



Georgia Ornithological Society

FOUNDED 1936



fall 2010 meeting. . .

7 - 10 October 2010
Jekyll Island, GA

meeting summary. . .

It was like riding a bicycle, albeit the chain sported a rusty glaze and got snagged on some of the gears. The society's first fall meeting since 2002 attracted 135 of the binocular-toting, field-guide packing faithful to Jekyll Island for the biggest GOS event since at least the mid 1990s. We devoted the past seven Octobers to arranging field trips and hosting guest speakers for the coastal festival, so when GOS proposed to resurrect the former fall meeting tradition earlier this year, it was no surprise when some questioned whether a society solo event in fall would succeed. Our files tell us that the first GOS fall meeting occurred in Savannah in 1937, so fall gatherings are as old as the society. The group's enduring affair with Jekyll Island began with a spring meeting there in 1948, a year after the state purchased the island from the Jekyll Island Club and six years before the causeway was built linking the island to the mainland like an umbilical cord. We now take that linear Boat-tailed Grackle magnet for granted, impatiently hurdling along its six-mile length in our eagerness to get to the south beach and the amphitheatre pond. But if you wanted to see the shorebird flock on the island's south beach 60 years ago, or the Wood Stork nestlings bellowing for food from the peak of the now dead pine at the pond, you would have had to rent a boat.

A few scattered society meetings cropped up on the island in the mid 1960s and early 1970s, but GOS didn't embrace this charming state park as an annual roosting destination until the 1980s. For the next 22 years, the membership could generally count on migrating to Jekyll Island each October, though the declining state of the island's hotels sometimes created more amusement than the meeting attendees bargained for. With this historical detour in mind, you'll understand when I say that our meeting on Jekyll Island this past October was a homecoming for the society. And what a homecoming it was.

The Cornell Lab folks had reserved Little St. Simons Island for some form of feathered ritual for the weekend, so we lost the most popular destination right at the start of field trip planning. But the trips schedule was bulging with other tantalizing destinations that spanned the entire Georgia coast, from Little Tybee Island to Cumberland Island.

As usual, the St. Catherines Island trip "sold out" instantly, much like tickets to see a favorite rock 'n' roll act. Other favorites were also quickly booked, including Raccoon Key - the new hit coastal birding destination. And speaking of "rock stars," members clamored to go birding with Jon Dunn, the meeting's featured speaker, and the word quickly spread around the meeting hotel (Villas by the Sea) that Jon is truly the real deal - a gifted teacher, as well as a field guide guru.

If you were there and still doubted this rumored assertion, all doubts evaporated when Jon gave his "Gull Identification 101" course at the banquet. Birders are notorious for the use of jargon, so I know that more than a few of us gleefully left the banquet hall that night, because Jon had armed our mental dictionaries with at least two new pages' worth of ornithological tongue twisters.

In addition to meeting Jon, who arrived on the island chauffeured by Bruce Hallett, Jeannie Wright, and some of our other Atlanta-area members (I did compare him to a rock star...), another highlight for me that weekend was meeting GOS grant recipient Dallas Ingram, who presented the Friday night program describing her research on the relationship between poultry farms and disease transmission in Wild Turkeys (see the article in this newsletter). I spent the final day of the meeting co-leading a field trip to Sapelo Island with Mal Hodges, one of my favorite birding buddies and a guy who certainly doesn't need my help. That trip was particularly special for me because, after being thwarted on several previous trips to Sapelo, I finally saw a chachalaca in Georgia. In fact, I saw three of them, including one bird that stood on the edge of the road 30 feet away and stared at us, as if we were the creatures who didn't belong on the island. I have seen the species before - in Tobago - where on the third consecutive day of being jolted awake by a flock (seriously) of them bellowing outside my hotel window at o'dark thirty, I was nearly moved to commit a violent act, but that's another story. What a thrill it was this time to see them one by one launching themselves from tree to tree, sort of like winged monkeys.

