



Georgia Ornithological Society

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RESULTS OF GOS FALL 2005 MEETING AND SPECIES COUNTDOWN (Concurrent with Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival) 6 - 9 October 2005 Jekyll Island, GA Lydia Thompson, Festival Planner



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Tropical Storm Tammy roared through Southeast Georgia shortly before Georgia's third coastal birding festival, but the birds and the birders persevered. About 300 people pre-registered for this year's festival, held October 6-10. Most were from Georgia, but visitors from 20 other states and Canada also attended. One hundred of the registrants identified themselves as GOS members. The weather kept some folks away and certainly limited the number of "walk-ins," but still there were 78 seminar and

workshop tickets sold to local folks who came to visit The Rookery. And there were over 50 field trips scheduled, more than ever before.

The festival got underway on Thursday with the second annual Coastal Birding Challenge, organized this year by Sheila Willis, and used as a fund-raising event for the Hurricane "Birders & More" Relief Effort to benefit Gulf Coast birders and others affected by the 2005 hurricanes. On that day four teams competed to see or hear the most species on the sites that make up Georgia's Colonial Coast Birding Trail. The team of Sterling Blanchard, Chuck Saleeby, Dan Vickers and Bill Lotz managed an event record of 129 species, and were recognized on Saturday night by Lydia Thompson and the banquet attendees. Several birders had solicited pledges from generous donors, either per species or a flat amount. More than \$570.00 was raised to help get a Gulf Coast birder back on her feet.

The 2005 Georgia Bird Conservation Summit was held on Friday afternoon at the Jekyll Island Convention Center, the hub for all the festival activities. Peter Stangel, director of the Southern Partnership Program for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and a panel of the state's leading bird experts presented the latest information on what is being done to protect Georgia birds and their habitats. Next was the festival kick-off social, featuring an exciting raptor show conducted by the Georgia Southern University's Center for Wildlife Education and Lamar Q. Ball Jr. Raptor Center. Then E.J. Williams, assistant regional director for Migratory Birds and State Programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, gave an update on the status of Georgia coastal wildlife. This inspiring talk was in conjunction with a slide show highlighting some of the Georgia coast's spectacular wildlife and habitats.

Although fifty-four field trips were scheduled for Friday through Monday, several could not be held. Among the most disappointing cancellations were the Little St. Simons Island trips, which could not

go as scheduled due to flooding on the island caused by the heavy rains of Tropical Storm Tammy. Perhaps due to the poor weather, many more migrants were found this year, and the 210 species tallied for the long festival weekend was astounding! (Note: That is right at 50% of all the species on the Georgia Checklist.) Some of the birding highlights included Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Veery, White-crowned Sparrow, 27 species of warblers, Philadelphia Vireo and 11 species of raptors (including dozens and dozens of Peregrine Falcons). One of the Coastal Birding Challenge teams, consisting of out-of-state birders representing various optics companies, had a brief look at what may have been Georgia's first ever Zenaida Dove, blown here from the Bahamas by Tropical Storm Tammy. Alas, the bird was not photographed, and as of this writing, has not been relocated.

Throughout the weekend The Rookery, an interactive exhibition center located in the Jekyll Island Convention Center's Atlantic Hall, was the place to find several dozen artists, authors, professionals representing some of the best optics companies, displays and more raptor shows. Saturday night featured the festival dinner and keynote address. After a short GOS business session to re-elect officers, John Swiderski presented the Earle Greene Award to Terry Johnson (see full story on page 4).

Then Bob Sargent introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Scott Robinson, adventurer, birder and scientist, who gave a fascinating program on "Paving the way for Ecotourism and Birding in the Neotropics: What has science taught us?" While a student at Dartmouth College, Dr. Robinson took a year off from his studies to set a new North American Big Year record of 657 species, breaking the mark previously held by Kenn Kaufman. (This record was shattered just a few years later.) While working in the remote Manu National Park in Peru, he teamed with the late Ted Parker to set the world "Big Day" record of 331 species, a record that still stands. Notably, this record was set by foot and dugout canoe on about one square mile of the park! Dr. Robinson proved to be a wonderful speaker, and his presentation was excellent in every way. He emphasized the importance of preserving tropical habitats, reminding his audience that the survival of "our" birds will not be possible otherwise. He also explained the contributions to science that many of his co-workers have made, including the amazing Dr. John Terborgh, and how research and birding complement each other. The evening concluded with the countdown, led by Diana Churchill.

