

**SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS**

**BIRDS**

BIRDS:

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

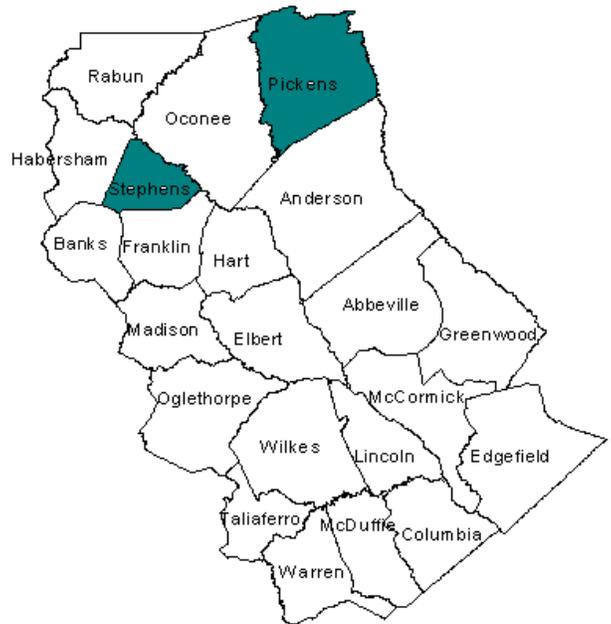


FEDERAL LIST:

GEORGIA Not Listed      SOUTH CAROLINA Not Listed

STATE LIST:

GEORGIA Rare      SOUTH CAROLINA Endangered



GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Peregrine is about the size of a crow; 1.5ft (0.5m) long with a 3.3ft (1m) wingspread. The Peregrine has a characteristic falcon shape which differs from other types of hawks. The wings are pointed and the tail is narrow. At rest the bird has a heavy shouldered tapering look. Adults are dark, slate gray above. The head is black with black mustache markings extending on the neck. The throat is white. The undersides are pale barred crosswise with black. Immature birds are dark brown on back, with a light underside with dark brown vertical streaks.

Peregrines are easily confused with other species. Peregrines do not soar but flap their wings continuously when in level flight. Marsh hawks also flap continuously but are larger and have a white rump patch. Peregrines are swift fliers. They will fly 10-20mi (16-32km) from the nest to search for prey. Birds are their favorite prey. They may accelerate to 200mph (320kph) when diving at prey. They club large birds with

their feet and follow them to earth to feed. Small birds are seized with the talons. There are perhaps 200 pairs in the Continental U.S. Peregrine prey is hunted over open habitat such as waterways, field and wetland areas (swamps and marshes). They possess great strength and agility and have been used since 2000 B.C. for the art of falconry. Average home ranges cover 20 mi<sup>2</sup> (52km<sup>2</sup>). Falcons generally reach sexual maturity at 3 years of age. Peregrines generally mate for life. Mating occurs in late March or early April. Incubation averages about 32 days for each egg, with a 2-day hatching interval between eggs in the clutch. Clutch size averages three. Young stay in the nest 6-7 weeks and become self-sufficient after several months.

In Georgia and South Carolina it is possible to see either the American or Arctic races. The American peregrine is larger, darker, and has more extensive black markings on the face than the Arctic peregrine.

**GENERAL HABITAT:** Preferred habitat and nesting sites are cliffs overlooking water. Slopes, river cutbanks, mounds, sand dunes, trees, flat bogs and plains are also nesting sites. Peregrines are a cosmopolitan species and do not occur in large numbers. They live where prey is very abundant and feed on pigeons in the city. Old records indicate that peregrines once nested near Caesar's Head and Table Rock, South Carolina. Now the peregrine is generally considered only a winter migrant in the state. More recent records reveal that peregrines have been sited in Atlanta, Georgia. Sightings in Columbia County, Georgia, have, unfortunately, never been confirmed. Actual sightings have been very few. Probable sightings occur when peregrines are in migration along the coast. Experimental hacking (reintroduction) programs have recently been conducted in the Table Rock area, increasing potential for observation of the species in northern Upper Savannah River Basin area.

