikely that you will have one these species at your feeders or flowers this summer, fall, or winter, but you never know! Please watch for odd, strange, and curious creatures at your feeders. You are as likely to have a rare sighting as anyone! Keep your skills honed!)

Florence reports, "Have an abundance of hummers this season. Yet I still get calls asking what's happened, and aren't they coming this year? It was during one such call that I had eight hummingbirds just two feet outside my window jockeying for positions at a four-place feeder! I have noticed that many of this year's young have patches on top of their heads, varying from grayish white to pale yellow. I wonder if this denotes gender, and will fade as they mature. For years I'd seen red patches on top of the heads of young Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. Finally this was verified when I read it in a bird book. Observations are always exciting!"

Susan Cochran takes an early morning walk up Whitesville Road past Lynn Haven. Recently she saw a turkey hen with several young ones. Another neighbor, Lamar Sturkie, reported a turkey in his back yard this summer. At Lynn Haven an old "Tom" slips into the yard and up to the stump feeder when he "thinks" that Florence is not looking.

This spring Florence commented to Dr. Butch Cochran that "her" Gray Foxes were being missed, and had not been seen for almost three years. Dr. Cochran told her that although the clearing of land adjacent to hers, by a forestry company, had probably run them off, the land had been replanted, and foxes should return soon. Replanting would be bringing back moles, field mice, and other fox foods. Sure enough, on June 1st, Florence looked out at dusk to see a beautiful Gray Fox eating at a tray that is always out to feed her Broad-winged Hawks. (Two young hawks and an adult commonly come to her feeders.) During June the fox kept coming earlier each night. On July 4th, with fresh peanuts on the feeder, the fox came at 12:15 for a 15-minute noon meal.

From Australia to Alaska! From the world's smallest continent to the incredibly big state of Alaska! To friends Mike Fuller of Columbus and Bob Beard of Martin, Tennessee (formerly of Columbus), we simply say, "We wish that we had been along!!"

Mike has recently completed a wondrous trip to Alaska, while Bob had a "trip of a lifetime" to Australia in May. On both of these trips you are invited to come along as we enjoy the fruits of their nature searches in this all too brief summary in our newsletter. So, get out your field guide and just imagine, and enjoy both Australia and Alaska! Come on!!!

Mike's summer trip to Alaska included about 30% of his time being spent on pelagic studies, about 60% in coastal waters and coast roads, and about 10% inland. (Remember that pelagic relates to deep ocean waters.) This editor had told Mike on many occasions that Alaska was GREAT! Listen to Mike's response, many years later...."Everything you ever said about Alaska was simply inadequate. You had me set up for AWESOME...but what I got was heaven!!!" Among the dozens of birds and other creatures that Mike got to study and enjoy were Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Wheatear, Barrow's Goldeneye, Fork-tailed Storm Petrel, Northern Fulmar, Pacific Loon, Red-throated Loon, Gyr Falcon, Parasitic Jaeger, Sooty Shearwater, Red-necked Phalarope, Ancient Murrelet, Cassin's Auklet, Horned Puffin, Kittlitz's Murrelet, Thick-billed Murre, Aleutian Tern, Black-footed Albatross, and many more wonders of nature! Mike said that his favorite bird of the trip was the Red-necked Phalarope. He mentioned that two Black-footed Albatrosses followed the boat for two days! Mike has observed 571 species of birds in North America. "Ships, helicopters, and boats give you lifers, but they sho be spensive!", says Mike. Next summer Mike plans to return to Alaska to fish for Grayling, Rainbow Trout, and Salmon. He won't just go to AWESOME, but HEAVEN!!!

Bob's trip to Australia included 2½ weeks spent there with the National Guard Shooting Team. At the Currumbin Sanctuary, about 100 km south of Brisbane, Bob was surrounded by spectacular birds of the Lori-keet family, mostly Rainbow Lorikeets. Along with plenty of Kangaroos, Bob got to see some of Australia's beautiful coastal raptors known as Brahminy Kites. He also enjoyed good views of White-breasted Sea Eagles, Royal Spoonbills, Australian Wood Ducks (actually in the goose family, according to Bob), Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Straw-necked Ibises, White Ibises (probably different from ours), White-faced Herons, White-necked Herons, Nankeen Kestrels, Darters (like our Anhingas), Black Swans, Pale-headed Rosellas, and other wonders of the incredible world of Australia!

A Whip-Poor-Will nest was found on Bob's farm in Tennessee in the spring. Actually the "nest" was one egg on some dead leaves. Bob watched three Turkey gobblers as they paraded around for about two hours one morning. He said that he has seen lots of turkeys this spring! He also found a Screech Owl nesting in one of his Wood Duck boxes. (Shades of Florence Lynn's beautiful Lynn Haven!) A house cat killed his Blue-bird female after she had layed four eggs. Either the hot sun "hatched" one of the four eggs, or the male sat of it, according to Bob. The baby fledged in early summer, just after Bob returned from "Down Under."

Both Mike and Bob had fantastic trips. Next time you see an Anhinga, think of the Darters of Australia! When you see the Kestrels on local power lines this fall, remember the Gyr Falcons that are being observed in "heaven", and other places!

Speaking of "other areas" and "other birds", Mike once hit a Groove-billed Ani with his automobile in the Lower Rio Grange of Texas. He, Bill Matheny, and the editor discussed freezing it, and bringing it to Florence's feeders, and leaving it as a "fresh specimen" for her to find. The threesome decided that Florence would have them arrested!

In May and June a pair of Goldfinches frequented the yard of Jim Shirah on 47th Street. He knew that they were nesting in the area, but had a difficult time locating their nest. Goldfinches were in the editor's yard on June 21. Others have been sighted in and around Columbus this summer. It is always interesting to see a species at the extreme southern edge of its breeding range. Jim also has gotten a kick out of seeing lots of activity related to the White-breasted Nuthatches this summer. He says that they are still nesting in the southern end of Callaway Gardens, between the Country Store and Overlook. It is fun to hear.....Yank-Yank-Yank coming from their active feeding maneuvers. Watch for their antics in your area.

Red-White-Blue Day On July Fourth, the editor was sitting at his window watching a flag express itself. A Red-headed Woodpecker was beginning its morning forays to a hanging feeder that was filled with small oily sunflower seed. A House Finch and a Cardinal moved into the feeder area at about the same time. The old Red-head should have been named our National Bird! It looks black, but it is really Red, White, and very dark Blue! Imagine a Red, White, and Blue bird right in Columbus!

Enjoying the Delight of Lynn Haven by Jane Dillard Knight

Forty-odd years ago, Florence Lynn, newly widowed, set her jaw and resisted the urgings of worried friends to "move back into town." Today, with jaw still set and a twinkle in her eye, the First Lady of Birding maintains her 80-plus acres, Lynn Haven in rural Harris County, as a nature preserve for and with Columbus Audubon and Columbus College. Saturday, April 4th, 18 members of Audubon hiked the trails that wind through the woods and skirt pine ridges, hills, rock outcroppings, a small pond, hardwood bottom lands, and flowing creeks. The longest trail was tagged by PMTA's Neal Wickham eight years ago.

