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# GOShaw

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society  
[www.gos.org](http://www.gos.org)

## President's Message

By Steve Holzman

I'll keep this short, as the issue is running a little long. December was CBC (Christmas Bird Count) month for many of us. I hope everyone who could participate found a CBC that needed their help. It's a great way for beginning birders to move forward in their identification skills and a great way for those with more experience to share their knowledge with others. I encourage everyone to find a CBC for next year. The GOS website will help connect you with a count that needs your help. The CBC website, [netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/](http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/), is a great place to examine the results from past counts and discover trends over time.

Our fall meeting was held October 2-4 at Villas by the Sea on Jekyll Island. More than 100 attendees enjoyed a couple of excellent presentations, interesting posters, and, as always, some great coastal birds. The species list is printed at the end of this issue. On Friday, Felicia Sanders from the South Carolina DNR presented a fascinating discussion of American Oystercatchers. I know they are favorites of many of us. GOS is proud to fund ongoing efforts to increase

survival of nestling oystercatchers along the Georgia coast. On Saturday, Sharon "Birdchick" Stiteler delivered an entertaining presentation on her efforts to get paid to bird. She taught us that there are jobs out there if you can be flexible and ready to move quickly when an opportunity arises. The highlight of the fall meeting actually came a few days later, when a Red-footed Booby was sighted on the St. Simons Island pier. Jim Ferrari found the bird during the meeting weekend, but the identification couldn't be confirmed until great views were obtained the week after the meeting. Of course, Rachel and I had picked that time for our annual trip to visit a raptor banding station in Wisconsin. Another Georgia bird slips away from us for the time being.

Our winter meeting will return to Tybee Island on February 12, 2016. We'll have pelagic trips, Purple Sandpipers, and Atlantic Puffins. Well, okay, probably not actual living puffins on the Georgia coast, but a great presentation on the restoration of Atlantic Puffins to islands off the Maine coast by Dr. Stephen Kress of Project Puffin. The Ocean Plaza hotel GOS has frequented on Tybee Island was recently renovated and has new owners. This will be

*(continued on page 3)*

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## Georgia Ornithological Society

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For a list of grant, scholarship, and award committees (and their contact information) visit [gos.org/executive-committee](http://gos.org/executive-committee)

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of the month prior to publication.  
Submission by e-mail is appreciated.*

## Yellow Indiangrass on Georgia Birds' Menu

By Ashley S. Harrington

To the casual observer, Yellow Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) adds colorful movement to a field's landscape. This warm-season bunchgrass with white-haired, spiked seed heads has narrow blades glinting silver and gold in the sunlight while rising almost six feet tall. To the sparrow and quail, Yellow Indiangrass adds nesting material, winter cover, and appetizing food in seasons of scarcity. Because the Georgia Department of Natural Resources considers this native grass to be a win-win item for man and bird, they have devoted extensive efforts to propagate it over the last ten years.



Henslow's Sparrow at Panola Mountain. Photo by Patrick Maurice.

Panola Mountain State Park is the site of this ongoing work, a few acres at a time. Site preparation includes chemical spraying to eliminate undesirable non-native

plants, field plowing, and broadcasting seeds. Follow-up controlled burns are conducted in a two-year rotation to ensure that competing plants are not present. The October seed harvest finds numerous volunteers and DNR employees gathering seeds and placing them in pillowcases. These valuable seeds are stored until a spring or early summer planting time. After planting the seeds, the cycle repeats.

It is a known fact that songbirds, grassland game birds, small mammals, grasshoppers, and caterpillars reap a tremendous benefit from this DNR-managed work. But to highlight the real success story of the Yellow Indiangrass project, direct your attention to the photograph by Patrick Maurice of a rare Henslow's Sparrow. This bird was captured, banded, and photographed October 17, 2015, at the Panola Mountain State Park banding station supervised by Charlie Muise. Many must share credit for this bird's attendance. Applause goes out to GOS, which supplied money for chemicals, funding for burn crews, and hard-working volunteers. This is a continuing vital project that has shown tangible success. Without GOS' participation, Panola Mountain Yellow Indiangrass would not be on the menu as "Today's Special" for migrants stopping at this important habitat after crossing metro Atlanta.

**President's Message** (continued from page 1)

our meeting location, and it is now called Hotel Tybee. I'd like to encourage all of you to attend as it is our 80th anniversary meeting. I hope there is cake. Details about the meeting are in this issue.

In other news, GOS recently decided to allow its members to choose if they would like a digital copy of our journal, *The Oriole*, emailed to them instead of being mailed to them as a traditional paper copy. Digital delivery saves us money and might be a good option for you. We will continue to publish and print the journal, but we wanted to give you a paperless option. Email Shannon Fair at [membership@gos.org](mailto:membership@gos.org) if you want the digital version.

If you haven't renewed yet, you can do so online at [gos.org](http://gos.org). Thanks for helping GOS promote birding and bird conservation in 2016.

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**The Georgia Ornithological Society's Winter Meeting**

**When:** February 12–15, 2016

**Where:** Hotel Tybee  
1412 Butler Avenue  
Tybee Island, GA  
[www.hoteltybee.com](http://www.hoteltybee.com)  
Use group code 'GOS2016' to receive a discounted rate.

**What:** We've planned lots of field trips to great birding destinations like Savannah NWR, COE Disposal Site, Harris Neck, Fort Pulaski, pelagic trips, Little Tybee Island, and Ossabaw Island.

Dr. Stephen Kress of Audubon's Project Puffin will be our Saturday evening keynote speaker, and our own Mason Cline will speak about Black-throated Blue Warblers on Friday evening.

We hope to see you there for great birds and great fellowship.

**How:** Check out [gos.org/2015-fall-meeting](http://gos.org/2015-fall-meeting) for more details and to register.



Dr. Stephen Kress with Y54 chick. Photo by Derrick Jackson.



Friday night speaker, Mason Cline.



Puffins. Photo by Stephen Kress.



## Little St. Simons Island Adventure

By Jess Searcy



Snowy Egret on Little St. Simons Island. Photo by Mike Searcy.

