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GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society
www.gos.org

President's Message

By Steve Holzman

I'd like to use this space to thank the various members of the Executive Committee for all they do to keep our organization running smoothly. Our First Vice President, Larry Carlile, is the one who lines up our speakers and arranges the field trips and leaders. Larry has brought in some great speakers over the last three years and has arranged some fantastic trips. Thanks Larry.

Our Second Vice President, Ed Maiorello, is in charge of finding an appropriate meeting location and negotiating our rates. He is also responsible for most of the registration and field trip sign-ups at the meeting. He works with the hotels to arrange a delicious banquet and to assure there is dessert for our Treasurer, Jeannie Wright.

What can I say, we'd be lost without Jeannie. It takes money to do most things in an organization, and Jeannie does a fantastic job overseeing our finances. She makes sure the bills get paid, the grants get distributed, I get reimbursed for stamps, and we continue to have funds to confront any future challenges.

We have received some very generous donations over the last decade, and I'm glad we have Jeannie and her committee to watch over our finances and keep them growing over time.

Our Secretary, Ellen Miller, is responsible for all the note taking at our committee meetings and keeps our notes secure and accessible to all. Thank you, Ellen.

The Membership Chair, Shannon Fair, is the keeper of the grand and exalted Access database. She makes sure the members receive *The Oriole* and *GOShawk* in the way they wish to receive it (digital or paper). She sends out the renewal notices, reminding you that we value your membership and hope you'll stay on for another year. It can occasionally be quite time consuming, especially when your day job requires you to travel all over the world (okay, I'm just a little jealous of that part). But seriously, Shannon, thank you very much for keeping our membership list current and growing.

Ashley Harrington has been our Business Manager for about seven years now. This was my first job with GOS, and I know it can be a

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Georgia Ornithological Society

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<i>Webmaster</i>	Jim Flynn

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

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*Deadline for article submission is the first
of the month prior to publication.
Submission by e-mail is appreciated.*

Welcome, New Members!

Quail Covey (Family)

Amy Alderman	Macon, Georgia
Deb Carter and Becky Poulson	Athens, Georgia
John and Margaret Cole	Columbus, Georgia
Anna Yellin	Statham, Georgia

Bachman's Sparrow (Individual)

Elizabeth Conroy	Athens, Georgia
Yolan De Rosa	Savannah, Georgia
Kay Grinnell	Hilton Head Island, South Carolina
Philip Hui	Milton, Georgia
Ulf Kirchdorfer	Albany, Georgia
Beth Wrobel Langhorst	Avondale Estates, Georgia
Frederick Langhorst	Avondale Estates, Georgia
Ingle Larkin	Marietta, Georgia
JoAnn Miller	Decatur, Georgia
Mary Pallon	Aiken, South Carolina
Anne Pelletier	Peachtree Corners, Georgia

Fledgling (Student)

Heather Korey	Dacula, Georgia
Katherine Morgan	Helen, Georgia
Patricia Shapiro	Savannah, Georgia

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

GOS FALL MEETING

October 7-10, 2016, Jekyll Island

GOS WINTER MEETING

January 13-16, 2017, Tybee Island

GOS Grant Application Deadlines

Bill Terrell Graduate Student Research Grants, December 1, 2016
 Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grants, December 31, 2016
 H. Branch Howe, Jr., Graduate Student Research Grants, December 31, 2016
 Norene Boring, Undergraduate Student Research Grants, September 15, 2016
 GOS Opportunity Grants, no deadline
 More information about these grants is available on the GOS website, gos.org.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

ton of work at times. Ashley makes sure you get that hat, T-shirt, or book once you push the buy-now button on the website. He holds our inventory of GOS merchandise, and drags it along to sell at every GOS meeting. I hope he never sells his truck in favor of a Prius or something.