Peregrines have declined due to use and buildup of DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides in their food chain. Contaminated peregrines have impaired calcium metabolism which causes thin-shelled eggs. Such eggs break easily and do not hatch. Falconers have removed many of these birds from the wild. Elimination of the Peregrines habitat has contributed to its decline. The great horned owl is its major predator.

[Return to contents](#)

BIRDS:

Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Picoides borealis*



FEDERAL LIST:

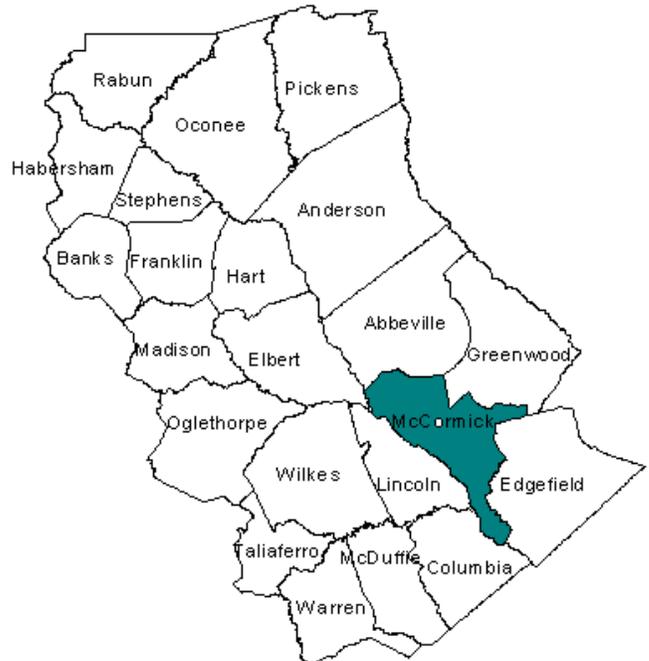
GEORGIA  
Endangered

SOUTH CAROLINA  
Endangered

STATE LIST:

GEORGIA  
Endangered

SOUTH CAROLINA  
Endangered



(McCormick record historic)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: A non-migratory species similar in appearance to the hairy woodpecker, except that the top of the head is black, the cheeks conspicuously white, and the sides spotted with black. Birds are gregarious except during the breeding season. Males have an inconspicuous red streak above each ear. The average length is 7in (18cm). The nest is easily recognized by pitch that covers the bark below the nest entrance. These woodpeckers feed in the upper regions of large **living** pines. Food consists of insects and arthropods, including the larvae of wood boring insects, and some vegetable matter. They move from one tree to another, covering large areas in the course of a day. Vocalizations usually consist of high-pitched squeals. This species apparently mates for life. Two to seven eggs are laid in clutches and incubation begins before completion of the clutch. Hatching of the young is staggered. One or two young are fledged at about 26-29 days. The young are foraging for themselves at this stage but may continue to receive food from their

parents for several months. There is never more than one breeding pair per colony although as many as 20 cavities may occur in a colony. The red-cockaded woodpecker is unique in that it is the only woodpecker that excavates a cavity in a living tree.

GENERAL HABITAT: Nesting and roosting is tied very closely to over-mature pines, infected with red heart disease, caused by the fungus *Formes pini*. The average age of trees in existing habitats are 85 years in a range from 59 to 167 years. These mature pine forests must be fairly open and free of a hardwood understory. Longleaf pines (*Pinus palustris*) are most commonly used, but other species of southern pine are also acceptable. Foraging habitat is pine and pine hardwood stands 30 years old or older with foraging preference for pine trees 10in (25.4cm) or larger in diameter. J. Strom Thurmond Lake is the only Savannah District Project that has confirmed Red-cockaded Woodpecker activity.