Last January, I went to my first GOS meeting and chose Little St. Simons Island (LSSI) as one of my field trips. I was thrilled to be riding on the back of a pick-up truck through the virgin live oak forest like a character in Jurassic Park. I would not have been surprised to see a tyrannosaurus come crashing through the woods at any moment. Luckily, the heavily evolved dinosaurs still present on the island are not so ferocious these days, at least not toward humans anyway. It was a wonderful experience, and as I walked through the lodge, I remember thinking to myself how nice it would be to return with family.

Later that evening at the GOS banquet, after securing my spot as the new member with the most lifers that day (and for the record, I ended up with 33 lifers for the trip), I bought six tickets to the raffle to win a two-night stay at the lodge on LSSI. I had my finger on one ticket in particular. My friends to either side leaned in close, and we all read the number together as one of the GOS board members read the winning ticket number. I had won the two-night stay at LSSI! In the moments following, an unfortunate picture was taken of me in my gleeful state and was subsequently published in the next newsletter. Thank you, Ed.

I have to say that it was worth the embarrassment of my momentary lapse of composure. In the spring, I took my husband, Mike, to visit the island. We decided to buy an additional night and make a second honeymoon out of it. We went in May, right in the middle of nesting season for many species. It was awesome! Mike, who is not a big birder, enjoyed taking photos of the nesting herons and egrets from the blinds, the guided fishing excursions, and lounging on the beach. I got to watch Painted Buntings at the bird feeder on our cabin's deck. We both enjoyed biking the island trails, kayaking through the salt marsh, and taking a boat out and seeing dolphins close up. So many adventures in such a short time! The staff naturalists are wonderful, and we made many new friends among the other guests. I can't wait to take our kids back when they are old enough to go. It was a spectacular trip, and one I will remember for a very long time.

Now go buy some raffle tickets!



Painted Bunting on Little St. Simons Island. Photo by Jess Searcy.



## Raffle Time!



Little St. Simons Island has once again graciously donated a two-night stay for two guests on their beautiful island. The package includes boat transfers from St. Simons Island, lodging, meals, activities, equipment usage, gratuities, and taxes.

The drawing will be held at the GOS winter meeting on Tybee Island on February 12-15, 2016. The winner need not be present to win.

All proceeds from this raffle (minus PayPal fees) will be presented to Project Puffin.

Go to [gos.org/2016raffle](http://gos.org/2016raffle) to buy tickets. Tickets will also be sold at the GOS winter meeting.

### CALLING ALL BIRDERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 18

#### THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Now Accepting Applications for the

### 2016 RICHARD PARKS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR YOUNG BIRDERS

You can attend the American Birding Association's

## Camp Avocet

**Application deadline is March 30, 2016**

The Georgia Ornithological Society will send one lucky teen to Lewes, Delaware, to take part in a special camp session July 30–August 5, 2016. The GOS will cover registration fees and up to \$500 reimbursement for travel expenses (Note: Scholarship recipients arrange their own travel. Food and lodging is included in the camp registration.) For more information about Camp Avocet, visit [events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps](http://events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps).

**How to apply:** The applicant must be at least **15** and no older than **18** during the camp session and **must be a Georgia resident**. Complete the application form (visit: [gos.org/ApplicationFormParks.pdf](http://gos.org/ApplicationFormParks.pdf)) and write an essay (300-word minimum) about your interest in birds and birding, what you will do with the knowledge you will gain, and how you will spread your interest in birds to friends. Include three letters of recommendation with the application. Scholarship recipients are expected to write an article describing their experiences at camp for the GOShawk newsletter.

**The application form, essay, and letters of recommendation must be received by March 30, 2016 to be considered. The winners will be selected on April 15, 2016.**

#### Mail your application materials to

Dr. Robert Sargent / 2016 Parks Scholarship (DE)  
1263 Clairmont Place  
Macon, GA 31204

Applications may be submitted electronically (Subject: GOS Parks Scholarship) to

[kywarbler@cox.net](mailto:kywarbler@cox.net)

**All submissions must be in high-quality PDF format. Unreadable applications will be returned.**

## Hog Island, Maine

By Joseph Bell

My time on Hog Island, Maine, is a time I have great confidence I will never forget. I was very honored and excited to be traveling north to attend the camp with sponsorship of the Georgia Ornithological Society but had no idea what to expect to experience during the week in the unfamiliar region of coastal Maine. After a smooth day of air travel, a few teen campers and I were met by a deluge as we were shuttled from the Portland Maine Jetport to the dock looking out on Hog Island. Once there, we boarded the *Snowgoose III* that took us the last quarter mile of our journey off the mainland onto the fog-covered island.

The group of teen campers, known around Hog Island as the Corvids, had the privilege to be under the care of Doug Wentzel and Laurie McLaughlin for the week. Most of our time on the first day was spent orienting ourselves with our new home as well as the people we would be sharing that home with for the duration of the camp. After a session of icebreaker games and exploration, the birding was on! The island was alive with Northern Parulas, Black-throated Green Warblers, Ospreys, an abundance of Common Eiders, and the always lovable Guillemots.

At night, after an always amazing dinner with the rest of the camp—teens, adults, volunteers, and staff all together—we would gather in the fish house to hear from a remarkable lineup of involved speakers such as Dr. Steve Kress, Fred Dietrich, Scott Weisenhaul, and Tom Johnson., who told us about their various banding and conservation projects.



Hog Island, Maine. Photo by Joseph Bell.

On our first morning, following the previous night's presentation delivered by Dr. Kress on the incredible work he has been doing with Project Puffin since 1973, we were informed that the excursion to Eastern Egg Rock to see Atlantic Puffins had been moved from somewhere late in the week to the beginning due to the unpredictable weather conditions. No complaints were heard from the Corvids, who were absolutely reeling with excitement to board the *Snowgoose III* and head out to Eastern Egg Rock, the very island lined with puffin burrows that were each products of the tireless work Dr. Steve Kress and his team have been doing for years. We added around 15 species on the eight-mile trip from Hog Island to Egg Rock, including a Razorbill and our first Atlantic Puffin of the day (and most of our lives).

