



Georgia Ornithological Society

FOUNDED 1936

**RESULTS OF GOS FALL 2004 MEETING
AND SPECIES COUNTDOWN
(Concurrent with Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival)
8 - 10 October 2004
Jekyll Island, GA
Lydia Thompson, Festival Planner**



© Giff Beaton

The rain mostly stayed away and the birds and birders certainly showed up. Georgia's second coastal birding festival was held during October 8-10, and like fine wine this event just keeps getting better with time. If you attended last year's festival and came away convinced that nothing more could have been crammed into that wonderfully hyperactive weekend, this year's effort may have left you and the other 340 attendees breathless. First of all, the party started a day early with the festival's first Coastal Birding Challenge

organized by Russ Wigh. The team of Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba, and Chuck Saleeby bested four other teams with a one-day count of 124 species, and was rewarded with a beautiful trophy courtesy of Russ and Lydia Thompson.

Friday through Sunday featured 31 field trips to most of the barrier islands and several of the inland hot spots. The trips yielded 183 species along with sightings of diamondback rattlesnakes on Little St. Simons Island and an alligator carrying a feral hog in its mouth in the Altamaha River. Birding highlights included Eared Grebe, American White Pelican, Snowy Egret, Reddish Egret, Glossy Ibis, Northern Pintail, Peregrine Falcon, Piping Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Wilson's Phalarope, Chuck-will's-widow, Traill's Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Clay-colored Sparrow, Painted Bunting, and Baltimore Oriole (see the complete species list in this newsletter).

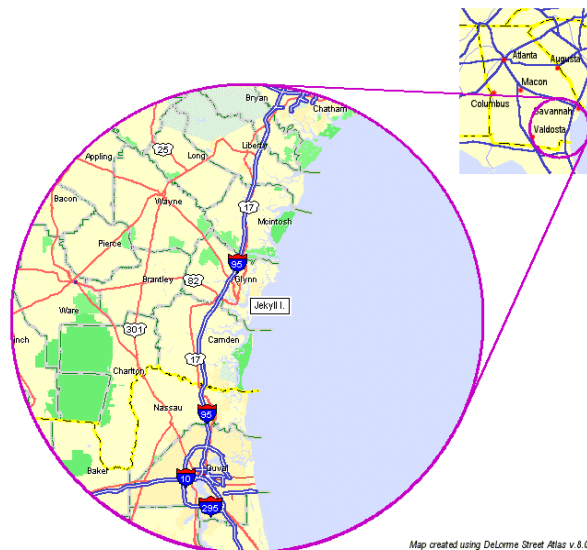
Birders weren't just flocking to the islands on that weekend; back at the Convention Center there were birds and birders flocking to every nook and cranny. Friday afternoon kicked off with "Toasting and Boasting on the Coast," a captivating speech by former Lt. Governor Pierre Howard about the many virtues of Georgia's spectacular coastal environs. On Friday and Saturday the center was home to 15 seminars covering aspects of birds ranging from hummers to pelagics, and from bird photography to identifying fall warblers. The center's Rookery was the roost for 43 vendors throughout the weekend, as they hawked binoculars, art, field vests, and anything else the complete birder desired. The Rookery exhibits also included an ornithological poster session detailing research on grassland birds, Painted Buntings, American Oystercatchers, Piping Plovers, and Mottled Ducks.

Saturday night's banquet started with a taste of the South: a low country boil. Lydia Thompson led off the program praising the many folks who made the festival so successful, particularly Amy Ochoa, Diane Churchill, Pat Metz, Russ Wigh, Sheila Willis, and Steve Holzman. Of course, Lydia is so humble she wouldn't get close to mentioning all the work she had done on behalf of the festival, so I thanked her when it was my turn at the podium. The audience, in turn, thanked her with a standing ovation. Then I passed the microphone to John Swiderski, who presented GOS' Earle Greene Award (see the full story in this newsletter) to Giff Beaton, an obvious choice for this prestigious award because of the many, many contributions he has made to ornithology in Georgia.

Next on Saturday night's agenda was the featured event: Dr. Rocky Gutierrez' program "The Spotted Owl: Conservation Icon or Cool Critter?" My many communications with Rocky (I had never met him before) up until that night had given me an inkling that he was both a very sharp guy and a hoot (no pun intended). He confirmed my initial impression five minutes into his talk. Rocky gave a talk about a western species that kept us easterners glued to our seats. He was in turn a teacher, birder, and stand-up comic. The high point for many in the audience was when Rocky cut loose with booming renditions of calls of male and female spotted owls. Diane Churchill concluded a full evening by leading the countdown.