Although I'm running out of room, I want to mention the rest of the folks that keep GOS on track. Dr. Reneé Carleton is the chair of the Editorial Committee and has been doing a great job putting together issues of *The Oriole*, and is currently working on getting *The Oriole* back issues online at the SORA website. Rachel Holzman edits the *GOShawk*, putting out four issues per year that we all look forward to reading. She has a great eye for creating a dynamic layout, and I can't thank her enough. Mim Eisenberg is her assistant editor and has her work cut out for her, making sure my scribblings make sense and have their commas all in the right places. I hope that last sentence is grammatically correct. Meg and Dave Hedeem have signed on to put together the *From the Field* section of *The Oriole*.

Jim Flynn is the chair of our Checklist and Records Committee, and he and the committee make sure the official list of Georgia birds is kept up to date and that rare sightings are evaluated objectively. He also helps out with our website. Nathan Farnau is our Conservation Chair and is always ready to send a letter expressing our concern regarding various local, state, regional, and even national bird conservation issues. It is an important job because we cannot allow our elected officials to think that birds don't matter. Dr. Bob Sargent, as Education Chair, does a great job with Camp TALON, the Youth Birding Challenge, and helping young people further develop their interest in birds. We are very grateful for all you do. Mark Beebe keeps GOS involved in EarthShare of Georgia. EarthShare partners with businesses and employees to support numerous environmental organizations through workplace donation campaigns and other activities. EarthShare has a diverse mix of local, national, and international nonprofits as members. Phil Hardy is our historian and holds the records of our organization. He also provides us with great articles, allowing us to get to know our fellow members, past and present.

There are other members serving on our various committees, and I'd like to recognize their support and assistance over the years. Richard Hall, Joel McNeal, Lois Stacey, Tim Keyes, Georgann Schmalz, E.J. Williams, Jim Ferrari, Joe Meyers, John Rappole, Todd Schneider, Patti Wohner, Dan Vickers, Dennis Lacoss, Bill Lotz, and Jim Valentine. For more information, please visit gos.org/executive-committee.

An organization such as GOS has no paid employees. We all do the work we do here because we believe birds are a crucial part of our lives. We all want to see the bird life of Georgia thrive and are willing to take part of our day to do what we can to ensure that happens. So thank you to everyone who does something for birds, whether it's via GOS or your local Audubon chapter, or even just in your own back yard. Everything counts.

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, 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 December 2016 issue.

Krista Gridley, In Memoriam

By Bob Sattlemeyer



Krista Gridley on a pelagic trip. Photo courtesy of Richard Hall.

In September, 2014, not long after she learned that her cancer had returned and metastasized, Krista Gridley took a break from chemotherapy, and we went to California to do some pelagic birding with the legendary Debbie Shearwater. For Krista, some pelagic birding meant four long trips in five days, with an “off” day to bird on land. That day we drove down the coast toward Big Sur, stopping at various hotspots along the way, but our primary target was her lifer California Condor. We spent several hours scanning the skies around places where they had been recently reported, with no luck. Finally, late in the afternoon, we headed back toward Monterey. It had still been a good day, as any day birding with Krista was. As we came around a particularly spectacular bend in the road high over the ocean, Krista said, “Pull over here. I want to take a photo for Sally.” We walked over to the edge of the cliff and there, of course, was the California Condor, soaring along the beach several hundred feet below us.

All birders are familiar with those serendipitous moments when a long-sought bird seems to materialize out of nowhere, and Krista had many of those magical times. After all, Long-eared Owls and Rufous Hummingbirds don’t show up in just anyone’s back yard. But what made that particular moment pure Krista is that it happened because she was thinking of someone else. Birders are, in general, a sociable and helpful bunch, eager to share their knowledge (or maybe obsession) with others. But with Krista this took the form of a natural kindness and thoughtfulness that all of us fortunate enough to have known her prized. And she had many circles of family and friends who knew the same warmth and love.

Krista Gridley, In Memoriam *(continued from page*

And her love of birds and birding was not a narrow pursuit, for she loved anything wild, from orienteering and hiking in the mountains, to dogsledding in Alaska, or teaching her Girl Scouts to canoe and kayak on trips to the Okefenokee Swamp. In her last years, under a grim prognosis and in between bouts of chemotherapy, she lived with a fierce determination to experience some of the wildest and most remote places in the world, from South Africa to the jungles of Brazil, from India and Bhutan to Antarctica. And in the remotest places she still thought of family and friends, so I was not surprised that she managed to send me a postcard and some photos from Antarctica, telling me what a great time she was having and looking forward to our next adventure.