Upon arrival at EER, a group of five interns that live on the small island for the summer assisted us in landing on the island, so that no one would end up in the cold waters of the Atlantic. After we were all safely on the rocky outskirts, we were led inland through hundreds of Common and Arctic Terns, swarming with rage as we very carefully walked through their nesting areas. We reached the center of the island, where we then split up into two



**Hog Island Maine** *(continued from page 6)*

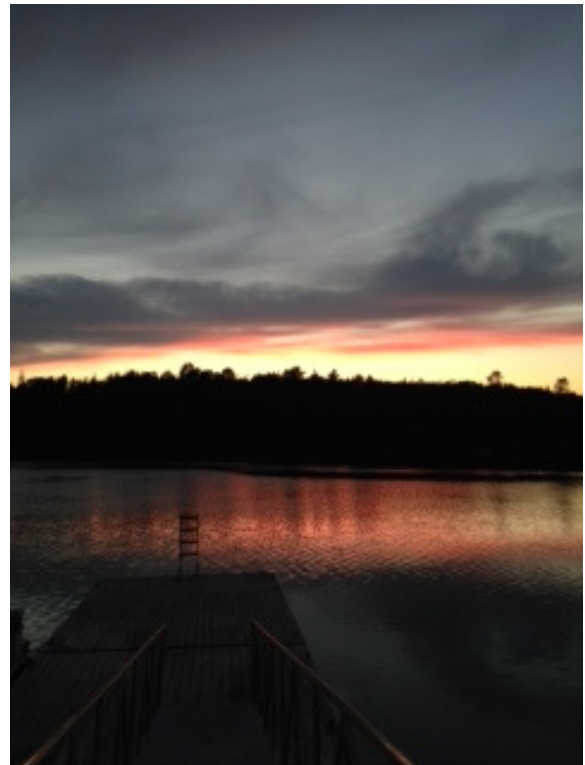
groups. One group went to the blinds to view puffins and the other group stayed at the center of the island with the interns to scope along the shores. It was such a cool experience to just sit and watch for an hour all of the life on the island. Terns, gulls, guillemots, and puffins were everywhere I looked. I will never forget our day on Eastern Egg Rock.

The Corvids took several trips to the mainland to bird in a variety of habitats. As we walked along in our rain gear at Medomick trail, we picked up 21 species, varying from Common Grackle to Blackburnian Warbler. Day three was the most active of the mainland birding. We visited at least five different locations and gathered a wide range of birds. Early on in the day, we enjoyed a very up close and personal encounter with a Barred Owl before it was chased off by a gang of crows. Bobolinks were the highlight of the next field we visited. We stopped off at a road with a predominately deciduous habitat that yielded a Nashville Warbler. Clary Hill was probably my favorite location for the day. Many Vesper Sparrows were sighted, and as we stood on top of the picturesque hilltop that was covered in blueberry patches, we heard a Mourning Warbler singing from somewhere in the tree line. The final day was spent banding on the mainland. We got to see around ten birds banded, including a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Only two species were added to the running list for the week, Brown-headed Cowbird and Downy Woodpecker. My personal total for the week was 80 species, 27 of which were life birds for me.

I cannot thank the Georgia Ornithological Society enough for the experience that they allowed for me to have in Maine. I learned a lot at Hog Island this summer. I made many friends, saw many sights, and enjoyed every moment immensely.



Joseph Bell at Hog Island Audubon Camp.  
Photo courtesy of Joseph Bell.



Sunset view at Hog Island. Photo by Joseph Bell.

## Meet Dr. Chandler Robbins

By Phil Hardy

It is a great honor to introduce to the GOS membership our oldest living member, Dr. Chan Robbins at 97 years young.

Born in Belmont, Massachusetts, in 1918, Robbins and his brothers were the last surviving descendants who were raised on the family farm of immigrant Roger Wellington. Roger had purchased the farm from the friendly Pequossette Indians in 1630. At an age much too young to receive a bird banding permit from the U.S. Biological Survey, Robbins circumvented the age requirement by having his father apply. In 1940, he received an A.B. degree from Harvard in physics and taught math and science at an international prep school in Manchester, Vermont. A year later all that changed with the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II.

Under the Selective Service System, Robbins selected Civilian Public Service and was assigned to U.S. Forest Service camps in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, where the main project was to open highways blocked by fallen trees from the New England hurricane. Not too many years passed before he learned of a new CPS camp at the new Patuxent Research Refuge. Robbins requested, and was granted, a transfer to the bird banding office.

After WWII concluded, Mr. Fredrick C. Lincoln, who had previously issued the youthful Robbins the bird banding permit, hired him to remain as a junior biologist in the national banding office. Soon Robbins was splitting his time between afternoons in the banding office and mornings helping Bob Stewart and others conduct baseline studies of the breeding birds on the refuge: a habitat map, and breeding and winter populations in each habitat. Robbins and Stewart both familiarized themselves with the habitats throughout Maryland, examined the historic records, and compiled a new *Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia* (1958).

A command from the Washington office mandated that the entire refuge staff must work on the effects of DDT on birds, mammals, fish, and other wildlife. Robbins' colleague, Bob Stewart, transferred to North Dakota to study waterfowl, while Robbins studied breeding bird populations in forests that had been sprayed with DDT. The results were published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*. "But nobody paid any attention until Rachel Carson, who had been our scientific editor, published *Silent Spring* several years later," says Robbins.

On April 16, 1948, Robbins married his sweetheart, Eleanor Cooley, of Beltsville, Maryland. On the couple's "birding" honeymoon to Bull's Island, South Carolina, Robbins learned that, in the spring, long-distance migrants avoid the southeastern states. "They land on the Gulf Coast, then fan out as they move northward." As the years passed, Eleanor blessed Robbins with four wonderful children: Jane, Stuart, George and Nancy.



Photo of Chan Robbins, courtesy of Chan Robbins.



