



fall 2011 meeting. . .

**6 - 9 October 2011
Jekyll Island, GA**

meeting summary. . .

The year 2011 was an auspicious one for the Georgia Ornithological Society. We began the year with a gala meeting on Tybee Island, celebrating our founding seventy-five years ago, in 1936. The very abbreviated version of the rest of the year is that your society funded scientific research and habitat restoration to the tune of about \$80,000 in grants, we helped send young people to birding camps in Colorado and Maine, we backed conservation efforts across the state, we supported both Camp TALON and the Georgia DNR's Youth Birding Competition, and we hosted meetings in Hiawassee and Jekyll Island. Whew! A busy year indeed.

Most recently, GOS met from October 6 to 9 at the traditional fall meeting location, Jekyll Island. While quite a few members participated in Thursday and Friday field trips, the program formally kicked off on Friday evening when Patti Newell, a Ph.D. student at the University of Georgia and a recipient of both our Howe and Terrell Graduate Student Research Grants, presented her research on "Species in Decline: The Case of the Rusty Blackbird." Patti tested multiple hypotheses—a "line-up" of potential suspects—for the 85-95% decline that this species has experienced since the 1950s. As is often the case, there appears to be more than one suspect, though a major culprit seems to be loss of wetland habitat in the South, where the birds overwinter. In addition, predation by accipiters may be hindering recruitment of juveniles to the population.

I spent my Saturday morning helping out at the Jekyll Island Banding Station, but our membership fanned out to Harris Neck NWR, Raccoon Key, and Sapelo Island, among other excellent locations, and saw great birds like Plain Chachalaca, Marbled Godwit, and many others. At last count, the tally for the weekend was 177 bird species. On Saturday evening, the keynote speaker at the banquet was author and photographer Richard Crossley. His talk, "Past, Present, and Future," focused primarily on his new book, the highly original Crossley ID Guide, which he described as a "half-way house between a field guide and reality." The presentation, richly illustrated with Crossley's hallmark storytelling photography, was very entertaining, even hilarious at times. But Crossley went beyond mere bird identification and challenged the audience to consider the future of birding in the U.S. and how new approaches and new media are needed to reach the next generation of birders as well as engage the public more meaningfully. I was particularly taken with his statement that learning about birds should be a "voyage of discovery" rather than an exercise in mastering a series of dry facts leading to identification.

Sunday, the final day of the fall meeting, was another day of fantastic field trips, in my case to Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area. My group encountered Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Roseate Spoonbills, and a swirling tornado of Tree Swallows before a drenching rain chased us home. Despite the rain, it was a great weekend. Thank you to all of the people who make these meetings happen. Some of them work behind the scenes, reserving banquet space, paying the bills, tending databases, and organizing mailings, while others serve more conspicuously as field trip leaders, but all of them deserve our thanks for putting on the usual well-run and enjoyable meeting.

While most of the fall meeting was dedicated to birding and fellowship, we also took time during the Saturday evening banquet to hold our biennial society elections. Bob Sargent bowed out after eight remarkable years as president, and I was elected president. Cue the appropriate cliché (tough act to follow, big shoes to fill, etc.), but the fact remains that after Bob's dedicated and energetic leadership of the society, I approach my new role with some trepidation. Bob will indeed be a tough act to follow, and the shoes that need filling are indeed big. As concrete evidence of Bob Sargent's positive impact on the society, he was awarded the 2012 Earle R. Greene Memorial Award for his many years of service to GOS. The Greene Award committee managed to keep news of this award tightly under wraps, so those few of us who were clued in beforehand enjoyed seeing Bob caught off guard by the surprise presentation during the banquet. Another executive committee member who stepped down was Bill Lotz, who served with distinction for eight years as first vice president. Thank you, Bill. Dan Vickers, who has done yeoman service as second vice president, is the new first vice president. We welcome Ed Maioriello, a board member of Oconee Rivers Audubon Society, to serve as second vice-president. Ellen Miller, former president of Atlanta Audubon, was elected secretary, though she had already been serving in that position after Darlene Moore resigned earlier this year. Continuing as treasurer is Jeannie Wright, who has kept us on the fiscal straight and narrow for many years. I am both excited and humbled at my election, and I look forward to working with the newly configured Executive Committee.