Photos courtesy of Richard Hall.

Fort Sill Black-capped Vireo Project

By John Mark Simmons

What would I be doing if time were to rewind back to January of this year? Filling out job applications, lots of them. Summer is prime time for countless numbers of wildlife-related field projects from graduate students doing their master's theses all the way to long-term ecological endeavors. While there are an abundance of jobs out there for eager young learners like me seeking experience, these assistant positions are extremely competitive. I applied for twenty different jobs all over the continent.

One of the projects that caught my eye on the Texas A&M job board website was a Black-capped Vireo surveying job in the Wichita Mountains of Oklahoma. Would I want to work with an endangered species that would also be a life bird for me? The answer to that question was obvious. And as luck would have it, my résumé caught Joseph Grzybowski's eye as well. Dr. Grzybowski is the project manager (AKA the godfather of Black-capped Vireos and many other things), and he responded to my application e-mail with a request to interview me. Fast forward to May 7th, the day after I finished my freshman year at the University of North Georgia, and I'm on a plane bound for Oklahoma City, where my friend and coworker, Landon Neumann, would pick me up and drive us both to Lawton, Oklahoma.

The site for this project is Fort Sill, a U.S. Army artillery base. One interesting aspect of the Endangered Species Act is the requirement that all U.S. military installations manage their endangered species if any live on base property. Essentially, we were military contractors hired to survey and monitor the Black-capped Vireos on Fort Sill. Dr. Grzybowski started leading this project in 1988, when Black-capped Vireos were first discovered to be inhabiting the low scrubby oaks in the Wichita Mountains. Every year he hires a team of field technicians who are capable of identifying the vireos, surveying the local population, and monitoring their nesting success. This year he hired Landon Neumann and me as field techs, with Sarah Weber as our field supervisor and data manager.

Surveying was one of the two primary tasks in our job description. We did this by hiking into the appropriate Black-capped Vireo habitat areas, and looking and listening for individual males. Once we detected a male, we marked his location with a GPS, wrote down whatever details we could observe, such as approximate age, band combination if any, behavior, and so on. This bit of the project went from early May until late June.

Territory monitoring was the other task. During our first week of training, we focused only on nest searching. Every day we practiced the basic techniques for finding the vireos' nests. Although finding a tennis-ball-sized clump of spiderweb, mud, and leaves was sometimes quite difficult, this was my favorite part of the summer! Spotting that tiny nest on the edge of a black jack oak tree gave me a feeling of



John Mark Simmons with a Black-capped Vireo. Photo courtesy of John Mark Simmons.

Fort Sill Black-capped Vireo Project *(continued from page 6)*

great satisfaction, especially during the hottest and hardest of days.

When we found a vireo nest, we would check the contents immediately, record the GPS coordinates, make a pile of rocks nearby so we could find it more easily later, and then move on to another territory. The nesting cycle of Black-capped Vireos is about 35 days from building the nest to the young hopping out of it, fully fledged. We monitored each nest during the nesting cycle and made observations using Dr. Grzybowski's detailed and accurate notes. If a nest failed because of depredation or rain, vireos usually attempted a second nest and sometimes several more. Even if a pair's first nest is successful, they will almost certainly attempt a second brood.

In addition to surveying and monitoring, we did a few days of banding. Using just one net and playback, we caught around forty vireos from four days of banding. Each bird received a unique color combination of plastic bands as well as the federally issued aluminum band. Being able to identify specific individual vireos is extremely helpful in determining territory boundaries.

A typical day for me during the months of May, June, and July began with checking into Fort Sill's Department of Natural Resources office to make sure we would not be heading into an area slated for artillery shelling. After that rather crucial task, we drove out to our work location for the day. By sunrise, we were looking for Black-capped Vireos. Excessive hiking and rock climbing/hopping was involved in chasing these birds down to map their territories and find their nests. Despite the usual grunt work of field season, it was a good feeling to literally spend all day listening to and watching these beautiful songbirds to learn about how they spend their lives.