**Meet Dr. Chandler Robbins** (continued from page 8)

In 1947 Robbins began editing *Maryland Birdlife*, a task he continued through 2014. He also, with the help of Bob Stewart in 1947, discussed with ancient Prince George's County landowner, Seaton Belt, his plans for preserving his 515-acre virgin hardwood forest in nearby Bowie, of which Belt was so proud. "He assured us it would be safe in the hands of the Episcopal Church, but shortly after his death the bank began selling the timber. It took 49 years and the help of influential people to finally get the property protected by the State of Maryland as the Belt Woods Natural Environmental Area," recalls Robbins.

From 1948 to 1950, Robbins attended night school at George Washington University and the University of Maryland to get an M.A. degree in biology from GWU. His thesis was "Ecological Distribution of the Breeding Parulidae of Maryland." Part of his field work laid the basis for a subsequent paper on 50-year changes in breeding bird populations on the Allegheny Plateau.

Prior to 1949, Robbins was designated a Junior Biologist and then promoted to Wildlife Research Biologist. He was a Wildlife Research Biologist Supervisor from 1957 until 1960, Chief of the Section of Migratory Bird Studies from 1961 to 1972, Wildlife Biologist (Research) until 2000, and then Senior Scientist.

"I began a big project of taping songs and calls of North American birds and recording the number of songs per minute together with the temperature. And whenever I had birds in my hand for banding purposes, I measured their live natural length from bill to tail, which is considerably shorter than the length of flat museum specimens that field guide authors always used," remarks Robbins.

From 1950 to 1956, when the USFWS was still primarily a game bird organization, Robbins was asked to set up a program for monitoring snipe populations in the heart of their wintering ground in ten southern states. It involved working with game agents in those states, finding concentration areas, netting wintering birds, banding them, then returning in subsequent years to recapture them. He also located breeding concentrations from Nova Scotia to the Northwest Territories and Yukon. During the time he was actually in his office, he was busy compiling migration dates for Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds* and compiling breeding and winter ranges for the 5th edition of the A.O.U. Checklist.

Along with John Aldrich and Bob Stewart, Robbins served as technical editor of *Audubon Field Notes/American Birds* from 1951 through 1989. "This kept me in touch with many of the active field ornithologists throughout North America, which was a big help to me in 1966 when I was soliciting volunteers to help launch the Breeding Bird Survey."

During the autumn of 1955 Robbins participated in a nocturnal study of fall migration, counting birds as they crossed the face of the full moon. "Competing against hundreds of other observers, my all-night tally from my driveway in Laurel, Maryland, showed more birds than any other site in North America!"

From 1955 through 1970, shortly after Japanese mist nets became available to bird banders, Robbins joined with Jim Baird and Aaron Bagg of Massachusetts Audubon in their Operation Recovery program, which encouraged banders to work together at coastal concentration points to carefully determine the age and sex of each bird captured and to weigh it instead of just banding and releasing it, as had been the common practice.

**Meet Dr. Chandler Robbins** *(continued from page 9)*

During 1958, Robbins became involved in aircraft safety at large airports, looking for bird roosts and loafing and feeding concentrations. His greatest problem was with nesting albatrosses at Midway Atoll in the Pacific, where he was involved for ten years. One of the Laysan Albatrosses he banded there has survived to be the oldest known wild bird in the world at 64 years old. Wisdom, as the bird is named, nested again in 2015!

In 1959 he began a long-term study of songbirds nesting in the undisturbed Patuxent floodplain forest.

**The Birth of the Breeding Bird Survey**

Robbins writes, “In the mid 1960s, the director of the USFWS referred a letter to me to answer. A lady in the Midwest, who was disturbed by the large die-off of robins on college lawns from application of DDT, asked whether this was just a local problem or whether it was threatening the national population. I replied that since we, nor any of the states, had a staff trained to monitor songbird populations, we could not answer her query, but that I would give some thought to the problem. Which I did.

“I knew from my experience with my dove survey and our woodcock and snipe surveys that I could design a statistically valid survey and perhaps find 50 qualified observers in Maryland who would be willing to devote a couple of days to learning the technique and birding along a strange new route. But how to sample the other states?



Photo of Chan Robbins, courtesy of Chan Robbins.

“My Wisconsin brother was developing a songbird sampling program for that state, but not with sufficient statistical reliability. The more I thought about it, I realized that with so many bird species declining so rapidly we would have to have a reliable survey going within a decade, even though the Fish and Wildlife Service had not yet shown any interest in songbird species, or even endangered species.

“After many field tests in several states in 1964, which I determined the best starting time, number of stops, and length of each stop, I finally drew 50 stops per random route for each of 50 Maryland and 10 Delaware sampling routes and came up with a proposal to the Maryland and Delmarva Ornithological Societies for a trial run in 1965.

“My hearing was tested at the University of Maryland hearing lab, and each observer was required to run a sample 50-stop route that I had recently run. All but three of my Maryland volunteers turned out to have adequate hearing, so those three routes were assigned to other



**Meet Dr. Chandler Robbins** *(continued from page 10)*

volunteers. All of the Maryland and Delaware routes were run on schedule and with excellent results. Fifty thousand individual birds were recorded on the 50 Maryland routes.

“I showed my results to John Aldrich, my supervisor, and asked if I had permission to expand the Breeding Bird Survey area to include all states east of the Mississippi River in 1966. I explained how existing staff could handle the increased workload. John’s considered reply was, ‘Go for it, just so it doesn’t cost the government any money.’ I immediately called Tony Erskine, my counterpart in the Canadian Wildlife Service, and asked if Canada might like to collaborate in this endeavor. His reply, ‘Yes, Canada wants to be included,’ came later that same day.”

**Other Accomplishments and Publications**

\*In 1966 with the assistance of Herbert Zim, Bertel Bruun, and Arthur Singer, Robbins published the *North American Golden Field Guide*, incorporating half a dozen new features that set the pattern for future field guides.

During the late sixties, Robbins and Ted VanVelzen published the first *Field List of the Birds of Maryland*.

In 1969, Robbins began compiling the annual Atlantic Flyway Review (Region 4) for *North American Bird Bander*, which he still does annually.

From 1968 to 1970, he coordinated a Winter Bird Survey of Central Maryland by establishing a four-mile walking route, at the center of each seven-minute USGS quadrangle, that a MOS member hiked each of the three mid-winters (Robbins 1970), which was actually the first New World winter bird atlas in North America.