Most events of this sort often conclude on Sunday with a few field trips, usually wrapping up by noon. Not this festival. The full slate of field trips on Sunday was followed by talks on sea turtles and snakes, and an evening birding trip to Laura S. Walker State Park led by Sheila Willis. Quite a weekend! Thank you to everyone who made this festival possible and successful. With your continued support and the magnet that is Georgia's coastal ecosystem this event will become one of the premiere festivals in the South. See you again on Jekyll Island next October.

Submitted by Bob Sargent



Map created using DeLorme Street Atlas v. 8.0

[Click map to view full size](#)

SPECIES COUNTDOWN

Steve Holzman, Compiler

183 species observed

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

Common Loon	Northern Bobwhite	Forster's Tern	American Robin
Pied-billed Grebe	Clapper Rail	Black Skimmer	Gray Catbird
Horned Grebe	King Rail	Rock Dove	Northern Mockingbird

Eared Grebe	Virginia Rail	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Brown Thrasher
Northern Gannet	Sora	Mourning Dove	European Starling
American White Pelican	Common Moorhen	Common Ground-Dove	Tennessee Warbler
Brown Pelican	American Coot	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Northern Parula
Double-crested Cormorant	Sandhill Crane	Barn Owl	Yellow Warbler
Anhinga	Black-bellied Plover	Eastern Screech-Owl	Magnolia Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Wilson's Plover	Chuck-will's-widow	Cape May Warbler
Great Egret	Semipalmated Plover	Chimney Swift	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Snowy Egret	Piping Plover	Belted Kingfisher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Little Blue Heron	Killdeer	Red-headed Woodpecker	Yellow-throated Warbler
Tricolored Heron	American Oystercatcher	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Pine Warbler
Cattle Egret	Black-necked Stilt	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Prairie Warbler
Reddish Egret	American Avocet	Downy Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Green Heron	Greater Yellowlegs	Hairy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Lesser Yellowlegs	Northern Flicker	American Redstart
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Willet	Pileated Woodpecker	Ovenbird
White Ibis	Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Northern Waterthrush
Glossy Ibis	Long-billed Curlew	Trail's Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Roseate Spoonbill	Marbled Godwit	Eastern Phoebe	Yellow-breasted Chat
Wood Stork	Ruddy Turnstone	Great Crested Flycatcher	Summer Tanager
Black Vulture	Red Knot	Western Kingbird	Eastern Towhee
Turkey Vulture	Sanderling	Eastern Kingbird	Clay-colored Sparrow
Wood Duck	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Loggerhead Shrike	Savannah Sparrow
American Wigeon	Western Sandpiper	White-eyed Vireo	Grasshopper Sparrow
Mallard	Least Sandpiper	Red-eyed Vireo	Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Mottled Duck	Pectoral Sandpiper	Blue Jay	Seaside Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Dunlin	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Stilt Sandpiper	Fish Crow	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Short-billed Dowitcher	Tree Swallow	Northern Cardinal
Green-winged Teal	Long-billed Dowitcher	No. Rough-winged Swallow	Blue Grosbeak
Ring-necked Duck	Dowitcher (sp)	Barn Swallow	Indigo Bunting
Ruddy Duck	Wilson's Snipe	Carolina Chickadee	Painted Bunting
Osprey	Wilson's Phalarope	Tufted Titmouse	Bobolink
Bald Eagle	Laughing Gull	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Bonaparte's Gull	Carolina Wren	Eastern Meadowlark
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Ring-billed Gull	House Wren	Common Grackle
Cooper's Hawk	Herring Gull	Sedge Wren	Boat-tailed Grackle
Red-shouldered Hawk	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Marsh Wren	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Great Black-backed Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Baltimore Oriole
American Kestrel	Caspian Tern	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	House Finch
Merlin	Royal Tern	Eastern Bluebird	American Goldfinch
Peregrine Falcon	Sandwich Tern	Gray-cheeked Thrush	House Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Common Tern	Swainson's Thrush	

[Return to the GOS Meetings Page](#)

8/2013