Other forms of wildlife were plentiful as well. We had several close encounters with western diamondback rattlesnakes, watched coyotes and young gray foxes leap through fields and canyons, and heard the mournful call of greater roadrunners every day without fail. Overall, I enjoyed spending my summer in the western part of the country constantly in the presence of a bird that I had wanted to see for so long while also obtaining experience that should prove vital in pursuing other avenues into ornithology.



Black-capped Vireo habitat. Photo courtesy of John Mark Simmons.



Black-capped Vireo. Photo courtesy of John Mark Simmons.

Camp Avocet

By Branch Austinson

In late July and early August, I was thrilled to fly from Atlanta, Georgia, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Just a few months before, I learned that I had been awarded the birding scholarship I had applied for and would be attending Camp Avocet from July 30 to August 5. I left early in the morning on July 30 to make it in time for my morning flight, sleeping in the car while my aunt drove. I made it for the flight and flew in to Philadelphia that afternoon. After making it through the airport, I was picked up and continued my journey to Lewes, Delaware, which I would call home for the next six days. I arrived at the University of Delaware a few hours after leaving the airport, unpacked, and got acquainted with my fellow birders. They were from all over the United States, and one was even from England.

I headed outside after meeting my roommates and looked for birds with one of the leaders, Bill Stewart, and a group of other teenagers my own age. After eating supper, we settled in early for the long days ahead of us. Our first location to bird was Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge, and we stayed there until a few hours after eating lunch, leaving to go to a few other hot spots close by. After returning back to the university, we all had an early supper and another early night, which, as I would learn later on, was a necessary way to end my day. The following day, we struck out early again and headed to Prime Hook NWR, along with a few other local locations that were known to have amazing birds. When we returned, another early supper and lights out awaited us, and, honestly, I was perfectly fine with an early bedtime.

The next day, we all got in the vans and headed to Virginia's Chincoteague NWR, where we stayed the whole day. At that location, I saw my first Whimbrels as well as Black-necked Stilts, which are one of my favorite birds. We also were fortunate enough to see the wild ponies that are quite a tourist attraction. As I mentioned, we pretty much stayed at this location the whole day, but the variety of birds was so great that we couldn't help it. The following day was one of my favorites; we headed out to the ferry and crossed over to Cape May and Stone Harbor of New Jersey. At Stone Harbor Point, I saw my first ever Red Knot, and that made the whole trip worth it. I also got to see what a little caring could do. The nesting grounds for so many birds here had been man-made, thanks to enough people who actually care about conserving bird nesting habitat for species that are struggling to survive, like the Red Knot. After visiting Nummy Island and a local birding store and eating a quick supper, we all got back on the ferry for a slightly bumpy ride home.

August 4th was a more relaxed day. We stayed closer to home and drove out to Cape Henlopen, a location that was close enough for us to visit almost every day. While it was one of the closest locations to visit, it was also one of my favorites. The ocean wind in my hair and the ability to just stand and look out across the bay made my days so much better, as nothing calms the senses and nerves better than sand between the toes and a beautiful view to look at. After returning, we had a later lights-out time than usual and had a fire as some of us enjoyed throwing a Frisbee around. That night was a sad one, as it was the last one before we all left and returned to our homes all across the country the next day.

The following morning a van brought me back to the airport where I would fly back to Atlanta. While riding on the plane back, I realized how lucky I was to be chosen for a journey like this one. I sincerely thank the Georgia Ornithological Society for new friends and memories that will stay with me for the rest of my life. I would also like to thank the leaders of Camp Avocet for making my stay the best one away from home I had ever had. As I continue to go about my life day to day, I wish that one day, I will meet all my friends again and share more about the wonderful world of birds.

Camp Avocet

By Selu Adams

This summer, I had the honor and privilege of being able to attend American Birding Association's Camp Avocet in Lewes, Delaware. I'd had some experience with shorebirds in the past, but coming from the mountains of northeast Georgia, I knew that I would be birding in totally different habitats and conditions than what I was used to.