As always, I thank the many gracious and skilled members who led the field trips. Thank you, too, to the executive committee members - Bill Lotz, Jeannie Wright, Steve Holzman, Ashley Harrington, and Darlene Moore - who jumped into the trenches to organize the meeting and to handle the last-minute crush of folks registering before the evening programs. A special thank you goes to Dan Vickers for not only arranging the hotel contract and banquet, but also for being daring enough to voluntarily manage all of the meeting and trip registrations. I'll never question your devotion to the society, Dan, but we need to talk about your sanity.

Thank you to all of the members who showed up to support GOS' return to its former fall meeting tradition. Because your enthusiasm was convincing, we have made reservations to meet again at Villas by the Sea during October 7-9, 2011. Come be with us again at the society's fall home.

-- **Bob Sargent**

species countdown...

Steve Holzman & Bill Lotz, Compilers *178 species observed*

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

Black-bellied Whistling Duck	Lesser Yellowlegs	House Wren
Canada Goose	Whimbrel	Marsh Wren
Wood Duck	Long-billed Curlew	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Mallard	Marbled Godwit	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Mottled Duck	Ruddy Turnstone	Eastern Bluebird
Blue-winged Teal	Sanderling	Veery
Northern Shoveler	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Gray-cheeked Thrush
Northern Pintail	Western Sandpiper	Swainson's Thrush
Green-winged Teal	Least Sandpiper	American Robin
Ruddy Duck	Dunlin	Gray Catbird
Plain Chachalaca	Short-billed Dowitcher	Northern Mockingbird
Wild Turkey	Wilson's Snipe	Brown Thrasher
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-necked Phalarope	European Starling

American White Pelican	Laughing Gull	Tennessee Warbler
Brown Pelican	Ring-billed Gull	Northern Parula
Double-crested Cormorant	Herring Gull	Yellow Warbler
Anhinga	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Magnolia Warbler
American Bittern	Great Black-backed Gull	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Least Bittern	Caspian Tern	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Forster's Tern	Black-throated Green Warbler
Great Egret	Royal Tern	Yellow-throated Warbler
Snowy Egret	Sandwich Tern	Pine Warbler
Little Blue Heron	Black Skimmer	Prairie Warbler
Tricolored Heron	Rock Pigeon	Palm Warbler
Reddish Egret	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Bay-breasted Warbler
Cattle Egret	Mourning Dove	Blackpoll Warbler
Green Heron	Common Ground-Dove	Black-and-white Warbler
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	American Redstart
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Eastern Screech-Owl	Ovenbird
White Ibis	Great Horned Owl	Northern Waterthrush
Glossy Ibis	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Common Yellowthroat
Roseate Spoonbill	Belted Kingfisher	Hooded Warbler
Wood Stork	Red-headed Woodpecker	Yellow-breasted Chat
Black Vulture	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Eastern Towhee
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Clay-colored Sparrow
Osprey	Downy Woodpecker	Field Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Northern Flicker	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Pileated Woodpecker	Nelson's Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Saltmarsh Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Empidonax sp.	Seaside Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk	Eastern Phoebe	Song Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	White-eyed Vireo	Swamp Sparrow
American Kestrel	Bell's Vireo	White-crowned Sparrow
Merlin	Blue-headed Vireo	Summer Tanager
Peregrine Falcon	Warbling Vireo	Scarlet Tanager
Clapper Rail	Philadelphia Vireo	Northern Cardinal
King Rail	Red-eyed Vireo	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Virginia Rail	Loggerhead Shrike	Blue Grosbeak
Sora	Blue Jay	Indigo Bunting
Common Moorhen	American Crow	Painted Bunting
American Coot	Fish Crow	Bobolink
Black-bellied Plover	Tree Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Wilson's Plover	Bank Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark
Semipalmated Plover	Cliff Swallow	Common Grackle
Piping Plover	Barn Swallow	Boat-tailed Grackle
Killdeer	Carolina Chickadee	Brown-headed Cowbird
American Oystercatcher	Tufted Titmouse	Orchard Oriole
Spotted Sandpiper	Brown-headed Nuthatch	House Finch
Greater Yellowlegs	Carolina Wren	House Sparrow
Willet		

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