With the expert eye of Dorothy Potts, along with husband Bob, the group was able to spot the rarely seen Black-throated Green Warbler. Other exciting finds were a Screech Owl on its nest, two occupied Wood Duck boxes at the pond, one with 14 eggs, and a Yellow-throated Vireo. In all, 28 species were seen.

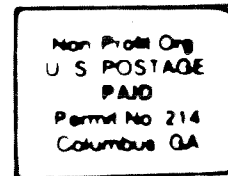
The beautiful springtime woods were splashed with the whites, pinks, and blues of dogwoods, rain lilies (atamasco), and wild azaleas, and common and bird foot violets. On a given spring day, observant hikers may find wax myrtle bushes fruiting, young ferns fiddle-heading up, blueberry bushes nodding ivory bells, deer and raccoon tracks, turkey scat, or hear the cries of Red-shouldered Hawks circling high over the lake, and catch snatches of birdsong from the trees.

Florence's vision and her hopes for Lynn Haven were in full focus on this lovely Saturday morn.

#####

# Observer

Columbus Audubon Society  
c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808



# Observer



September 1992  
Monthly Newsletter of The Columbus  
Audubon Society!!

President ..... Priscilla Phillips

OBSERVER Editor/Typist .... Sam Pate

Answering Service ..... 571-6014

For MAILING info to the OBSERVER:  
S.Pate, Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808

\*\*\*This month's meeting is very late.  
If you have any questions about the  
OCTOBER meeting, call Answering Serv-  
ice, or check the phone numbers of  
members on page 2. Call for info!

September Meeting Wild Turkeys! Our speaker will be Reggie Thackson.  
Reggie is District Biologist for Georgia. He has  
a BS and an MS from the University of Georgia. After spending six years  
in Oklahoma, Reggie has been back in Georgia for four years. Be there!...  
for a fascinating program on Turkeys. Read up on them before the meeting!

September 13th. 2:30 p.m. Columbus College Room 118 Turner Center

Don't forget that we will elect Officers, Board Members, Committee Chair-  
persons. The Nominating Committee has included a list on page 2 for your  
consideration. You may wish to nominate someone at the September Meeting.  
If you have any questions about the nominations, call Answering (571-6014).

#####

CAS needs a BOAT. The Lynn Haven Nature Center has a big need for a  
boat. It does not need to be over 14 feet long.  
One that will not tip is a necessity. If you have a boat that you would  
like to donate to Audubon, or know of someone who does, please let us know.  
If there is one available that is extremely reasonable in price, we may be  
interested in looking into that possibility, also. Call Answering-571-6014.  
Aluminum is the first choice. We don't need items such as a trailer.

#####

Field Trip-September-Rood Creek-Plans in Progress-Answering Serv.571-6014

#####

GOS Meeting The Georgia Ornithological Society's Annual Fall  
Meeting will be held on October 9-11. Charter House  
Inn, on Highway 40 just west of St. Marys, will be headquarters for the  
weekend. Rooms are \$39.96, single or double, if you mention the GOS. You  
need to make your own reservations for lodging. For registration and the  
banquet, \$8 and \$12.70 respectively, send your money to Ken Clark, 8247  
Lower Thomaston Road, Macon, Georgia 31210. (For further info, call Ken  
(912) 935-2178, or Helen Ogren (404) 475-7218.) Possibly 130 species  
may be encountered! Field trips to Okefenokee, marsh areas, beach sites,  
and Cumberland (This costs only the \$7.95 boat ride, first come, first  
served.) All field trips are free, except for Cumberland. The main pro-  
gram will be presented by BEAKS, the rehab facility near Jacksonville that  
has treated more than 27,000 birds, mostly shore and sea birds.

The Nominating Committee (Peggy Bone, Jane Knight, and Elizabeth Martin) offer this list of nominations for 1992-1993.

CAS Officers, Chairpersons, and Board Members \*\*\*

- President.....Mandy Barton .....
- Vice President.....Bert Talley .....
- Treasurer.....Holly Talley .....
- Recording Secretary.....Elizabeth Martin...
- Membership.....Thomas Vasas
- Conservation.....Priscilla Phillips  
Work.. Extension 247
- Program.....Charlotte Kennedy
- Publication.....Sam Pate
- Education and Publicity...Carole Rutland
- Hospitality.....Weenonah Jones
- Field Trip.....Carmen Toussignant



Board Members At-Large

Peggy Bone .....  
 Jane D. Knight ..  
 Florence Lynn ...  
 Ferinez Phelps ..  
 #####

\*\*\*At the September Meeting, if you have other nominations, please feel free to offer them. If you would like to have more info, refer to phone numbers on this page, or call Answering Service-571-6014.

Thank You (VERY MUCH) to Peggy, Jane, & Elizabeth, for their work in the Nominating Committee. Thanks!....to all of you who have accepted nominations to serve our CAS. Good Luck to all for 92-93!

#####

\*\*\* Hawaii! Laura E. Franklin had a wonderful trip to Hawaii recently! Two of her favorite birds in the islands were the Common Mynah and the Red-crested Cardinal. The mynah was introduced to Hawaii in 1865, from India, for insect control. The cardinal, a South American native, was brought to the islands in 1930. Did you know that Northern Cardinals, Cattle Egrets, Mourning Doves, N. Mockingbirds...are in Hawaii?

\*\*\* Martha B. White had a wonderful encounter with a Striped Skunk family in Tennessee in June. Listen to her account of the fun....

"We were having a cook-out at the Chimneys picnic area in the Great Smokies. Coming down the trail was a mother striped skunk with five tiny babies, following her in single file. They seemed to be actually attached to her, so closely were they in file. Their tiny bodies were almost overwhelmed by their big tails that were up in the air over them. Mother skunk paused at a rock pile, where the babies broke file and wandered over the rocks. Mother soon proceeded down the trail with only four babies following her! One had chosen to linger awhile around a tree, seemingly realizing in a few minutes that it was lost. Soon it disappeared. We cooked our hamburgers and waited for the return of the mother skunk. (Some of our party had followed her down the trail and watched her leave the other four at another rock pile.) Soon she appeared at the edge of a field, and was seen several times over the next few minutes as she apparently looked for the lost one. About an hour after we first saw her with the five babies, she came back up the trail and found her lost one. She and the baby were walking so close to one another that they seemed to be joined together!"

Martha's son got some of the action on his Camcorder, while other members of her camping party, from New Jersey, got several photos of the skunks.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park was visited by 8,000,000+ people last year! Visiting it is still an incredible experience. Early morning and late afternoon are times of few tourists and lots of wildlife!

John Neal got a good view of immature White Ibises in a field eight miles south of Phenix City, Alabama on 7-23-92. John asks that some of us save our ice cream containers for him for use in bird house construction. He uses the plastic types, such as Rich & Creamy. Half Gallon, etc. His number is 291-9319. Florence Lynn got a view of a Cooper's Hawk as it flew with its prey, a small bird. The hawk was seen on July 19, 1992.