From 1972 to 2013, Robbins was heavily involved in Breeding Bird Atlas studies and publications, primarily in Maryland, but also in Maine, New Hampshire, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

\*Starting in 1966, Robbins was the United States delegate to meetings of the International Bird Ringing Committee and the International Bird Census Committee, which later joined with the European Bird Atlas Committee to establish international procedures for Breeding Bird Atlases.

From 1973 through 2012, Dr. Robbins did a fall migration banding study on his 2-1/2-acre residential property in Laurel, Maryland.

In 1977, he wrote the Maryland/Washington, D.C. chapter for Pettingill’s *Guide to Bird Finding*.

In 1980, at the request of *British Birds* (73:448-457), Robbins wrote *Predictions of Future Neotropical Landlord Vagrants to Europe*.

Because Dr. Robbins had obtained authorization to collect a single tail feather from birds he banded, he concluded that he could reliably identify warblers to species by that one single outer rectrix.

Over the years, Robbins had requests from at least half a dozen conservation organizations to participate in money-raising birdathons for their benefit. He did several all-day birdathon counts from his residence and others in Ontario, Spain, Trinidad, and Colombia.

**Meet Dr. Chandler Robbins** (continued from page 11)

In the 1980s, Robbins published a paper on the “Distribution and Migration of Seaside Sparrows.” With Dan Boone he published a paper on “Threatened Birds of Maryland” for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. With Dawson and Dowell, he published a paper on “Habitat Requirements of Forest Birds,” and with Sauer, Greenberg, and Droege, he published “Population Declines in North American Birds that Migrate to the Neotropics.”

\*One of the longest projects Robbins worked on was a study of the effects of forest fragmentation on breeding birds. It began in Maryland and surrounding states in 1974, then spread to the wintering grounds of those birds in Mexico, the West Indies, Central America, and Venezuela. In the Latin American countries, Robbins always collaborated with local biologists or organizations. Together, they discovered that most songbirds required unfragmented forest on their breeding grounds. But in the winter months, they lived in fragmented forests that the resident tropical species avoided during their breeding season. The results showed that the migratory songbirds did not compete for food sources with the local tropical birds.

\*In 1976, Robbins was one of three Americans selected to write and negotiate the USA/Soviet Union Migratory Bird Treaty. This marked the first treaty to protect not only the shared species but also the habitat these species required, thus setting the example for future treaties.

In 1992, Robbins collaborated with Fitzpatrick and Hamel on *A Warbler in Trouble: Dendroica cerulea*.

In the course of Robbins’ prolonged field work in Guatemala and Mexico, he and others provided enough documentation to assist in establishing the Cerro San Gil Reserve in Guatemala (47,600 hectares) and the Rancho Sandoval Reserve in Campeche, Mexico (8,000 hectares).

Twice Robbins was invited to act as a judge in the Junior Duck Stamp Competition and once in the Senior Duck Stamp Competition.



Photo of Chan Robbins, courtesy of Chan Robbins.

Robbins spent a couple of years on the Maryland Public Service Commission trying, in vain, to protect major songbird migration routes along Appalachian ridges from wind turbines. Unfortunately, the power companies refused to take the birds into consideration.

He wrote “The Early Years” chapter in *The History of Patuxent*, which is in press. Currently, he is writing a *History of Atlasing in the New World* for a publication by the Nuttall Ornithological Club.

When asked if he could pick a single project that had the greatest conservation impact, Robbins indicated he might pick one of the



**Meet Dr. Chandler Robbins** *(continued from page 12)*

accomplishments introduced by an asterisk above. "But more likely, I would suggest the hundreds of young people who hiked the forest trails with me preparing for future employment in jobs that did not even exist a hundred years ago," recalls Robbins.

So now you have met author, pioneer, visionary, researcher, scientist, scholar, and gentleman, Dr. Chan Robbins.

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**CALLING ALL BIRDERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 18****THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY****Now Accepting Applications for the****2016 RICHARD PARKS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR YOUNG BIRDERS****You can attend the American Birding Association's**

## Camp Colorado

**Application deadline is March 16, 2016**

The Georgia Ornithological Society will send two lucky teens to Colorado to take part in a special camp session July 16–22, 2016. The GOS will cover registration fees and up to \$500 reimbursement for travel expenses (Note: Scholarship recipients arrange their own travel. Food and lodging is included in the camp registration.) For more information about Camp Colorado, visit [events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps](http://events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps).

**How to apply:** The applicant must be at least **15** and no older than **18** during the camp session and **must be a Georgia resident**. Complete the application form (visit: [gos.org/ApplicationFormParks.pdf](http://gos.org/ApplicationFormParks.pdf)) and write an essay (300-word minimum) about your interest in birds and birding, what you will do with the knowledge you will gain, and how you will spread your interest in birds to friends. Include three letters of recommendation with the application. Scholarship recipients are expected to write an article describing their experiences at camp for the GOShawk newsletter.

**The application form, essay, and letters of recommendation must be received by March 16, 2016 to be considered. The winners will be selected on April 1, 2016.**

**Mail your application materials to**

Dr. Robert Sargent / 2016 Parks Scholarship (CO)  
1263 Clairmont Place  
Macon, GA 31204

**Applications may be submitted electronically (Subject: GOS Parks Scholarship) to**

**[kywarbler@cox.net](mailto:kywarbler@cox.net)**

**All submissions must be in high-quality PDF format. Unreadable applications will be returned.**

**Go Paperless!** Want to save trees and reduce printing costs by receiving the *GOShawk* electronically? Contact Shannon Fair, the GOS membership chairperson, at [gosmembership@gmail.com](mailto:gosmembership@gmail.com), and let her know that you would like to receive the *GOShawk* by e-mail. Shannon will make sure that you go electronic starting with the March 2016 issue.

