

# Wings Over Georgia

A Newsletter about Birds and Butterflies for the Members of  
The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.

Volume 1

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Issue 2

Thanks to those of you who emailed or called about the first issue of **Wings Over Georgia**. My computer skills are not the best, so you must excuse me if my presentation looks unprofessional at times. This newsletter has been one of the most enjoyable things I've done in garden club.

On August 29<sup>th</sup>, I had an experience that I have only had three other times in my 65 years. Just before eight o'clock that morning, I arrived at The State Botanical Garden of Georgia and parked in the shaded lot near the GCG Headquarters House. Just as I reached to open the door, I noticed a movement high in the trees. Much to my delight, it was a pileated woodpecker. I watched this magnificent bird for about 3 minutes before a car came down the street and it quickly flew away.

When I returned to Hartwell, I read that these birds occupy the same territory throughout their lives. You can bet that I'll be watching the next time I'm at Headquarters House.

**Suzanne**

Suzanne Wheeler

GCG Birds and Butterflies Chairman 2007 - 2009

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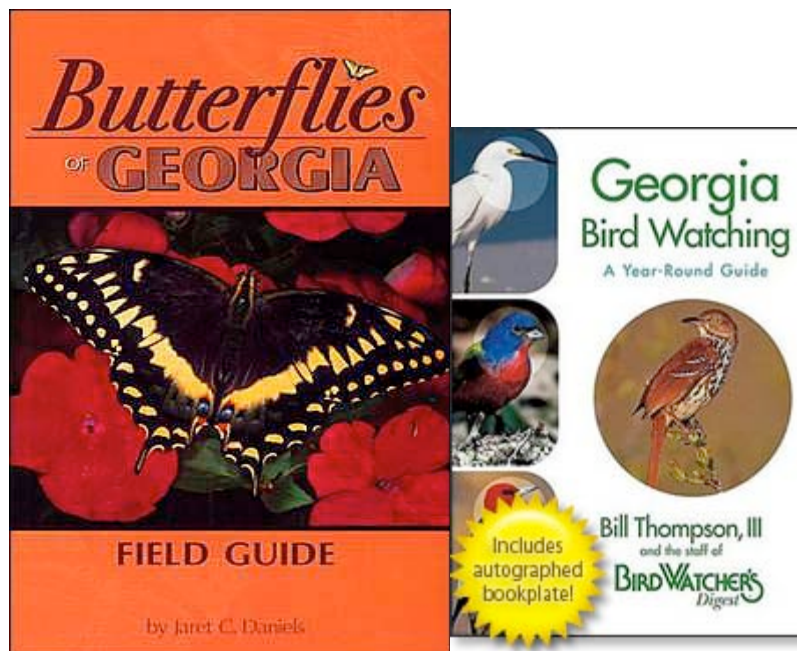
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**The Great Backyard Bird Count will be February 15-18, 2008.**

**Project Feeder Watch will be the winter of 2007 - 2008.**

**For more information on these two events, go to [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).**

*Check these out!*



If you are new to bird watching or butterfly watching in Georgia. These two books are the books for you. Actually, someone who has watched birds and butterflies in Georgia for years will find them helpful, too.

*Georgia's Bird Watching* is full of information about the many birds in Georgia. It has six sections - **Welcome to Bird Watching in Georgia** (Ecoregions, Bird Watching By Season, Georgia's Ten Must-see Birds,

Georgia's Ten Best Bird Watching Spots, Resources for Georgia Bird Watchers), **Getting Started in Bird Watching, Feeding and Housing, How to Use *Georgia Bird Watching*, 100 Most Commonly Encountered Birds in Georgia** , and **Resources** (Solutions for Common Feeding Problems, Food/Feeder Chart, A Glossary of Common Bird Terms, Frequently Asked Questions, How to Build a Simple Birdhouse, Bird-Friendly Plants For Your Yard, National Organizations for Bird Watchers).

I purchased my copy through the web site of *Bird Watchers Digest* - [www.birdwatchersdigest.com](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com). It is well worth the less-than-twenty-dollars price!

Last year, my daughter and I attended a *Monarchs Across Georgia* Workshop in Thomson. We were introduced to the *Butterflies of Georgia* book then. The butterflies in this book are arranged by predominant color. One page shows the butterfly with its wings extended and folded and gives a brief description. This pages also shows a picture of the larva. The next page tells more about the butterfly and shows on the little map of Georgia where in Georgia the butterfly is found. In addition, it also gives each host plant.