The last remaining Red-cockaded Woodpecker colony disappeared from the Hawe Creek site in McCormick County, South Carolina in 1992. The Savannah District Wildlife Biologist, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service are currently considering the reintroduction of the species into appropriate habitat found in the J. Strom Thurmond Lake area. Additional information and a detailed recovery plan are available from the District Wildlife Biologist.

[Return to contents](#)

**BIRDS:**

Southern Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

**FEDERAL LIST:**

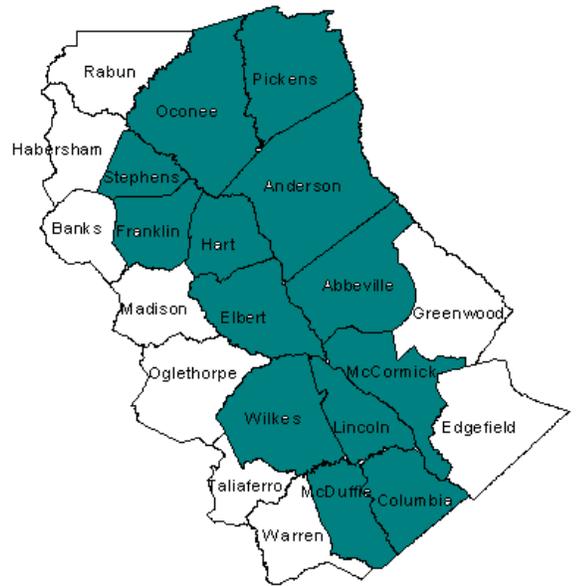
GEORGIA  
Not Listed

SOUTH CAROLINA  
Not Listed

**STATE LIST:**

GEORGIA  
Threatened

SOUTH CAROLINA  
Endangered



**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** A large raptor, wingspread of about 7ft (2.1 m), plumage mainly dark brown with pure white head and tail when adult. First year juveniles are often chocolate brown to blackish, sometimes with white mottling on the tail, belly and underwings. The head and tail become increasingly white with age until full adult plumage is reached in the fifth or sixth year.

**GENERAL HABITAT:** The bald eagle is primarily riparian, associated with coasts, rivers, and lakes, usually nesting near bodies of water where they feed. Selection of nesting sites varies tremendously depending on the species of trees growing in a particular area. Although the tops of tall trees, either living or dead, are generally preferred, bald eagles may even nest in small mangroves less than 20ft (6.1m) above ground. Regardless of this large variation in sites, there are certain general elements which seem to be consistent: The proximity of water (usually within 0.5mi or 0.8km) and a clear flight path to a close point on the water; the largest living tree in a span; an open view of the surrounding area. The proximity of good perching trees may also be a factor in site selection. Excessive human activity in the area can render a site

unsuitable. The eagle exhibits territorial behavior during the breeding season by showing aggressiveness toward other large birds, including eagles, which approach the vicinity of its nest. Territorial size ranges from 28-112 acres (11-47 hectares) averaging 57 acres (23 hectares). Habitat requirements are somewhat altered during migratory situations. They are not as closely limited to shores at this time, gathering food where it is most easily available. Often the immatures will fly inland at night to roost communally away from coastal nesting areas. Eagles are opportunistic feeders and will take a variety of vertebrate prey. If fish are abundant, they comprise the major part of the diet and are the birds' choice. Eagles will lay one to four eggs but the usual is two. A second clutch may be laid if the first is lost. Incubation time is thirty five days; ten or twelve weeks are needed for fledging, and 4-5 years are required for the birds to reach breeding age. Total life span is apparently quite long, since eagles have been known to live for 50 years in captivity.