Early Saturday morning, I said goodbye to my family and boarded a plane in Atlanta. After a short flight, I landed in Philadelphia, grabbed my luggage, and got on one of the shuttles with several other campers and headed to the Virden Center, where we would be staying for the week. A couple of hours later, we arrived at the Center, moved into our rooms, and met our roommates. After dinner and a short orientation meeting, we headed to Cape Henlopen State Park, our first birding location of the week, where we had a taste of what was to come.



Immature Yellow-crowned Night-heron by Selu Adams.

The next morning, we headed to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge and did a lot of birding in the refuge's salt marshes. Upon arrival, we were greeted by the sight of scores of egrets, plovers, and sandpipers in the salt marsh. As the campers began to get in the vans to drive to our next location, one of the campers spotted some movement in the trees on the edge of the marsh: night herons! We were able to get a great look at several immature Yellow-crowned Night-Herons and two adult Black-crowned Night Herons.

After eating lunch, we were amazed by the spectacle of more than 2,500 Bank Swallows. Most of them swarmed in the air, but some would try to land on the tops of corn tassels before quickly losing balance and flying back into the air. That evening, we visited ABA's headquarters in Delaware City, Delaware, and met Jeff and Liz Gordon.

The next day (Monday), we headed to Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge. We saw numerous herons, egrets, terns, gulls, yellowlegs, plovers, and Osprey. A little while later, one of the campers spotted a Hudsonian Godwit, a lifer for almost everyone (including me). That evening, we drove to DuPont Nature Center at Mispillion Harbor Reserve and saw more than 20 Osprey perched on rocks along the shore.

On Tuesday, we headed to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia. We were surprised by a Delmarva fox squirrel, which scampered across the road near the refuge's entrance. Once we got out of the vans, we were enthusiastically greeted by the mosquitoes, but that didn't stop us! We saw White-rumped Sandpipers, Little Blue Herons, Cattle Egrets, Glossy Ibises, Brown Pelicans, and more.

The next morning, the campers headed to the Cape May Ferry Terminal. Shortly before boarding the ferry, we spotted a Black Scoter (lifer!). After we boarded, ABA made an announcement to the passengers that there were birders aboard who could help identify birds or answer any questions anyone had about them. We helped the passengers and saw a Wilson's Storm-Petrel, another lifer,

Camp Avocet (continued from page 9)

along the way. Once arriving in New Jersey, we birded at Stone Harbor Point and got Piping Plovers, Red Knots, and even one Roseate Tern! Stone Harbor Point was also one of my favorite locations of the week because of the juvenile Black Skimmers and American Oystercatchers we saw.

Thursday was the day everyone had been looking forward to all week. Campers divided into teams for a bit of friendly competition: the Big Green Hour! Teams (accompanied by one staff member for verification) would have one hour to find as many species as possible at Cape Henlopen State Park. We arrived at the location, and everyone hurried out of the vans to find the most species with their team. My team saw the most of the usual shorebirds and also some passerines that had not been seen all week, like the Indigo Bunting and Brown-headed Nuthatch, both familiar birds for me but not for the rest of my team. After an hour was up, all of the teams gathered under a pavilion and compared species totals. My team had won! The rest of the day was a beach day, where everyone relaxed. That evening, all of the campers gathered for one last meeting and tally before heading to their rooms to pack.



Juvenile Black Skimmer by Selu Adams.

Friday, the end of the week, came too soon. After eating breakfast, everyone said a tearful goodbye to all of the friends they had met that week.

I will never forget the amazing experience I had at Camp Avocet. I met many new friends and made many good memories. I am extremely grateful that GOS gave me this amazing opportunity of being able to attend Camp Avocet.



Camp Avocet birders at Chincoteague NWR by Selu Adams.

An Exceptional Birding Adventure: Camp Colorado 2016

By Rich Hull

Upon my arrival at the Denver International Airport, I was filled with anticipation for the following week. Camp Colorado was a completely new experience for me, as it was both my first young birders camp and my first dedicated birding trip. I was really looking forward to learning about birds while birding with great leaders and awesome young birders. Another reason for my excitement, of course, was the birds themselves. After it was all said and done, Camp Colorado did not disappoint. I had a total of 40 lifers along with memories that will last a lifetime.