#####

Black Bears! On July 20, a female Black Bear with two small cubs was observed by Harry Rainwater, Ralph Rainwater, Nan Pate, and the editor. The site was Cades Cove in Tennessee. (As many of you know, a big change in federal policy occurred about 25 years ago when two young women were killed in Glacier National Park, Montana, by separate Grizzlies, many miles apart on the same night. Read Night of the Grizzlies, by Jack Olsen, published by Signet Books, if you are interested in what may happen in rare cases in bear country. Both state and federal rangers now protect campers and other tourists from most bear encounters by making it illegal to feed, bother, or otherwise keep bears from being "natural and wild.") It was exciting to see truly wild bears this summer. All of the southeastern states have small black bear populations. They are a touch of wildness!

Martha B. White offers a side of the bear story that is an example of what is now missed by many campers who abide by the laws, but have fewer bear sightings because of campers who don't go by the rules. She told the editor recently that "Many times we have seen a black bear mother with cubs in our camp in The Smokies. Once we saw her with three babies with her. You seldom see them anymore because the National Park Service traps them and hauls them into the back country. It takes something away from the experience. I have camped in bear country for years and must say that I have never felt threatened by the bears. I suppose that people have caused problems by not abiding by warnings to leave the bears alone. Bears have walked through my campsite many times, and at very close range, without any problems at all. We always had all food put away by night, and really enjoyed seeing the bears. Gone are the days."

#####

Bluebird Information Free! How to build, locate, and maintain a bluebird nest box, or a whole trail of them! Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope (business size) to Lisa Paige, Bluebird Association of Maine, RFD 4, Box 7600, Gardiner, Maine 04345. Plan ahead!

"The Basics of Bird Houses" and "Feeding Birds in Maine" are two free fact sheets that may be obtained by writing Cooperative Extension Service, 103 Nutting Hall, University of Maine, Orono, Maine 04469. While the Maine bird-feeding tells about feeding birds up there in both summer and winter, it will be fun to compare their ideas with southern ones. Although this service does not require a self-addressed envelope, you may wish to include one as a Thank You to the Extension Service. The bird house fact sheet includes wood duck and other cavity nesting bird info. This stuff is for the birds! The State of Maine has many wonderful programs for aiding songbirds.

#####

Carolina Wrens were hatching on August 10 through 12, 1992, down at Bob Grier's place near Seale, Alabama. Bob was watching one more egg to see if all four would hatch. The eggs were laid from July 26 through July 29. In the interim, Bob had a great flight to an Air Show in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He is hoping for "great flights" from the clutch of wrens!

#####

\*\*\* First Eared Trogon nest in U.S.! October 1991-Ramsey Canyon-Arizona!!!  
At Press Time-Purple Martins still over S.Pate's yard-Columbus-8-16-92!

Tip for Hummingbird Feeder from Florence! If you are having problems with yellowjackets and/or bees, try this. Hang a small, shallow container nearby. Fill it with sugar water. Although this is not a 1000% cure, it should help a lot.

#####

Bob Grier just called (8-13-92) to say that his last (fourth) Carolina Wren had hatched. It is late, hot, and wet for wrens to still be having babies. Bob also reported a good look at an Armadillo on August 6, near Macon, Georgia. (Are Armadillos north of Harris County? Let us know!)

#####

Jim Shirah sent us a lot of info on butterfly hibernation boxes, bat houses, and martin houses. Some of the information will be included in the October OBSERVER. Plan ahead for spring by getting info on flowers that attract butterflies to our area. Call 1-800-262-3151 for a free copy of "Flying Flowers". For super info on butterflies, write to Butterfly Conservation, Garden Clubs of Alabama, 402 Drayton Drive, Selma, Alabama 36701. Jim sent us some mighty healthy results of nesting around his place on 47th St., and in Cascade Hills. The names of successful nesters will be given, along with the number of young that fledged:

Brown Thrasher-4, Catbird-3, Mockingbird-8(2 broods), Red-bellied Woodpecker-4, Carolina Wren-5(2 broods), Chickadee-4, Titmouse-4, House Finch-4(and heaven knows how many visited from my neighbor's house!), Robin-4, GC Flycatcher-nested,(but no young), Towhee-3, Bluejays-4-6, Goldfinches-at least 2 young, Mourning Dove-2, Cardinal-nested, but young unknown, and crows nested in area, but young unknown. Jim's area had great success!

#####

The October Meeting will be the Annual Picnic at Cooper Creek Park (Area 6). Saturday, October 3rd. Because of the very short time between the Sept. and the Oct. meetings, this is just an early reminder. More info will be in the October OBSERVER. Get ready for OCTOBER Show/Tell! For more information, CCAAALLL Answering-571-6014.

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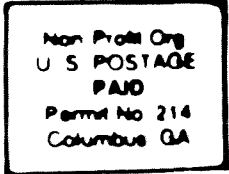
Don't take your Hummingbird Feeders down for awhile. More in Oct. OBSERVER! Florence Lynn reported 10 Wild Turkeys in her yard on 8-9-92! Don't forget the September Meeting...on Wild Turkeys! See you on September 13th.

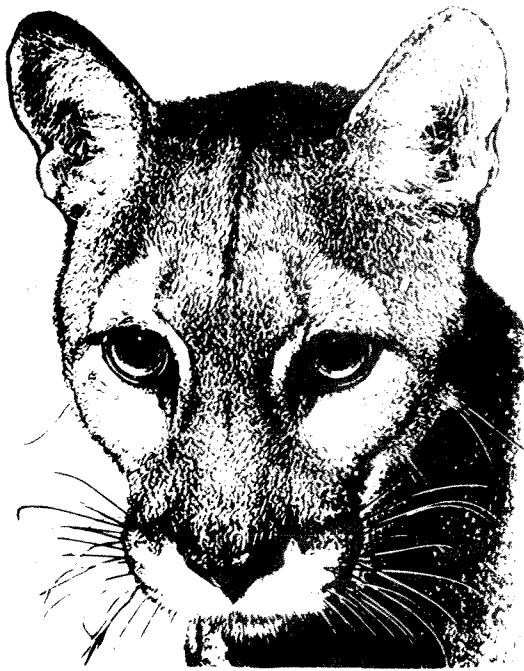
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\*\*\*\*\* Send info to the OBSERVER via S.Pate, Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808

# Observer

Columbus Audubon Society  
c/o Dr. Lyle Bundt  
33 Cannon Road  
Fortson, Georgia 31808





# Observer

Monthly Newsletter October 1992  
Columbus, Georgia, Audubon CAS

President ----- Mandy Barton

OBSERVER Editor ----- Sam Pate

Please mail information-the CAS  
OBSERVER info-to Sam Pate, via  
Box 157, Fortson, Georgia 31808

Education Programs Field Trips  
Conservation Hints Fellowship  
Picnics Wildlife Flora Fauna  
Migration Ecology Photography

\*\*\*Congratulations to all of our  
Officers and Board Members for the  
1992-1993 Year. Best wishes to  
Mandy Barton, our new CAS President!

