

Georgia Ornithological Society
Sixtieth Anniversary

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The Georgia Ornithological Society was organized in December 1936 by members of the Atlanta Bird Club (now Atlanta Audubon Society), Georgia members of The American Ornithologists' Union and National Audubon Society, and others interested in birds who felt the need for a state-wide organization to gather and disseminate accurate information about birdlife in Georgia. The stated purposes of the society were to foster cooperation among bird students and clubs in the state, promote interest in and protection of birdlife, create opportunities for fellowship among those interested in nature, and issue a quarterly publication as a means of furthering those ends.

The Oriole, first published earlier in 1936 under the sponsorship of the Atlanta Bird Club, became the official organ of the society. The first semiannual meeting of the society was held at Milledgeville in April 1937, at which time bylaws were adopted. The first GOS occasional publication, *The Birds of Athens, Clarke County, Georgia*, appeared in 1938. Number 2 in that series, *Birds of Georgia*, came out in 1945 and, as the first modern published work on birds throughout the state, did much to encourage bird study in Georgia. The quarterly GOS newsletter, now named *GOShawk*, first appeared in 1973, replacing *Oriole-Chirps*, a newsletter started in 1960.

The society initiated the Earle R. Greene Award in 1975, to be given to individuals or organizations for outstanding contributions to ornithology in Georgia, or having some connection to this state, and/or for outstanding service to the Georgia Ornithological Society. The GOS initiated the Graduate Student Research Grant in 1991 for ornithological research, under faculty direction, by graduate students either enrolled in Georgia, or from Georgia if enrolled out of state.

In November 1986, GOS celebrated its 50th anniversary at a meeting in Macon attended by over 300 people. The featured speaker was the late Roger Tory Peterson, who had been present at the society's organizational meeting and was an honorary life member. Dr. Peterson painted an Orchard Oriole to be used as a new cover for the society's quarterly journal. The new cover was first used on a special commemorative program distributed at the anniversary banquet.

In the subsequent decade, the GOS has continued to actively pursue its stated aims and serve the Georgia birding community. A Rare Bird Alert line was established in 1985 and is actively used today. The fifth edition of *A Birder's Guide to Georgia* was published in 1996. The GOS *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, to be updated by a supplement, continues to serve as a valuable reference source. GOS participation in the 1990 Earth Day led to the adoption of a nature trail in 1991 in the State Botanical Garden in Athens.

The GOS is an active member of the Georgia Environmental Council, the Environmental Fund for Georgia, and the Ornithological Council. The society is a co-sponsor of such state and

national programs as Teaming with Wildlife, Partners in Flight, and the Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program of the Department of Natural Resources.

GOS members have assisted in the compilation of birdlists for state parks and wildlife management areas and the authentication of unusual sightings. They are currently involved as volunteers in the North American Migration Count, the Neo-tropical Migratory Bird Management Plan, the Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas, and the Jekyll Island Banding Station.

It seems especially appropriate for the GOS to highlight its sixtieth anniversary observance by meeting jointly with the Association of Field Ornithologists.