On the two-hour ride from the airport to the YMCA of the Rockies, located in Estes Park, Colorado, we started to see a few western species: Swainson's Hawk, Western Kingbird, and White-throated Swift. When we got to the YMCA, however, they started to pour in! Cassin's Finch, Cordilleran Flycatchers, Green-tailed Towhees, a Rufous Hummingbird, and Band-tailed Pigeons were all present at different locations within the YMCA. Even though we had not done much actual birding during the first day, I still had nine lifers!

The second day of the trip was one of two montane birding days. Our first stop, located within Rocky Mountain National Park, was a trail system called Wild Basin. As soon as we piled out of the vans we had a MacGillivray's Warbler, and, before 10 minutes had passed, we had one of the best birds of the whole trip: Black Swifts! Four of them, presumably a family, kept giving us unheard of views as they hunted for insects. According to the leaders, those birds were probably the only nesting Black Swifts in the entire county. Yet the fun did not stop there, as we had at least ten American Dippers along a roaring creek, including two nests. Another camper and I were able to locate the second nest, which had four nestlings. This was undoubtedly a highlight of the trip.



American Dipper by Rich Hull.

Later in the day, we stopped by the Fawnbrook Inn for approximately an hour, where we had a flyover Red-naped

Sapsucker, tons of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds (more than 100 individuals), at least one male Rufous Hummingbird, and an uncommon male Calliope Hummingbird. That evening we enjoyed a presentation on county big years and various other similar challenges, presented by Jen Brumfield. This tied into the next day's activities, when we would attempt to break the Camp Colorado Big Day's record, which stood at 94 species total. In order to break the record, we would have to observe 95 species of birds from sunup to dinner. Although big days typically continue to sundown, Camp Colorado's big day ends at dinner since everyone is exhausted at that point.

At 4:30 a.m. on July 18, my favorite day of the trip began. While driving to the Pawnee National Grasslands, we enjoyed the Colorado sunrise as we alertly watched for birds. By the time we ate breakfast in the grasslands, I already had several lifers: Lark Bunting, Western Meadowlark, and Western Grebe. When we reached the field where we hoped we would get Mountain Plovers, the floodgates opened: Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Burrowing Owls, 24 Mountain Plovers, McCown's Longspurs, and even an American Badger made appearances. Later on, in another section of the grasslands, we had an uncommon Chestnut-collared Longspur, one of the top three birds of the trip. Although we saw many more good species, such as Say's Phoebe, Sage Thrasher,

An Exceptional Birding Adventure: Camp Colorado 2016 *(continued from page 11)*

Golden Eagle, and Brewer's Sparrow, we were not on pace to break the record when we left the grasslands. To make matters worse, we were also unable to visit a reservoir due to time restrictions. Despite the odds, however, we were able to make a large push at the YMCA, picking up several of the more common montane birds. By the time we were heading to the dining hall, which could potentially end our Camp Colorado Big Day record aspirations, we had been able to tie the record at 94 species. However, a Northern Goshawk, the 95th and record-breaking species, flew high overhead. Although it was only seen by a few kids who were lagging behind in hopes of a new bird (unfortunately, I was not one of them), someone's photograph proved it: We were the new Camp Colorado Big Day record holders!

The next day was our second and last montane birding day within Rocky Mountain National Park. While we were driving in the park, a Dusky Grouse chick flew across the road, and we were all able to get out and relocate the chick and find the mother. Later on in the day we had a flyover Golden Eagle and a few other nice western species, including Dusky Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, a much more cooperative Northern Goshawk, and Evening Grosbeaks.

The fifth day was our alpine day. After some intense scoping we were able to find at least four White-tailed Ptarmigans: one adult female, one adult male, and two chicks. Later on we were also able to get point-blank views of a Black-capped Rosy Finch on a snow drift. Some mammals we observed included a very cute immature Yellow-bellied Marmot and several very small and furry American Pikas. At our lunch stop on the way down the mountains, we were able to relocate an American Three-toed Woodpecker, my favorite bird of the trip.