October Meeting SATURDAY October 3, 1992! This is the Annual  
Picnic! We will begin meeting at about 11:30 a.m.  
Eating will begin at about Noon. Bring your favorite items of food to  
enjoy and share. AREA 6, all the way around the lake at Cooper Creek  
Park is our site. You may wish to share your summer trip experiences,  
check out the fall migrants, see a few fall wildflowers, or just enjoy  
a nice autumn day! Come and help us enjoy this annual fall experience!

Priscilla Phillips Thanks to our President for a job well done  
for the last many months of service to CAS!  
Don't forget that the phone numbers of all new Officers and Board Mem-  
bers for the coming year were included on page 2 of the September OBSERVER.  
Mandy's is 323-2408. Remember that our Answering Service is 571-6014.

The Wild Turkey Program made a big hit with members on 9-13-92. Reggie  
Thackson explained all sorts of unique things  
about these special birds. Bert Talley and Florence Lynn both had long  
conversations with the editor after the program. Bert and Florence were  
excited about the program, and reminded the editor just how much he had  
missed! THANKS to Reggie for presenting our group with such a nice program.

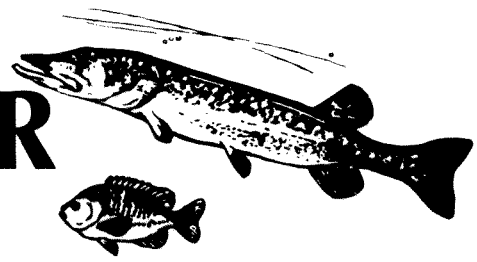
Field Trips Check with the Answering Service (571-6014) for  
info on fall outings. Very soon, Eufaula NWR will  
be an awesome place to visit for fall sightings. Check your back yard!

Migration Sounds! Every night you can hear migrating birds, sometimes  
dozens in just five minutes! Evening and morning,  
just before sunrise, are both good times to listen. The moon should be in  
position one more time before migration is over for something very unique!  
When the moon is low in the sky, aim your telescope toward it, focus, and  
watch carefully. If the birds are moving through in nocturnal migration,  
you are in for a treat! Look very closely, and be patient. Think south-  
bound! Thousands and thousands of birds move over this area **this month!**

Bert Talley reported seeing a number of Common Nighthawks during Labor Day  
week-end. Several folks reported seeing hordes of Nighthawks  
that week-end! On 9-5, we counted 150+ at just three billboards along the  
stretch near Hamilton Road Hardware. "Goatsuckers" are fun to observe!

# THE RIVERKEEPER

## WHY DO WE NEED ONE?



Historians familiar with the history of the City of Columbus have observed that "The Chattahoochee River was Columbus' reason for being."

Columbus' location at the intersection of the fall line and Georgia's longest river gives it a natural resource of unparalleled value and importance.

This resource resulted in the growth and economic prosperity enjoyed by this former Indian territory.

In addition to the economic value, the aesthetic value of the river has long been recognized.

What is true for Columbus is true for all communities along this river.

While most agree that the river is one of our most important assets, few have been willing to admit that the river is sick. The byproducts of economic progress, including pesticides, chemicals, urban runoff and

other pollutants have poisoned the river.

The increased water demands associated with population growth in the river basin, and more significantly upstream in the Atlanta area, have created extreme fatigue for a river which has limited capacity.

This once pristine natural resource is dying of neglect.

The condition of the river, however, is not yet terminal. It can be treated. Treatment must be an organized broad-based community commitment. With such commitment, the future of our river could be assured. Without it, the river will still be there, but wasting away from within, eventually to die.

The Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Project arises from recognized need. It provides a framework from which this enormous community challenge can be addressed.

## WHAT IS IT?

The "riverkeeper" concept was first used in this country on the Hudson River in New York. The fishermen in that area, who were concerned about the deteriorating quality of the river, concluded that citizens must enforce our environmental laws already in place.

After establishing the Hudson Riverkeeper Fund, they hired a riverkeeper to be the eyes, ears, and independent voice of the public on matters concerning the Hudson River. The riverkeeper patrols the river, investigates reports of pollution and leads efforts to bring enforcement action against the responsible parties.

Government has been receptive to this program, recognizing that our fragile river ecosystems can best be protected by someone who devotes full time to those ecosystems.

- \$100 Organization Membership
- \$25 Family Membership
- \$50 Family Membership
- \$15 Senior/Student Membership

THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER  
P.O. BOX 1492  
COLUMBUS, GA 31902

Ground Dove

On August 24, the editor was walking his dogs in his yard. Faulkner, a big male Lab, suddenly pulled on his leash, hard! A Ground Dove flew up from some wildflowers! You just never know what is right in your own yard. Sometimes a good dog helps!

From September 13 through 21, migrants were passing through our area. A Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher here, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak there, female Common Yellowthroats sneaking through, and hordes of birds every night overhead! The next few days will be the best time to see and hear migrants for many months. Take advantage of the migration. Let us hear what you observe!

The Editorial reprinted below is from The New York Times, September 21, '92. It seems to be a reminder that nature and progress really can co-exist if humans use some degree of common sense. Politics really clobbers nature.

## Don't Blame the Owl

The northern spotted owl — once described by President Bush as "that little furry-feathery guy" — is not a particularly popular little guy among timber workers in the Pacific Northwest. Listed as an endangered species in 1990, the owl triggered a series of court cases that halted logging in millions of acres of old-growth forests.

Timber workers are furious. They also vote. Which is why Mr. Bush went to Washington State last week and pledged to mend the Endangered Species Act to give "greater consideration to jobs, families and communities." It is time, he declared, "to put people ahead of owls."

Reasonable people may disagree on whether the Endangered Species Act, one of the nation's toughest environmental laws, gives sufficient weight to the economic costs of preserving biodiversity. But to suggest to frightened loggers that changing the act and sacrificing the owl will save their jobs for very long is disingenuous.

The logging industry is undergoing such radical changes that further clear-cutting can only be a stopgap remedy. Mr. Bush correctly noted, for example, that many milling jobs are lost because raw logs are exported to Japan, not sent to local mills.

There are two other powerful forces he did not mention. One is a major shift in investment capital to the South by the big timber companies. The other is automation. In short, business decisions and market forces have done far more to undermine the workers than the owl.

Blaming the owl trivializes the environmental

stakes and diverts attention from the Administration's failures. The issue is not just the owl but the owl's habitat — magnificent old-growth forests that environmentalists wish to save for future generations and loggers wish to cut for today's generation.

Yet the Administration has done virtually nothing to devise a sensible protection plan for the owl, as mandated by the act. Nor has it proposed measures to retrain displaced workers or help distressed communities. With a concerted effort, the Administration might conceivably save most of the forest and more than a few jobs. But nobody, including Congress, seems to have the stomach for such a task in a political year.

The old-growth forests could disappear completely in 15 years if cutting resumed at pre-1990 levels. What would happen to the loggers-then? And what would happen to tourism and recreation — industries that can create *sustainable* jobs as long as the forests last?