## Camp Colorado

By Angus Pritchard

It was apparent that I was no longer in Georgia's Piedmont. On the ride through rural Colorado from the airport north of Denver, we saw the first few of the ubiquitous Western Kingbirds, as well as numerous Swainson's Hawks and Brewer's Blackbirds, all rarities in Georgia but commonplace in Colorado. I was here at the ABA's Camp Colorado, with more than 20 other youth birders from across the United States and Canada. The home base, situated in a bowl of craggy, snow-laced peaks, abounded with Violet-green Swallows, Black-billed Magpies, and Common Ravens. After photographing a very cooperative Broad-tailed

Hummingbird, we were buzzed by a Prairie Falcon. Minutes later, a movement in a field caught my eye: A Northern Goshawk was running through the grass, chasing ground squirrels. On the first day alone, without any sort of dedicated birding effort, I had seen 12 life birds, including MacGillivray's Warbler and Green-tailed Towhee.

The following morning was overcast as we hiked up along a raging snowmelt creek in the Wild Basin area of Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). Townsend's Solitaires whistled in the distance, Audubon's Yellow-rumped warblers chipped in the trees, and an American Dipper braved the snowmelt torrent to pick insects from the rocks. The non-avian highlight of the excursion was the golden-mantled ground-squirrel that decided to investigate us in a very confiding manner.



Broad-billed Hummingbird. Photo by Angus Pritchard.



Yellow-headed Blackbird. Photo by Angus Pritchard.

The next day found us in the Endovalley unit of RMNP, a glacial valley with open, rolling parkland dotted with ponderosa pines and aspen stands. Neither birds nor birders seemed fazed by the cold, wet weather. After we had toured the valley, seeing Wilson's Warblers, Red-naped and Williamson's Sapsuckers as well as a host of others, a New England birder promised \$100 to the person who spotted a Dusky Grouse. When one inevitably was spotted, the spotter graciously declined the offer, but the photos of the mother with five chicks were priceless. Once back in Estes Park, we discovered a magnificent male Yellow-headed Blackbird that, for whatever reason, had no apparent fear of photographers.



**Camp Colorado** *(continued from page 14)*

The Camp Colorado Challenge came next, a Big Day in which campers attempt to see more species than the previous cohort had seen. On the way to Pawnee National Grassland, we had several Say's Phoebes, Lark Sparrows and Lark Buntings, but the best sighting was of several Mountain Plovers in a field of wheat stubble, picked out of the distant horizon by one leader's eagle eye. For a Georgian it was a strange landscape: The short grass and old fences stretched seemingly infinitely on into the edge of existence. Despite the complete lack of structure, the birding was fantastic because of the sheer saturation of the land with all species. A pair of Ferruginous Hawks flashed their white wing patches in the spotting scope just before we stopped to listen to the soft tinkling of McCown's Longspurs giving display flights over the low hills. The birds were not the only interesting wildlife, as Plains garter snakes and short-horned lizards both made appearances, along with pronghorn antelope. Later in the day, after we had sufficiently absorbed this magnificent display of prairie life, we stopped at the Fossil Creek Reservoir, which was covered with grebes, both Western and Clark's. We even got to see a pair of Western Grebes do a water-running display.

On Friday, we got up and kept traveling in that direction until we came to the highest point of Trail Ridge Road, the highest connected road in the U.S. Here we got out for a magnificent vista from the deck of the visitors' center. From 12,000 feet, there was a pretty stunning view that took away what breath we could get from the thin air. The alpine tundra abounded with elk and marmots and had a stark, cold beauty. At Medicine Bow Curve, we walked down a trail across the grassy expanse. We soon spotted a rock that moved, then flew down to the trail where its mate was foraging. Then we added White-tailed Ptarmigan to the list of birds that we had come within ten feet of.

On the final day, we visited one of the more dry, lower-elevation hotspots. At Rabbit Mountain and the surrounding areas, we saw dozens of Lazuli Buntings, heard both Rock and Canyon Wrens, and we had an amazing flyby of a Red-tailed Hawk carrying a five-foot-long bull snake. The raptors seen also included Golden Eagle, American Kestrel and Prairie Falcon.

All in all, this had to be the most memorable week of birding I've ever had. I got to see the western U.S. for the first time, and I will never forget the friends that I made there. It was incredibly inspiring to see all of the other young birders who attended the camp and were so passionate about birds. I am extremely grateful to the Georgia Ornithological Society for making it possible for me to attend this amazing camp. This is surely a life experience that I will never forget.



Dusky Grouse. Photo by Angus Pritchard.



# Camp **TALON**

(Teen Adventures Learning Ornithology and Nature)

## What?

- ▶ A six-day camp for teens interested in birds and nature
- ▶ Tons of birding and a little classroom instruction
- ▶ 3:1 student to teacher ratio. Instructors are professional biologists and teachers, all with 20+ years of experience
- ▶ Sponsors: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Ornithological Society, and Atlanta Audubon Society

**When?** June 4–9, 2016

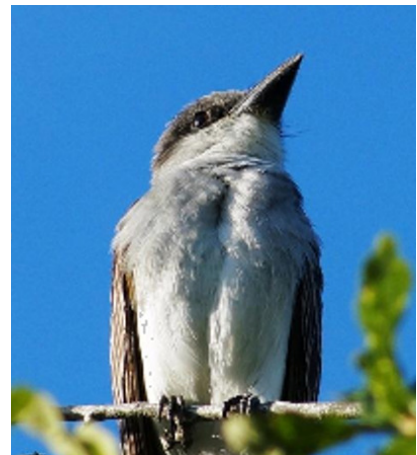
**Where?** The camp will be based at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island. We'll be birding on Little St. Simons Island, Okefenokee Swamp, Andrews Island, Sapelo Island, Harris Neck NWR, Jekyll Island, Altamaha WMA, and St. Simons Island.

**Who?** Hosting 16 students, ages 12 to 16. Older students may be eligible.

**How much?** \$375 early registration (before April 1), which includes meals, lodging, and bus from Macon. \$425 from April 2 to May 7.

**How can I register?** Look for the registration form at [www.gos.org](http://www.gos.org) or [www.atlantaaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org).