There were many more field trips on Sunday, including the Sunday Family Fun Day, sponsored by the Ogeechee Audubon Society. In spite of the bad weather, the Third Annual Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival was the best yet and we look forward to the fourth edition next October.

Submitted by Bill Lotz

SPECIES COUNTDOWN

Diana Churchill, Compiler

209 species observed (+ 1 exotic)

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

Canada Goose	Black-bellied Plover	Belted Kingfisher	Tennessee Warbler
Wood Duck	Wilson's Plover	Red-headed Woodpecker	Orange-crowned Warbler
American Black Duck	Semipalmated Plover	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Northern Parula
Mallard	Piping Plover	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Yellow Warbler
Mottled Duck	Killdeer	Downy Woodpecker	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	American Oystercatcher	Hairy Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Black-necked Stilt	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Cape May Warbler
Green-winged Teal	American Avocet	Northern Flicker	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Plain Chachalaca	Greater Yellowlegs	Pileated Woodpecker	Black-throated Green Warbler
Wild Turkey	Lesser Yellowlegs	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Blackburnian Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Willet	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Yellow-throated Warbler
Northern Gannet	Spotted Sandpiper	Acadian Flycatcher	Pine Warbler
American White Pelican	Whimbrel	Willow Flycatcher	Prairie Warbler
Brown Pelican	Long-billed Curlew	Eastern Phoebe	Palm Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Marbled Godwit	Great Crested Flycatcher	Blackpoll Warbler
Anhinga	Ruddy Turnstone	Eastern Kingbird	Black-and-white Warbler

American Bittern	Red Knot	Loggerhead Shrike	American Redstart
Least Bittern	Sanderling	White-eyed Vireo	Prothonotary Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Yellow-throated Vireo	Worm-eating Warbler
Great Egret	Western Sandpiper	Blue-headed Vireo	Ovenbird
Snowy Egret	Least Sandpiper	Philadelphia Vireo	Northern Waterthrush
Little Blue Heron	White-rumped Sandpiper	Red-eyed Vireo	Kentucky Warbler
Tricolored Heron	Pectoral Sandpiper	Blue Jay	Common Yellowthroat
Reddish Egret	Dunlin	American Crow	Hooded Warbler
Cattle Egret	Stilt Sandpiper	Fish Crow	Yellow-breasted Chat
Green Heron	Short-billed Dowitcher	Purple Martin	Summer Tanager
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Wilson's Snipe	Tree Swallow	Scarlet Tanager
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Laughing Gull	No. Rough-winged Swallow	Eastern Towhee
White Ibis	Ring-billed Gull	Bank Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
Glossy Ibis	Herring Gull	Cliff Swallow	Clay-colored Sparrow
Roseate Spoonbill	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Barn Swallow	Savannah Sparrow
Wood Stork	Great Black-backed Gull	Carolina Chickadee	Grasshopper Sparrow
Black Vulture	Gull-billed Tern	Tufted Titmouse	Saltmarsh Sharp-tld. Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Caspian Tern	Brown-headed Nuthatch	sharp-tailed sparrow sp.
Osprey	Royal Tern	Carolina Wren	Seaside Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Sandwich Tern	House Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Common Tern	Sedge Wren	White-crowned Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Forster's Tern	Marsh Wren	Northern Cardinal
Cooper's Hawk	Black Tern	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Red-shouldered Hawk	Black Skimmer	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Blue Grosbeak
Broad-winged Hawk	Rock Pigeon	Eastern Bluebird	Indigo Bunting
Red-tailed Hawk	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Veery	Painted Bunting
American Kestrel	Mourning Dove	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Bobolink
Merlin	Common Ground-Dove	Swainson's Thrush	Red-winged Blackbird
Peregrine Falcon	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Hermit Thrush	Common Grackle
Clapper Rail	Barn Owl	Wood Thrush	Boat-tailed Grackle
King Rail	Eastern Screech-Owl	American Robin	Brown-headed Cowbird
Virginia Rail	Great Horned Owl	Gray Catbird	Baltimore Oriole
Sora	Barred Owl	Northern Mockingbird	House Finch
Purple Gallinule	Chuck-will's-widow	Brown Thrasher	American Goldfinch
Common Moorhen	Whip-poor-will	European Starling	House Sparrow
American Coot	Chimney Swift	Blue-winged Warbler	Peach-faced Lovebird (exotic)
Sandhill Crane	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Golden-winged Warbler	

[Return to the GOS Meetings Page](#)

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