These questions require a political perspective that extends beyond Election Day. To his credit, Governor Clinton has talked, albeit vaguely, about a government-business partnership to reconcile environmental and economic needs. For Mr. Bush, who campaigned in the Pacific Northwest four years ago as the next "environment President," the answer is much simpler: get on with the cutting.

That approach will sacrifice not just the "little furry-feathery guy" but an extraordinary environmental resource with its own job potential.



Thank  
You!



A Great-horned Owl sounded off across the street from the editor's house in the evening hours of September 18. It was the first "sounds of autumn" from old Bubo virginianus. At dusk on September 19, a Great-horned Owl flew down the street in the same area as the editor and Nan watched. It was sort of an omen of things to come that evening. Two hours later there was another "call", this time a telephone kind. A fascinating call from Wes Biggs!

Wes called from Orlando to talk about all sorts of interesting things!

In the sprng of 1991, as you may remember from another OBSERVER a few months ago, Wes was shot with an AK47 Assault Weapon as he recorded notes in the Lake City, Florida area. He was working on a huge assignment that had taken years to partially complete. He was compiling a vast amount of information on Florida's birds. On the fateful night he had stopped along the highway to put down a few observations concerning owls and other night sounds. A man walked up to his vehicle, tapped the end of a large weapon against his window, and smiled. He then fired at point blank range. After sixteen months of rehab, surgery, and good luck, Wes is back to about as normal as one could expect to be, considering that he was shot with a gun that normally kills if the victim is hit anywhere on the body. Wes gave the editor a summary that would make an awesome article for Readers Digest! One just never knows where the kooks are! The spent cartridge that was found at the scene matched with several that were found at the site of an attempted drug exchange that went sour just twenty minutes before Wes was shot. He probably looked like an undercover agent.....??

Wes now runs trips to Dry Tortugas, off Key West, in the spring. In an upcoming OBSERVER we will include some dates, and other info, about the Dry Tortugas Trips. Fort Jefferson and the surrounding areas are fascinating areas of interest to nature and history buffs. All sorts of avian and marine life!

#####

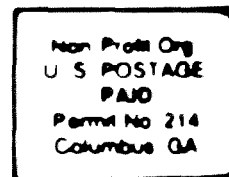
The Chattahoochee Riverkeeper info included in this OBSERVER is for your information. It is not a "dun" for money from you. However, if you would like more info about .....the project, drop a note to Box 1492 and offer your help. The "Riverkeeper" will be chosen very soon. Remember that the person will be involved in a full-time position. This is a non-profit organization that is set up to make the Chattahoochee River and surrounding habitats healthier, for us, and for generations to come. Read the article in the recent Smithsonian magazine to see why "Keepers" are catching on fast across the country. Ours will be the 10th of the Baykeeper/Riverkeeper projects in the United States! Smithsonian has a nice write-up about the San Francisco BayKeeper. Read it!

#####

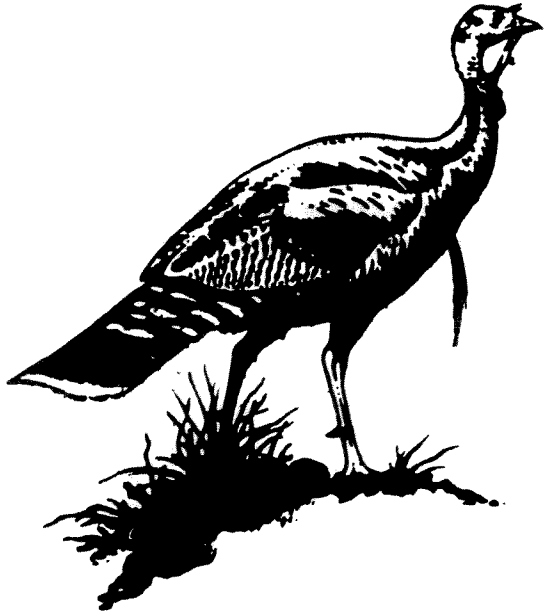
OBSERVER! Mail Info to: Sam Pate, Box 157, Fortson, Georgia 31808

# Observer

Columbus Audubon Society  
Mandy Barton, President  
1430 32nd Street  
Columbus, Georgia 31904



# Observer



November 1992  
Columbus Georgia Audubon Society!!!  
President ----- Mandy Barton

OBSERVER Editor ----- Sam Pate

Mailing INFO to OBSERVER:  
S.Pate Box 157, Fortson, GA  
31808

Field Trips and Programs coming up!

Send us your ideas, sightings, and  
your experiences! Send 'em on in!!

Education Research Fun Trips  
Scholarships Wildlife Flowers  
Conservation Programs Migration  
Biomes Ecosystems Environment

Annex! See pg. 3  
Sunday Nov.1st!  
November Program

Paul Bradshaw will present our program! Columbus  
College - Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center 11-1-92

Paul's program will deal with all sorts of fascinating things about the  
history of the Rood Indian Mounds and surrounding areas. Paul is asso-  
ciated with Florence Marina State Park. Come and bring somebody along!  
2:30 p.m. \*\*\*\*\* Audubon Answering Service - 571-6014 11-1-92

November Field Trip November 21, 1992! Saturday The Georgia side  
of Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge will be our  
destination. Dr. Bill Birkhead will be the trip leader. Meet at E.B.  
Turner Center at Columbus College at 8 a.m. for car-pooling to the site.  
November is a great time to visit the Georgia side! Wintering popula-  
tions of all sorts of things! Bring some liquids, snacks, comfortable  
shoes and clothing. The walking is all on dikes and roadways. You do  
not have to get your feet muddy or wet. This is a great time and place!

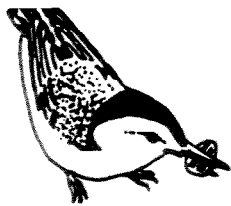
Mandy Barton reports that things were exciting for the Thursday Trail-  
blazers up at Lynn Haven Nature Center on October 8th. A  
pair of American Kestrels ("Sparrow Hawks") are setting up hunting grounds  
for the winter in the powerline right-of-way. The biggest find, however,  
was the group of ten Wood Ducks in the pond. Another discovery involved  
two clumps of Indian Pipe, a strange plant that is sometimes very hard to  
find. It is a non-green type that has a relationship with, nourishment-  
wise, with a special type of fungus. Always something different at HAVEN!

"Italy and the Age of Discovery"

This is the very special program  
that is running through December 4,

at the Patterson Planetarium. Call 569-2549 for more information! Take  
some friends/neighbors to this fascinating program (FREE) at our very edu-  
cational PLANETARIUM. (If you have not been to "Patterson" you have missed  
something great! Just tilt back in your seat and marvel at the stars!)

Mandy got the first reported sighting of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at  
Lynn Haven on 10-15-92. Florence Lynn got a good view of the Brown Cree-  
per at the Annual Picnic on 10-3-92. (L.A. Wells' Records had a sighting  
on 10-3-65, by, guess who?.....Florence Lynn!) S.Pate heard his first  
Yellow-rumped Warblers on 10-11-92. Y-r Warblers were previously called  
Myrtles. By Columbus Day, 10-12-92, the editor noticed that the mass of  
Swifts around his house had disappeared....Gone to Brazil!!!