The Savannah District Corps of Engineers participates annually in the midwinter eagle survey. All eagle sightings or suspected nesting activity should be reported to the District Wildlife Biologist. A detailed recovery plan for bald eagles is also available from the District Wildlife Biologist. Although the Bald Eagle was delisted in 2007 and is no longer protected by Endangered Species Act provisions, the eagle is still protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

[Return to contents](#)

**BIRDS:**

Wood Stork                      *Mycteria americana*



**FEDERAL LIST:**

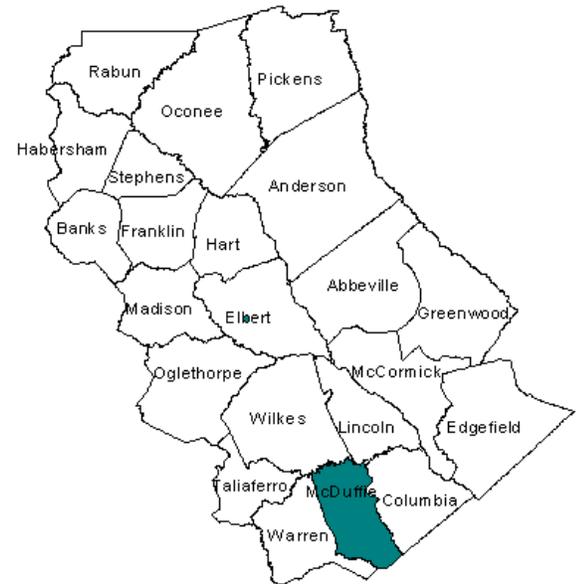
**STATE LIST:**

**GEORGIA**  
Endangered

**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
Endangered

**GEORGIA**  
Endangered

**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
Endangered



**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** The wood stork is locally known as "the flinthead" because of its gray-black, featherless head. It stands more than 3.5ft (1.1m) tall and has a wingspan of more than 5ft (1.5m). The wood stork's body is white; the tail and trailing edges of the wings are black. The 6-9in (15-23cm) bill is black, thick at the base, and slightly decurved. Immature birds are dingy gray and have a yellowish bill. Wood storks fly with their legs and necks outstretched.

**GENERAL HABITAT:** Once found across the South, the wood stork's range in the United States has been reduced to Florida, south Georgia and a small portion of South Carolina. Storks are birds of freshwater and brackish wetlands, primarily nesting in cypress or mangrove swamps, and feeding in freshwater marshes, flooded pastures and flooded ditches. Flocks may travel up to 80 mi (130km) to feed in shallow waters. Particularly attractive feeding sites are depressions in marshes and swamps where fish become concentrated during periods of falling water levels. Wood storks feed by groping with their beaks. When their beaks

touch a fish they seize it with one of the fastest reflex motions in the animal world. Reasons for decline are loss of feeding habitat and adverse water management practices particularly in the Florida Everglades.



Woodstorks feeding in Big Creek, west of Highway 78 bridge, McDuffie County, July 2000.

[Return to contents](#)

BIRDS:

Bewick's Wren      *Thyromanes bewickii*

FEDERAL LIST:

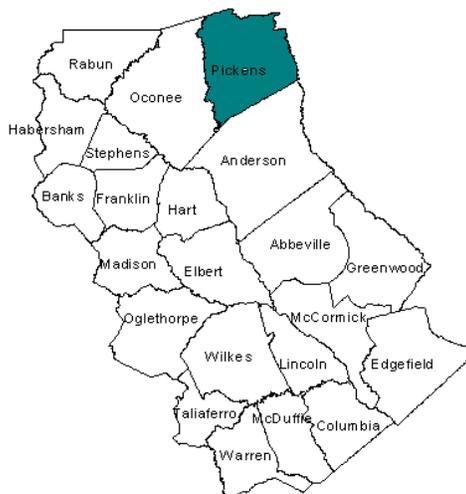
GEORGIA      SOUTH CAROLINA  
Unlisted      Unlisted

STATE LIST:

GEORGIA      SOUTH CAROLINA  
Unlisted      Threatened



IFWIS



GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Gray-brown above and white below; 5.5” in length. Similar to Carolina wren, but shows white in tail feathers during flight and is typically slightly smaller.

GENERAL HABITAT: Prefers brushy habitats, open stands, scrubby area and hedgerows.

[Return to contents](#)