On our last full day of Camp Colorado, we drove down into the foothills for some riparian birding. Since I had missed the Dusky Flycatcher at Rocky Mountain National Park, I was relieved to hear my lifer Dusky Flycatcher calling from a stand of dry woods. However, the highlight of the riparian area was a quick, but very enjoyable, look at a Virginia Warbler. We were also able to observe several beautiful adult male Lazuli Buntings. After unsuccessfully trying for Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays, Canyon Wrens, and Rock Wrens, we headed back up to the YMCA, where we spent our last afternoon of camp.

As I got my last and 40th lifer of the trip, Cinnamon Teal, on the way to the airport, the trip seemed to be at an end. However, this trip will live on in my memories for a lifetime as I remember not only the birds I observed, but also the friends I met, the sights I saw, and the lessons I learned. In short, Camp Colorado was an experience of a lifetime. Thank you to the ABA and Camp Colorado's great leaders for making this camp possible, and thank you to the Georgia Ornithological Society for making this camp possible for me.



Rufous Hummingbird by Rich Hull.

Camp Colorado

By Graydon Hidalgo

This summer, I was granted the opportunity to attend Camp Colorado, and I can't begin to describe what an enriching experience this privilege truly was. Over the course of six days, I was taken across the incredible diversity of habitats found in the state of Colorado. From shortgrass prairie to alpine tundra, Camp Colorado brought me to some of the most iconic ecosystems of the North American continent. This amount of multifarious excursion across such an unbelievable wilderness granted me a phenomenal wealth of information to help advance my knowledge and experience of the study of ornithology. With the guidance of a dedicated and experienced group of staff, I had many opportunities to not only observe a rich array of wild bird species, but also to gain background on the complexities of each bird's significance to the health of the area.



Short-horned Lizard by Graydon Hidalgo.

However, the knowledge imparted was not limited to simply the avian variety of wildlife. Through our exploration of habitats filled with bird life, we discovered a great abundance of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects. With each new find, we gained an understanding of each species' ecological niche. In fact, I remember a specific experience from our visit to the Pawnee National Grassland. As we drove through a paradise of shortgrass, we came upon a field so rich in wildlife it was basically the equivalent of a food-web poster you would find in any biology classroom. In this single field, in which we spent only an hour, we observed an active prairie dog town within flocks of McCown's Longspurs, at least a dozen Mountain Plovers, a Prairie Falcon, a parliament of Burrowing Owls, a pair of Ferruginous Hawks, a pair of Swainson's Hawks, a lounge of Short-horned lizards, and a

swift fox. It was an ecological masterpiece. However, my favorite species of all was the American badger. Just the day before, a group of counselors was discussing the elusiveness of that animal. I remember Raymond Vansburick explaining how he had lived in New Mexico for 26 years and had seen only one badger in all that time. Not 10 minutes after our arrival, this keystone species stuck its striped head out of the top of a prairie dog burrow only 40 feet away from where we were.

During the course of the week, my absolute favorite trip was one any counselor at camp would tell you was the crowning jewel to a camp in the Rockies: our hike through the alpine tundra. Without a doubt, Rocky Mountain National Park has the greatest accessibility to alpine tundra habitat of anywhere else on the continent. The ethereal feeling when you are "on top of the world" at 12,000 feet is one that never leaves you. Alpine wind is crisp and thin, and as it sweeps across the tundra and across your skin, you feel as if it could carry you aloft. There is such a purity within the air that with each breath you



American Badger by Graydon Hidalgo.

Camp Colorado (continued from page 13)

seem to become lighter in weight, as if you have joined the atmosphere. The hills are brimming with age-old flora of all different shapes and colors, creating a spectrum of life as far as the eye can see. Majesty surrounds you, and glacier-sculpted pinnacles capped with snow jut from the valley floor to cut the ever-changing skies. From one view you may find massive herds of elk within the glacier-fed fields, moose carving the valley floor, White-tailed Ptarmigan enveloped within the rocky meadows, or Brown-capped Rosy Finch flying about the snow fields—endless beauty.



Camper enjoying the view by Graydon Hidalgo.



Field guide lesson by Graydon Hidalgo.