# FeederWatch News



2

Autumn 1992



CORNELL LABORATORY of ORNITHOLOGY/LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY



## **Bird Feeding: Boon or Bane?**

***Does the extra food we provide help some species to increase in numbers--at the expense of others?***

Are people who feed birds unwittingly causing the decline of migratory bird populations? According to Project FeederWatch, a winter bird feeding survey sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the answer seems to be no.

Concern for migratory birds has been mounting in recent years. Surveys suggest that many populations have declined seriously over the past decade. In his recent book, *Where Have All the Birds Gone?*, ornithologist John Terborgh discusses the possible causes.

He mentions deforestation on the neotropical wintering grounds and fragmentation of breeding habitat in North America, which most biologists agree are the main problems. But he suggests that bird feeding may be a worry as well. He wonders whether feeders may be causing increases in birds such as Brown-headed Cowbirds, which are nest parasites, or Blue Jays, which are notable nest robbers. If so, he reasons, then bird feeding may be inadvertently contributing to the declines of many forest-dwelling species, such as warblers and vireos, that never even visit feeders.

To examine this possibility, Cornell ornithologist Erica H. Dunn turned to information from Project FeederWatch as well as data from the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), a continentwide survey of bird numbers in spring. She used the FeederWatch

data to determine which feeder species are most widespread in North America, and the BBS data to learn which of them had been increasing and which had been decreasing during the past 25 years.

Surprisingly, she discovered that 70 percent of the most widespread feeder birds showed significantly declining populations. These included not only the nest-robbing Blue Jay, but also nest-site competitors such as the European Starling and House Sparrow, as well as several other species often considered "pests." The Brown-headed Cowbird also declined, although not as much as many others. These findings don't mean these species are not hurting migratory birds through their predatory or parasitizing actions, but it does suggest that feeding them is not increasing their populations.

These observations raise another question--is bird feeding bad for bird populations? Are species such as the Blue Jay being hurt by the practice?

Probably not. Most of the declining feeder species belong to groups that are declining as a whole--even though some species in those groups don't visit feeders. These include mimids (thrashers and mockingbirds), towhees, certain blackbirds, and sparrows--birds that nest primarily in grassland or shrub habitats, which are also declining.

Bird feeding may harm some species, however. One study in England showed that regular feeding induced some Blue Tits and Great Tits to nest in suburban areas rather than their natural habitat, deciduous woodland. The suburban nesters showed very poor reproductive success because natural foods, especially the insects needed to feed nestlings, were in short supply. We

don't know whether Blue Jays are responding to feeding by nesting in suburbia, only to suffer insupportable predation by cats and raccoons. We do know that America Robins, which often nest in suburbia, are showing population *increases* nationwide.

Conclusive evidence for the effects of bird feeding on bird populations awaits more detailed studies of each species. Meanwhile, bird feeding does not seem to cause increases in most of the species that frequent feeders, including "pest" species.

If you feed birds in your backyard and you'd like to contribute to an international effort to monitor bird populations, now is the time to sign up for the 1992-93 FeederWatch season. Participants receive a complete instruction packet, data forms, and a subscription to *FeederWatch News*, a biannual newsletter that covers not only FeederWatch results but bird feeding tips, notes on feeder bird behavior, and more. For information on how to join, write to: Project FeederWatch, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850, or call (607) 254-2414.



*Blue Jays--notorious nest robbers--are actually declining*

On 10-1-92, a BIG Tom Turkey came in late afternoon to feed at the stump feeder at Lynn Haven. A BIG Buck and a smaller Doe were close behind. Old TOM puffed up until he looked twice his normal size, and then spread his wings. Both deer backed off at first, and then finally fed alongside the huge turkey! They seemed to have called a truce. (Georgia has only three vertebrate animals that are designated as "Big Game" animals. Florence was watching two of them as they fed together. The other is the old Ursus americanus, alias Black Bear, which lives in small numbers in both north and south Georgia. Turkey, Deer, and Bear.....the BIG THREE.)

\*\*\* Don't forget that the meeting on November 1st. will be held in the Annex at Columbus College. It is on the north end of the same lot where we park for the meetings when they are in the Turner Center.

The Annual Picnic met with some very rainy weather on 10-3-92. In spite of the inclement weather, some "hard core" naturalists braved the rain, and found 25 species of Aves! Among the birds were Pine Warblers, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Brown Creeper (spotted from beneath the shelter), and a variety of other species. A good crowd, even on a misty day!

"It makes you forget your ills, bills, and pills," says Helen Kittinger of Birmingham. (Dorothy Lindsay sent us Helen's interesting article from the Birmingham News.) Some reminders from the article may be of use to you as you get set for the winter, and the spring! Dripping water is special for the birds, especially during migration, as an attractor. Birdbaths, especially having more than one around the property, allow a source of H<sub>2</sub>O for baths and drinking. (Don't forget to clean them out all along.) Some Feeders help attract birds, especially in winter. Put suet out when the weather gets cold. Black oil and striped sunflower seeds, along with some other types thrown in for variety, will attract many species of "crackers". Plan ahead for the spring, by thinking of species of plants that will enhance your yard's "ability" to provide food, shelter, and water. If you would like to enhance your natural attractants for Hummingbirds in spring, consider Red Salvia, Cardinal Flower, Jewelweed, and Touch-Me-Nots. Other Angiosperms (flowering plants) that work well include Impatiens, Hibiscus, Coral Honeysuckle, and Trumpet Creeper. Bob and Martha Sargent of Trussville, Alabama, noted Hummingbird experts, suggest using one part sugar to four parts water for an excellent hummingbird feeder solution. They say to not add food coloring, but to place bright red flowers close to attract the hummers to the feeders. Plan soon for "added attractions" in the yard!

History in Your Yard! In early October a student brought in a Swainson's Thrush that had hit a window at Brookstone. Did you know that beautiful migrant was named for the English naturalist, William Swainson? A Cooper's Hawk crossed Whitesville Road a few days ago. Did you know that the "Cooper's" is named for William C. Cooper, founder of New York City's Lyceum of Natural History? This winter a few gulls called Bonaparte's will spend time along the Chattahoochee River. These tern-like gulls were named for Napoleon's nephew, who was a renowned ornithologist in Philadelphia last century. Bonaparte's Gull has a scientific name, Larus philadelphia, that is a reminder of the Philadelphia connection. Philadelphia is also the species for the beautiful Chestnut-sided Warbler. (You may find this warbler breeding near the top of Mount LeConte in the Smokies next summer!) If you are fascinated by the "history" in your yard, try looking in the library for the Chestnut-sided connection!

#####

- Hermit Thrush      Fox Sparrow    Y-b Sapsucker    Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Junco            Siskin            Waxwing            Evening Grosbeak    Water Pipit    and ????????

Don't forget to look....in your neighborhood this winter!

GOS Pelagic Trip to the Gulf Stream and beyond the Snapper Banks!