For more information, contact Julie Duncan at [Jdwildlife15@gmail.com](mailto:Jdwildlife15@gmail.com), (770) 313-5762, or Bob Sargent at [kywarbler@cox.net](mailto:kywarbler@cox.net), (478) 397-7962.



## My Camp Chiricahua Adventure

By Patrick Maurice

This year's camp, which ran from July 28 to August 8, was led by Michael O'Brien, his wife Louise Zemaitis, and Jennie Duberstein. Fourteen campers participated, two of them from California and the rest were "East Coasters," especially from the Northeast.

We flew into Tucson and then birded our way to Mount Lemmon, which we learned was the ecological equivalent of going from Mexico to Canada in less than 40 miles! We camped for two nights there and met Jo, a nice lady who had a cabin on Mount Lemmon where she had been feeding birds for around 40 years. The birds were used to humans, and so when I put my hand under the perches of a hummingbird feeder an adolescent male Anna's Hummingbird landed on me, which was magical!

On the third day we drove all day to get to Cave Creek Ranch in the Chiricahua Mountains. We made some Tucson desert birding stops along the way and got to see a few young Great Horned Owls. In the bright sunshine their pupils were reduced to tiny dots, which was really cool to see. We stopped for lunch in Wilcox and then birded at Lake Cochise, where we saw Tropical, Cassin's, and Western Kingbirds, breeding plumage Ruddy Ducks, and hundreds of shorebirds including Baird's Sandpiper, all three peeps, avocet, stilt, both yellowlegs, Stilt Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, and hundreds of spinning Wilson's Phalaropes. When we neared Portal we got to see a Western Diamondback Rattlesnake and a family of Chihuahan Ravens. We reached Cave Creek Ranch at dinnertime and settled in for the next four nights.



Angry Black-tailed Rattlesnake. Photo by Patrick Maurice.



The view from Stateline Road. Photo by Patrick Maurice.

The next morning we birded Stateline Road on the New Mexico border and found some good birds, such as Cassin's and Botteri's Sparrow, Scaled Quail, and all the possible "mimid" species in that area—a nice sweep. Later, we went up Cave Creek Canyon and heard a Montezuma Quail and found a very angry Black-tailed Rattlesnake.



**Camp Chiricahua** (continued from page 17)

The fifth morning found us driving through Paradise and then into the mountains in search of a Mexican Chickadee, which we found. We also heard some Red Crossbills fly over. That afternoon we went up to the Southwest Research Station but were unable to stay there due to a herpetology meeting. On the way back down from the high country we found another Black-tailed Rattlesnake.

After Paradise, we birded Portal and found another Great Horned Owl. Then we headed to the research station again. On the road, we sadly discovered three dead Montezuma Quail chicks. Louise collected one of them for a museum, and then we continued our trip until we stopped to study some weird, quail-shaped rocks. They turned out to be a pair of Montezuma Quail. That evening we made a third attempt to see Plain-capped Starthroat at Lori Conrad's house. After an hour of waiting, the starthroat finally appeared, and everyone saw it. Later that night we went to Paradise Road, where we found and took a selfie with another Black-tailed Rattlesnake!

On our last day at Cave Creek we birded Portal Road, getting better views of a Scaled Quail perched in the open, as well as fleeting glimpses of three others crossing the road. At the San Pedro House we found some Common Ground-Doves and my lifer Gray Hawk. We left after an hour or so because the heat was unbearable. That night we went to a strip mall across the street from our hotel, where we got to see Lesser Nighthawks were flying overhead hawking insects.



Male Broad-billed Hummingbird. Photo by Patrick Maurice.

The following morning, we visited Hunter Canyon. We saw a few Golden Eagles and heard and briefly saw a Northern Pygmy-Owl. At Ash Canyon we spotted a male Lucifer's Hummingbird, as well as a hybrid Costifer (Lucifer's x Costa's) Hummingbird. We ended the day at Miller Canyon, where we recorded a fledgling Spotted Owl and another Black-tailed Rattlesnake.

Then came the day that everyone was really excited about: the day that we would hike up Ramsey Canyon to see one of the rarest birds in the ABA area, the Tufted Flycatcher. When we arrived at the gates, the sign read that the canyon was closed, which we thought was impossible because the website said that they were open. So we resorted to Plan "B," driving to the top of Carr Canyon from which we hiked into Ramsey. It was a grueling three-hour hike, with the trail at times half a foot wide; one false step would send you tumbling down the side of the canyon. In Ramsey Canyon at last, the first thing we saw was a Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake being mobbed by House Wrens. Walking slowly through the canyon we heard the flycatcher call, and then I saw some movement, I raised my binoculars and exclaimed, "Tufted Flycatcher." Then there was a mad rush to set up scopes and get everyone on the bird. Sadly, the bird was a little distant, but everyone got prolonged looks anyway at this Mexican vagrant. On the way out of the canyon, we were serenaded by Northern Goshawks, juveniles begging for food and flying around us, which was a real treat.



**Camp Chiricahua** (continued from page 18)

Next on the itinerary was the famous Patagonia Picnic Table, where we encountered a family of Thick-billed Kingbirds! I was “Phone Skoping” the birds when an adult flew up and fed a young one. I got it all on video! Then we went to the Paton's Yard, where we saw Violet-crowned Hummingbirds. After seeing the hummingbirds, we headed back to Ramsey Canyon to look for the Flame-colored Tanagers. We didn't find that bird, but did find Summer, Western, and Hepatic Tanagers, as well as a Sulfur-bellied Flycatcher. Later that night we went owling. Even though the destination was scouted by Michael and Jennie the night before, when they found Whiskered Screech, Western Screech, Great-horned, and Elf Owl, we only had a Whiskered Screech Owl, but it gave us great views and I got some decent pictures.



On the last full day of our adventure, we went to Florida Canyon, where we almost saw the North American high count (9!) for Black-capped Gnatcatchers, though this is because we found a nest with babies inside. In the canyon we spotted a few male Varied Buntings. On the return hike, I went to the back of the group and found a pair of Rufous-capped Warblers. I guess it pays to be in the back! Then we went up to Madera Canyon to look for the Elegant Trogon, probably the most sought after bird in Southeast Arizona. We reached the site of the nest hole, and within five minutes the male trogon flew in and camera shutters started clicking. How lucky were we?

