



fall 2006 meeting. . .

13 - 15 October 2006

Jekyll Island, GA

Anne Mursch, Meeting Planner

*held in conjunction with the 4th Annual
Georgia's Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival*

meeting summary. . .

The hustle and bustle of organizing the fourth coastal birding festival is now a fleeting memory, but not the birds we saw, the speaker we heard, the seminars we attended, or the great weather we experienced. No, that wasn't a typo – we held a festival and it didn't rain. No tropical storm roared up the coast, Little St. Simons Island wasn't flooded, and, get a grip on your chair, the boats running to Blackbeard Island didn't break down (Gasp!). Of course, before we go dissin' tropical storms, we should pause first to recall that we had the highest species count (210) ever for a Georgia festival, even without trips to Little St. Simons Island, during last year's "monsoon weekend."

This year's species tally was a respectable 199 (see the complete list in this newsletter), and the tally of birders registered for the festival was 322, at least 70 of whom were GOS members. The latter figure is a bit misleading, though, as most of the field trip leaders were GOS members, and trip leaders were not required to register. More than 80 of the attendees were visitors to Georgia, representing 16 other states, the District of Columbia, Canada, and Scotland. While it's obvious the festival isn't growing dramatically, it's equally obvious that it continues to be a popular draw, and not just at the local level.

The popularity of this festival isn't hard to understand, of course (Read: How could we possibly screw it up?). Attendees had nearly 50 field trips to choose from, including visits to at least 10 of the islands, there were 21 seminars covering everything from digiscoping to identifying beach invertebrates, and 32 exhibitors hawked their wares all through the weekend. One of the particularly special highlights was Saturday's "Bird Conservation Summit," a forum for exploring challenging management issues which featured talks by scientists concerning the conservation of Swallow-tailed Kites and Wood Storks, the role of citizen scientists in bird conservation, the impact of feral cats on wild birds, and an update on Georgia's Important Bird Areas program.

Saturday night highlights included Brad Winn receiving the Earle Greene Award (see the story in this newsletter), Peter Stangel's hilarious introduction of the featured speaker, and a lesson on seabird ecology by Massachusetts Audubon's Wayne Petersen, which should have been filmed for showing in a future PBS Nature special. Yes, it was that good, and Wayne pulled off his wonderful brand of magic

using only a precariously perched 35 mm slide projector and a captivating sense of wit. Many people elected to skip the banquet but showed up afterwards to see Wayne's program. Petersen groupies? The program ran past the time during which we would normally have done the species countdown, but nobody noticed or seemed to care.

Speaking of caring, there's one other interesting tidbit about attendee numbers I neglected to mention: 277 people traveled at least 50 miles to attend the festival, and most stayed at least two nights on or in the Jekyll Island area. In fact, figures from 39 evaluation sheets received after the festival indicated that, on average, people spent about \$520 on food, lodging, and other expenses. What's the point of all this numerical rambling? My point is that these figures reflect the power of ecotourism in action, and the Jekyll community certainly felt the impact. You may be aware that plans are afoot to develop a sizeable portion of southeastern Jekyll Island. This doesn't bode well for the birds that use that area as stopover habitat, nor does it bode well for all the people like you and me who travel to that island each year to see and enjoy birds. Folks, if we care about birds and their future, we've got to be heard by community leaders in places like Jekyll Island. If you don't think birdwatchers have much leverage, look again at the rough expenses summary I provided above.

I hope to see you again in January on Tybee Island, and start making plans now to join us for next year's festival (October 12-14, 2007), which will feature Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, as our Saturday night speaker. By the way, if you have suggestions concerning ways in which we can improve the festival for next year, please send them to me at kywarbler@cox.net, or call me at 478-397-7962. See you in the woods and fields soon!

Submitted by Bob Sargent

species countdown. . .

Bob Sargent and Steve Holzman, Compilers *194 species observed*

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

Red-throated Loon	Spotted Sandpiper	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Pied-billed Grebe	Long-billed Curlew	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Horned Grebe	Marbled Godwit	Eastern Bluebird
Northern Gannet	Ruddy Turnstone	Veery
American White Pelican	Red Knot	Gray-cheeked Thrush
Brown Pelican	Sanderling	Swainson's Thrush
Double-crested Cormorant	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Hermit Thrush
Anhinga	Western Sandpiper	Wood Thrush
American Bittern	Least Sandpiper	Gray Catbird
Great Blue Heron	Dunlin	Northern Mockingbird
Great Egret	Short-billed Dowitcher	Brown Thrasher
Snowy Egret	Wilson's Snipe	European Starling
Little Blue Heron	Laughing Gull	American Pipit
Tricolored Heron	Ring-billed Gull	Cedar Waxwing
Reddish Egret	Herring Gull	Tennessee Warbler
Cattle Egret	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Orange-crowned Warbler
Green Heron	Great Black-backed Gull	Northern Parula
Black-crowned Night Heron	Caspian Tern	Yellow Warbler
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Royal Tern	Chestnut-sided Warbler
White Ibis	Sandwich Tern	Magnolia Warbler
Glossy Ibis	Common Tern	Cape May Warbler
Roseate Spoonbill	Forster's Tern	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Wood Stork	Least Tern	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black Vulture	Black Skimmer	Black-throated Green Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Rock Pigeon	Blackburnian Warbler
Canada Goose	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Yellow-throated Warbler

Wood Duck	Mourning Dove	Pine Warbler
Gadwall	Common Ground-Dove	Prairie Warbler
Mallard	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Palm Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Great Horned Owl	Bay-breasted Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Chimney Swift	Black-and-white Warbler
Northern Pintail	Belted Kingfisher	American Redstart
Green-winged Teal	Red-headed Woodpecker	Worm-eating Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush
Ruddy Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Common Yellowthroat
Osprey	Downy Woodpecker	Hooded Warbler
Mississippi Kite	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Summer Tanager
Bald Eagle	Northern Flicker	Scarlet Tanager
Northern Harrier	Pileated Woodpecker	Eastern Towhee
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Chipping Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Eastern Phoebe	Clay-colored Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk	Great Crested Flycatcher	Field Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Savannah Sparrow
American Kestrel	Loggerhead Shrike	Grasshopper Sparrow
Merlin	White-eyed Vireo	Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Peregrine Falcon	Yellow-throated Vireo	Seaside Sparrow
Plain Chachalaca	Blue-headed Vireo	Song Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Red-eyed Vireo	Swamp Sparrow
Clapper Rail	Blue Jay	White-crowned Sparrow
King Rail	American Crow	Northern Cardinal
Virginia Rail	Fish Crow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Sora	Tree Swallow	Blue Grosbeak
Purple Gallinule	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Indigo Bunting
Common Moorhen	Barn Swallow	Painted Bunting
American Coot	Cave Swallow	Bobolink
Sandhill Crane	Carolina Chickadee	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-bellied Plover	Tufted Titmouse	Eastern Meadowlark
Semipalmated Plover	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Common Grackle
Piping Plover	White-breasted Nuthatch	Boat-tailed Grackle
Killdeer	Brown Creeper	Brown-headed Cowbird
American Oystercatcher	Carolina Wren	Baltimore Oriole
American Avocet	House Wren	House Finch
Greater Yellowlegs	Sedge Wren	American Goldfinch
Lesser Yellowlegs	Marsh Wren	House Sparrow
Willet	Golden-crowned Kinglet	

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