Cost is 150 greenbacks. This is a fascinating trip if you are interested in trying to see some really odd birds of the open ocean, just off the Georgia coast. Call Bill Blakeslee at 1-404-881-6570 (Atlanta area) for info and/or reservations. The trip is November 8, 1992. Sea Turtles, sharks, and who knows what!

#####

Karen Plant is the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper! After months of applications and interviews, and some excellent candidates, the Riverkeeper Board of Directors selected and approved Karen as the "Keeper". She is the 10th hired, full-time Baykeeper or Riverkeeper in the United States. Initially watching over a stretch of the river from the West Point Dam to the Fort Gaines Dam, Karen will be involved in all sorts of activities. Education, water sampling, public relations, patrolling, and anything else that happens "out there". (The Chattahoochee Riverkeeper project is a tax-exempt organization that is totally funded by donations from groups and individuals. It is not controlled by government rules or funding.) We wish Karen the very best in her new job. She'll be our program soon!

#####

Dr. Lincoln Brower, the Monarch Butterfly authority at the University of Florida, says that Monarchs are way down in population in 1992. Down from record numbers last year, they dropped to about 10 percent of the 1991 eastern U.S. population this year. Monarchs in some areas of the U.S. are in better shape. However, Dr. Brower and other entomologists are extremely concerned that something is very wrong in the U.S. and/or Mexico, in Monarch habitats. It may be the "canary in the coal mine" warning.

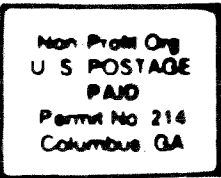
#####

When the Bluejays began the World Series with the Braves recently, some high school students got a lot of mileage out of the comparisons between these two animals. Did you know that the Bluejay is the 4th largest member of Corvidae in Georgia/Alabama? The Raven, Common Crow, and Fish Crow are all larger members of that Family of birds. Georgia's Common Raven, rare around Brasstown Bald, is the largest member of the big Order Passeriformes in the U.S. In most field guides, all birds listed after the Piciformes, woodpeckers, are in the Order Passeriformes. Classification is not hard, and it is fun and educational! The Bluejay is in Kingdom Animalia, Phylum Chordata, Subphylum Vertebrata, Class Aves, Order Passeriformes, Family Corvidae, Genus Cyanocitta, and Species cristata. Braves, or Homo sapiens, share the top three groups with Bluejays.

#####

# Observer

Columbus Audubon Society  
c/o Mandy Barton  
1430 32nd Street  
Columbus, Georgia 31904



# Observer

December 1992

Columbus Georgia Audubon Society

President---Mandy Barton ...

Editor-----Sam Pate...

Mail info to OBSERVER via:

S.Pate, Box 157, Fortson, GA 31808

Columbus Audubon is involved in such projects as Recycling, Field Trips, Educational Programs, Wildlife Surveys, and other worthwhile Natural History pursuits. Thanks to all of you who do good things for furthering the sane use of our environment.



## December Program

Our speaker and program presenter will be a man of many interests, Randy Marshall. Randy hiked the Appalachian Trail in 1982. During the 162 days along the trail he experienced many wondrous things. He will share his trail experiences with us in an exciting way. Randy is a graduate of Georgia Tech, with four years of work with the Corps of Engineers in his background. He is the West Georgia Red Cross Chairman. Now working as a Communications Consultant, Randy brings to our meeting a world of things to share.

Date: Sunday, December 6 Time: 2:30 p.m. Place: Turner Center Annex  
Columbus College

## December Field Trip

Join several of our members on a hike along a portion of the famous Pine Mountain Trail! See details on page 4! Enjoy the plants and animals and geology and air!

## Christmas Bird Surveys

Remember that the three area Bird Counts are fun and important to science! Help us! On December 19, you have a choice. Both the Eufaula and Callaway CBCs will have to be run on that day. Contact Sam if you would like to help on the Eufaula Count, or LuAnn, via the Callaway Gardens Education Dept., if you can help on the Callaway Count. The Columbus Count will be 12-26!

## PIT-o-hooey!

That is how you pronounce the Hooded Pitoohui's name. A poisonous bird? It made the top of the Front Page of The New York Times on October 30, 1992. Not only does this New Guinea bird's feathers repel all sorts of predators, it may open up a whole new area of study! Do some of our brightly colored birds have something in their feathers that repels some forms of life? Reacting to the remarkable discovery of poisonous bird feathers, Dr. Bruce Beehler, of Wildlife Conservation International, said, "It blew our socks off!" Are other birds chemically protected? Just maybe.....

## Red Phalarope!

On November 8, 1992, an unusual sighting of a bird of the open ocean was reported near Tusculumbia, Ala. It is extremely rare to see this bird inland in our part of the U.S. A Red Phalarope was found in Georgia several years ago. After it died of natural causes, it was given to Auburn University by the late L.A. Wells. The Wilson's Phalarope is also possible to encounter in migration in our area. If you see something very unusual, try to photograph it!

Late Info to Editor: Audubon Councils of Ga., Ala., Fla., Tenn., and n. Fla. Water Resources Week-end at Eufaula NWR and Lake Point Lodge. Call Answering Service or Mandy for info. Dec.4-5-6. Just \$10 fee. Banquet-\$12.



# NEWS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge  
Route 2 Box 97-B  
Eufaula, AL 36027-9294  
(205) 687-4065

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Linda L. Watters, Refuge Manager