In addition to the majesty we observed, Camp Colorado was an invaluable stepping stone on my path to a career in wildlife conservation and research. Each night, counselors would elaborate on a field project or study they had accomplished in their careers, and how it allowed them to progress in their path in conservation. On top of sharing their own experiences, the Camp Colorado staff gave us chances to develop our skills in field work through individually-led classes based on that counselor's skill set. My personal favorite was "Keeping a Field Journal," taught by Jennie Duberstein. The class consisted of four campers, including myself, in an atmosphere of cooperative, discussion-based learning.

My favorite and most invaluable moment over the entire week was our last night of camp. All of the counselors sat in a panel across the front of the classroom and gave us the opportunity to discuss our aspiring careers and to ask them their advice on how to make them happen. Hearing personal advice from such experienced individuals in the field of ornithology was an experience within itself.

I cannot begin to thank the Georgia Ornithological Society for such a life-altering expedition. In addition, I also thank my counselors for their guidance, their support, and their work in the field of conservation. This camp has taught me a wealth of new knowledge to apply on my path to a career as a researcher, educator, and conservationist. I am grateful for the support I have received from the ornithological community in Georgia as I embark on my college career and beyond.

GOS Binocular Strap

By Steve Holzman

Tired of your binoculars bouncing around as you bird? This fall GOS will be selling our own branded binocular harness. As we go to press we are not yet sure if we'll have them in time for the fall meeting, but if we don't, we'll have them soon after. Visit gos.org and watch for this new and useful piece of GOS merchandise. Thanks to GOS members Tom and Sonja Striker, owners of Blue Ridge Bird Seed Company, for providing a recommendation for the company that will be producing these harnesses.



18 Years of Georgia Birders Online, aka GABO-L

By Steve Holzman

Let's go back in time to September 1998. There is no Facebook, no eBird, no texting, and our phones were not all that smart. You might find out, five days after the fact via the rare bird alert, that something cool had shown up in the next county over, but only if you happened to call the RBA. It was into this world that GABO-L (**GeorgiA Birders OnLine**) was launched. Some pronounced it GABBO, others GAYBO. I say however you want to pronounce it is fine with me, although I say GABBO with a short "a" sound. GABO is an email system to connect birders no matter how close or far apart they live in the real world. It has been used over the last 18 years to share bird sightings, interesting Georgia birding locations, birding experiences, and Georgia-related bird conservation issues. I think it made rare bird chasing more democratic. You no longer had to know someone to find out about a rarity. I dare say all our state lists would be a lot more sparse without it. But rare birds aside, GABO became a community of like-minded people willing to share their experiences with strangers, either within their own cities, or in towns hundreds of miles away. Friendships were formed between birders who, in some cases, had never met. Birders with limited mobility or resources could bird vicariously through others, taking delight in their sightings and adventures. As we tend to use even more immediate communications via texts and eBird checklists posted from the field these days, I still think GABO has a place in this new world. Let's take a look at some September highlights over the years:

September 26, 1998—Darrel Lee reported two Magnificent Frigatebirds over the south beach at Jekyll Island.

September 18, 2001—Eran Tomer, an avid GABO poster over the years, reported good numbers of nighthawks over northeast Atlanta.

September 4, 2005—because we still didn't have smart phones yet, Bob Zaremba posted a message that Jim Flynn and Bud Horn had a Long-tailed Jaeger at Lake Hartwell.

September 22, 2009—Max Medley called Mark McShane to say that Josh Spence had an inland Sabine's Gull in Murray County. Mark McShane got the word out to GABO and included GPS coordinates.

September 11, 2016—Jim Flynn posted from the field via his iPhone that the phalarope in Rome, first reported to eBird by Shawn Reed, was actually a Red Phalarope.

I'm sure at some point in the future, communication via the GABO Listserv® will go the way of the answering machine Rare Bird Alert, but for now, it seems to still have some purpose for Georgia birders who happen to be online.

For details on how to subscribe, visit: gos.org/georgia-birders-online

To view the archives, create a username and password here: listserv.uga.edu, and then visit the archives here:

listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=GABO-L

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