Back at the hotel we had a pizza party and swapped birding stories. Camp Chiricahua 2015 had come to an end. I ended up with seeing 188 species of birds, including 29 lifers. I think the camp's total species count was around 190. We also saw six individual rattlesnakes, and now I think I might have caught the “herping bug” and need to buy myself a snake hook!

Elegant Trogon. Photo by Patrick Maurice.

## Species List from Fall 2015 Meeting on Jekyll Island, Georgia

Compiled by Larry Carlile

### 174 Species, plus 1 other taxon

Birds observed during field trips to Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, Andrews Island Disposal Site, Cannon's Point Preserve, Glennville Wastewater Treatment Facility, Jekyll Island Banding Station, Jekyll Island Campground Big Sit, Jekyll Island Hot Spots, Jekyll Island Welcome Center Big Sit, Little St. Simons Island, Savannah COE Disposal Site, Sapelo Island, and St. Catherines Island.

|                              |                           |                             |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Black-bellied Whistling-Duck | Whimbrel                  | Carolina Chickadee          |
| Canada Goose                 | Long-billed Curlew        | Tufted Titmouse             |
| Wood Duck                    | Marbled Godwit            | White-breasted Nuthatch     |
| Gadwall                      | Ruddy Turnstone           | Brown-headed Nuthatch       |
| Mottled Duck                 | Sanderling                | House Wren                  |
| Blue-winged Teal             | Dunlin                    | Marsh Wren                  |
| Northern Shoveler            | Least Sandpiper           | Carolina Wren               |
| Northern Pintail             | Pectoral Sandpiper        | Blue-gray Gnatcatcher       |
| Ruddy Duck                   | Semipalmated Sandpiper    | Eastern Bluebird            |
| Plain Chachalaca             | Western Sandpiper         | Veery                       |
| Pied-billed Grebe            | Short-billed Dowitcher    | Swainson's Thrush           |
| Wood Stork                   | Long-billed Dowitcher     | American Robin              |
| Red-footed Booby             | Wilson's Phalarope        | Gray Catbird                |
| Double-crested Cormorant     | Red-necked Phalarope      | Brown Thrasher              |
| Anhinga                      | Bonaparte's Gull          | Northern Mockingbird        |
| American White Pelican       | Laughing Gull             | European Starling           |
| Brown Pelican                | Ring-billed Gull          | Ovenbird                    |
| American Bittern             | Herring Gull              | Worm-eating Warbler         |
| Great Blue Heron             | Lesser Black-backed Gull  | Northern Waterthrush        |
| Great Egret                  | Great Black-backed Gull   | Blue-winged Warbler         |
| Snowy Egret                  | Gull-billed Tern          | Black-and-white Warbler     |
| Little Blue Heron            | Caspian Tern              | Tennessee Warbler           |
| Tricolored Heron             | Common Tern               | Orange-crowned Warbler      |
| Reddish Egret                | Forster's Tern            | Common Yellowthroat         |
| Cattle Egret                 | Royal Tern                | Hooded Warbler              |
| Green Heron                  | Sandwich Tern             | American Redstart           |
| Black-crowned Night-Heron    | Black Skimmer             | Cape May Warbler            |
| Yellow-crowned Night-Heron   | Rock Pigeon               | Northern Parula             |
| White Ibis                   | Eurasian Collared-Dove    | Magnolia Warbler            |
| Glossy Ibis                  | Mourning Dove             | Yellow Warbler              |
| Roseate Spoonbill            | Common Ground-Dove        | Chestnut-sided Warbler      |
| Black Vulture                | Yellow-billed Cuckoo      | Black-throated Blue Warbler |
| Turkey Vulture               | Black-billed Cuckoo       | Palm Warbler                |
| Osprey                       | Great Horned Owl          | Pine Warbler                |
| Bald Eagle                   | Chimney Swift             | Yellow-throated Warbler     |
| Northern Harrier             | Ruby-throated Hummingbird | Prairie Warbler             |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk           | Belted Kingfisher         | Eastern Towhee              |
| Cooper's Hawk                | Red-headed Woodpecker     | Clay-colored Sparrow        |
| Red-shouldered Hawk          | Red-bellied Woodpecker    | Lark Sparrow                |
| Red-tailed Hawk              | Downy Woodpecker          | Savannah Sparrow            |
| Yellow Rail                  | Northern Flicker          | Seaside Sparrow             |
| Clapper Rail                 | Pileated Woodpecker       | Song Sparrow                |
| King Rail                    | American Kestrel          | Swamp Sparrow               |
| Sora                         | Merlin                    | Summer Tanager              |
| Common Gallinule             | Peregrine Falcon          | Northern Cardinal           |
| American Coot                | Eastern Wood-Pewee        | Blue Grosbeak               |
| Black-necked Stilt           | "Trail's" Flycatcher      | Indigo Bunting              |
| American Avocet              | Least Flycatcher          | Painted Bunting             |
| American Oystercatcher       | Eastern Phoebe            | Bobolink                    |
| Black-bellied Plover         | Eastern Kingbird          | Red-winged Blackbird        |
| Wilson's Plover              | Loggerhead Shrike         | Common Grackle              |
| Semipalmated Plover          | White-eyed Vireo          | Boat-tailed Grackle         |
| Piping Plover                | Yellow-throated Vireo     | Brown-headed Cowbird        |
| Killdeer                     | Red-eyed Vireo            | Baltimore Oriole            |
| Spotted Sandpiper            | Blue Jay                  | House Finch                 |
| Solitary Sandpiper           | American Crow             | American Goldfinch          |
| Greater Yellowlegs           | Fish Crow                 | House Sparrow               |
| Willet                       | Tree Swallow              |                             |
| Lesser Yellowlegs            | Barn Swallow              |                             |

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### Annual membership rates for individuals and families

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bachman's Sparrow (Individual Membership) | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Quail Covey (Family Membership)           | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron)          | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fledgling (Students only)                 | \$15 |

### Life Membership Rates for individuals

- |                          |                  |       |
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