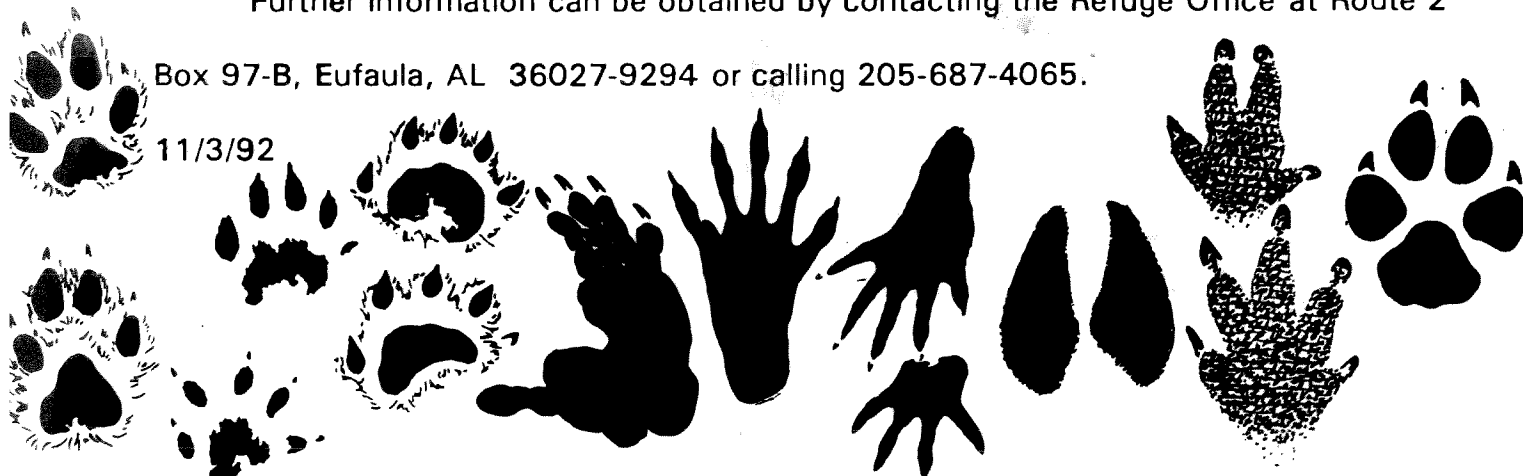
## REFUGE SUMMER TOUR ROUTE/FISHING SEASON CLOSED

Winter migration for thousands of waterfowl will soon begin with ducks heading south for warmer climates. Many of these waterfowl will rest and feed at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge. To prevent disturbance to these birds, Refuge Manager Linda Watters announced, "The Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge will shift from our summer tour route to the winter tour route. Gates to the Uplands and Houston Units were closed November 2nd and will remain closed until March 1st. No public entry (by foot or vehicle) is permitted in these areas in order to provide sanctuary and freedom from human disturbance for wintering birds."

Manager Watters added, "While fishing in the refuge portion of Lake Eufaula continues year-round, no bank fishing is allowed from the Bradley, Houston, Kennedy or Molnar Units from November 2nd until March 1st."

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Refuge Office at Route 2 Box 97-B, Eufaula, AL 36027-9294 or calling 205-687-4065.

11/3/92



Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge was visited by a group of teachers from Brookstone School on November 2nd. The trip was led by Sam Pate, and was used for teacher "credit units" by the group. Along with teacher course work, that is kept up-to-date for each five-year period, conventions, field trips, and other hands-on experiences are a must for all area teachers. Just ways to keep in touch!

A White Pelican was the most unusual sighting of the day! Another "big" sighting involved 5 Snow Geese, a regular Snow, and four Blue Forms. Several Harriers, alias Marsh Hawks, were observed at close range as they hunted across the fields. Terns, apparently all Forster's, were abundant. Small numbers of Ring-billed Gulls, as opposed to the huge numbers that will be in the area in colder weather, were studied as they acted as the area scavengers. Two Ospreys were seen as they passed directly overhead, probably hanging around until the weather drives them farther south for the winter. As a Turkey Vulture passed over, we were reminded of Buzzard, the name they are called because of an "across the Atlantic" name shift. Buzzards are actually European hawks, never seen in North America. We just borrowed the name many years ago. The same is true of "Polecat", a name we associate with our Striped Skunk and Spotted Skunk, and the Hooded and Hog-nosed Skunks of the American southwest. So, the next time you smell a polecat, or see a buzzard, think back to the early naturalists in Philadelphia and New York who helped to transfer the names over the ocean.

The tracks on page 2 are identified as follows: From left to right, they are Gray Fox, Mink, Otter, Opossum(back foot,with no big-toe nail), Raccoon, Muskrat, Deer, Armadillo and Coyote. If you got them all correct, you get the Lewis and Clark Award! If you got 7 or 8 of them, you get the William Bartram Trophy. If you got 5 or 6, you are awarded the Nanook of the North Citation. If you got 4 or less, you get the Florence Lynn "YOU BETTER GET YOURSELF A BETTER FIELD GUIDE, AND STUDY IT!" Plaque!

#####  
Speaking of Armadillos! A DOR Armadillo was seen by Jim Shirah on October 25, 1992. The interesting thing about Jim's sighting is that the animal was found 14 miles north of West Point, in Troup County, Georgia. This is very likely near the extreme northern end of the range of this strange animal. Remember that old Dasypus novemcinctus, alias Nine-banded Armadillo, has identical quadruplets, developing from the same egg. Jim said that Crows and Vultures had used a lot of the mammal as food.

#####  
Sister Virginia Morris is moving out of the area. After this OBSERVER, we will honor her request to drop her from our mailing list. We appreciate her interesting sightings and enthusiasm that she shared with us, and our OBSERVER. She is a very good friend of nature, and we wish her well. Thank You, Sister Virginia, for all you do for nature, and for PEOPLE!

#####  
 1993 GOS Pelagic Trips If you would like to do something really different, try a pelagic trip, to the Snapper Banks, or the Gulf Stream! The Snapper Banks trip is set for February 7. Gulf Stream trips are coming up on May 23, August 22, and November 14. Cost is \$96 for the February trip, and \$150 for all the rest. Call Bill Blakeslee via (404) 881-6570 for more info. Gannets, Petrels, Kittiwakes, Shearwaters, and who-knows-what may be seen. Birds of the open ocean!

\*\*\* GOS Rare Bird Alert and Gos Hotline -- (404) 509-0204

December Field Trip                      On December 12 (Saturday), meet in the parking lot beside the Turner Center at Columbus College by 8 a.m. This exciting trip will take you via car-pooling to the Pine Mountain Trail. Mark McIntosh will lead the hike. The group will walk along a portion of a very special loop along the trail. It is easy walking, and will be at a casual pace for checking out the flora and fauna! Neal Wickham, the "Daddy" of the PMT, will be working on the Trail until February. A new loop is under construction. Work will alternate on Sat. mornings and Sunday afternoons each week-end. Contact Neal at Wickham's Outdoor World for more details. He needs you as a volunteer! Help him out!

Remember that the Callaway Christmas Count will take place just one week after our hike. If you see, or hear, something in the way of birds that might help on the Callaway survey, let LuAnn know at the Gardens Education Department. Any part of the Trail.....within 7½ miles of the intersection of Highway 27 and the railroad overpass, near the Gardens Entrance, falls within the Count Circle. You just never know what you'll see along the PMT!

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Cooper's Hawk!                      On Nov. 15, a few startled Starlings rocketed out of the Christmas Tree sales area at the intersection of Whitesville Road and U.S.27. As the editor looked up, and tried to remember what year the birds were introduced from England, something bigger shot out of the trees! It was a beautiful Cooper's Hawk, obviously larger than a Sharp-shinned Hawk, complete with rounded tail, and very powerful wingbeat. How can anybody ever say that they are "bored", when all about are the wonders of nature? (Eugene Schieffelin brought the European Starling to the United States in 1890. Sixty of the birds were released in New York's Central Park that year, with 40 more added in 1891.)

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Bobcat and Two Babies!...chasing a rabbit!                      Scott Barton got one of those "thrills of a lifetime!" over in Greene County, Georgia on Oct. 24! He watched as the beautiful cats tried to get some rabbit food. Another great sighting was a Bald Eagle. Mandy said that she got a good look at a Brown Creeper, too! (Mandy said that a Black-and-White Warbler and a Sharp-shinned Hawk were the best sightings at Thelma Dawson's, Oct.29/30.)

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\*\*\* Audubon Answering Service --- 571-6014                      Mandy's number is  
 \*\*\* Mail Info for OBSERVER to S.Pate, Box 157, Fortson, Georgia                      31808-0157

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