This book is available in book stores and on the internet. If you're like I am and live in a small town without a book store, you can find this book on the Barnes and Noble site - [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com).

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### **From The Atlanta Constitution - June 11, 2000**

When it comes to fossils, moths and butterflies get far less press than say, dinosaurs. The lack of attention is partly caused by a lack of specimens: Only about 700 moth and butterfly fossils have been known to exist.

Scientists are not sure whether the lack of fossils means that these insects were not abundant millions of years ago, or that they just do not preserve well.

A new discovery, however, indicates that poor preservation is the problem. In one fell swoop, a European scientist has more than tripled the know number of these fossils. The researcher, from the University of Gottingen in Germany reports in *Nature* the finding of some 1,700 moth specimens in 55-million-year-old sediments in Denmark.

More than 1,000 of the specimens are of one species, and they were often found close together. Since the area in which they were found was once part of the ancient North Sea, the finding indicates that the moths undertook mass migrations over the sea, as some species still do. And mass migration means there must have been masses of these insects around.

## HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BUTTERFLY?



Do you know the name of this elegant butterfly? This is a glass wing butterfly. Its range is throughout Central America into Mexico. You won't see it in your backyard. Thanks to Brenda Griner for forwarding me an email she received from Liz Sills, president of the Savannah Area Council.

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According to *Georgia Bird Watch*, this is one of the ten must-see birds in Georgia. It is a fairly large (35 inch) diving bird sometimes know as the snake bird because it sometimes swims with just its head above water like a snake. It is found at most wetlands south of the Fall Line. The left and right pictures show it drying its wings in the sun, which it must do after several dives as its feathers become water logged. The bottom picture shows it with a recent catch. Do you know its name? (The answer is on page 7.)



The Deep South Region chose the Northern Cardinal as its regional bird at the meeting held in Atlanta in March. Many of the Board members objected to the selection of a bird with “northern” in its name. Perhaps the following article will help to clarify any misgivings.



**Northern Cardinals  
by Larry McQueen**

Northern Cardinal  
(*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

The common and familiar Northern Cardinal is a bird whose range has expanded northward in the last 100 years. Originally a bird of the Southeast, the Northern Cardinal's range expanded north and northwest along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. The northern in its name denotes that it is a bird of the northern hemisphere.

Cardinals are noted for their loud, clear whistled songs, often sung from a high treetop song post. Females will counter sing, duetting with males - usually after the males have established territories and before nesting begins. Local variations and accents have been noted in cardinal songs.

Typical habitats are thickets and brushy areas, edges and clearings, riparian woodlands, parks, and residential areas. Here the nonmigratory cardinals feed on a variety of foods including seeds, leaf buds, flowers, berries, and fruit. Up to one-third of its summer diet can be insects. Its winter diet is 90 percent vegetable matter, especially large seeds. Winter flocks can be very large, up to 60 to 70 individuals in areas of abundance.

Northern Cardinals are a medium-sized songbird (approximately 8.75 inches in length) with short, rounded wings, a long tail, a heavy conical bill, and a crest. Males are nearly all brilliant red; brownish-gray-tinged scapular and back feathers give the upper parts a less colorful appearance. The coral red bill is surrounded by a mask of black that extends to a dark eye and includes the chin and throat. Legs and feet are dark red.

The female is soft grayish brown on the back with variable areas of red on the tail, crest, and wings. The underparts are a warm pinkish brown. Her coral red bill is also surrounded by darker but not black feathers, so her mask is not as distinct as the male's. Females are slightly smaller than males.

Juveniles are like females but more brown in color, with shorter crest and a blackish bill. They molt to adult plumage in fall.



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Which of Georgia's ten-must-see birds is featured on page 4 ~ the aninga. Easy places to see aningas include Harris Neck and Eufaula national wildlife refuges and the Altamaha Wildlife Management Area.

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Comma



Question Mark

If you look closely at the butterflies pictured above, you'll understand how they got their names. The Comma has a comma on its underside and the question mark has a question mark. The Eastern Comma(*Polygonia comma*) and the Question Mark(*Polygonia interrogationis*) are found in Georgia. The Eastern Comma host foods include nettle, elm, hops, and false nettle. Question Mark host foods are nettle, false nettle, Japanese hops, elms, and hackberry. Both butterflies have two broods a year. They are found in woods near rivers, wooded swamps, city parks, and other wooded situations.