There is a lot in store for GOS members in 2012, beginning with the winter meeting on Tybee Island in January. The program includes two talks that promise to be excellent: on Friday evening, our own Malcolm Hodges will tell us about the Nature Conservancy's fire management program in Georgia, and on Saturday we will learn about the restoration of Whooping Crane populations from George Archibald, the co-founder of the International Crane Foundation. I'm looking forward to meeting more of you at Tybee Island and raising our binoculars together in the field.

- *Jim Ferrari.*

species countdown. . .

Bill Lotz, Compiler **178 species observed**

The following table contains a combined list of the species reported from the all of the field trips:

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Marbled Godwit	House Wren
Canada Goose	Ruddy Turnstone	Sedge Wren
Wood Duck	Red Knot	Marsh Wren
Mallard	Sanderling	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Mottled Duck	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-winged Teal	Western Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird
Northern Shoveler	Least Sandpiper	Veery
Plain Chachalaca	White-rumped Sandpiper	Swainson's Thrush
Wild Turkey	Pectoral Sandpiper	Gray Catbird
Pied-billed Grebe	Dunlin	Northern Mockingbird

Wood Stork	Stilt Sandpiper	Brown Thrasher
Double-crested Cormorant	Short-billed Dowitcher	European Starling
Anhinga	Laughing Gull	American Pipit
Brown Pelican	Ring-billed Gull	Cedar Waxwing
American Bittern	Herring Gull	Ovenbird
Great Blue Heron	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Northern Waterthrush
Great Egret	Great Black-backed Gull	Black-and-white Warbler
Snowy Egret	Caspian Tern	Tennessee Warbler
Little Blue Heron	Black Tern	Orange-crowned Warbler
Tricolored Heron	Common Tern	Connecticut Warbler
Reddish Egret	Forster's Tern	Common Yellowthroat
Cattle Egret	Royal Tern	American Redstart
Green Heron	Sandwich Tern	Cape May Warbler
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Black Skimmer	Northern Parula
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Rock Pigeon	Magnolia Warbler
White Ibis	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Yellow Warbler
Glossy Ibis	Mourning Dove	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Roseate Spoonbill	Common Ground-Dove	Blackpoll Warbler
Black Vulture	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Eastern Screech-Owl	Palm Warbler
Osprey	Great Horned Owl	Pine Warbler
Bald Eagle	Common Nighthawk	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Harrier	Chimney Swift	Yellow-throated Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Prairie Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	Black-throated Green Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Red-headed Woodpecker	Eastern Towhee
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Clay-colored Sparrow
American Kestrel	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Savannah Sparrow
Merlin	Downy Woodpecker	Saltmarsh Sparrow
Peregrine Falcon	Northern Flicker	Seaside Sparrow
Clapper Rail	Pileated Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
King Rail	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Swamp Sparrow
Sora	Empidonax sp.	Summer Tanager
Common Gallinule	Eastern Phoebe	Scarlet Tanager
American Coot	Great Crested Flycatcher	Northern Cardinal
Black-bellied Plover	Loggerhead Shrike	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Wilson's Plover	White-eyed Vireo	Blue Grosbeak
Semipalmated Plover	Yellow-throated Vireo	Indigo Bunting
Piping Plover	Red-eyed Vireo	Painted Bunting
Killdeer	Blue Jay	Bobolink
American Oystercatcer	American Crow	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-necked Stilt	Fish Crow	Eastern Meadowlark
American Avocet	Tree Swallow	Common Grackle
Spotted Sandpiper	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Boat-tailed Grackle
Solitary Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Greater Yellowlegs	Carolina Chickadee	House Finch
Willet	Tufted Titmouse	House Sparrow
Lesser Yellowlegs	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Whimbrel	Brown-headed Nuthatch	
Long-billed Curlew	Carolina Wren	

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