

Winter 2014. Tallahassee, FL

Turnout was better than expected as 85 of us gathered in Tallahassee, Florida. The meeting began with the presentation of the Earle R. Greene Award to esteemed ornithologist Robert Crawford. The award presentation was followed by an interesting and entertaining talk by Megan Jones, a PhD student at Florida State University, about cooperative breeding in White-ruffed Manakins. Her talk, "Wonder, curiosity, and research: Cooperative display in the White-ruffed Manakin," focused on how her curiosity and wonder about the natural world led to her research on why dominant individuals cooperate with subordinates when those same subordinates may also be competitors. Megan presented data showing that some, but not all, White-ruffed Manakin males form cooperative partnerships in their displays for females. She then explained three experiments aimed to test hypotheses about those questions. The audience was highly amused by the videos of the White-ruffed Manakin displays and asked a wide variety of questions after the presentation.

The next morning found our members grabbing a bite in the hotel lobby and organizing around the day's field trip leaders. The word went out that two Whooping Cranes were wintering within 10 minutes of our meeting location, so some field trips diverted there to catch the birds before they headed out of their roost for foraging. Many of us were lucky to see these two birds, which we later found out were hatched at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland in 2009 and led by Operation Migration pilots and their ultra-lights to St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge that fall. GOS has been a proud sponsor of OM's work over the years. We really hope these birds can raise young successfully in Wisconsin and future GOS members can be delighted by a chance encounter during their migration through Georgia. Some of the field trips offered included a trip to Tall Timbers Research Station, where participants could view birds up close during banding operations and in the museum. Also, participants got good looks at Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and Bachman's Sparrows. St. Marks NWR is always full of birds in winter, and participants got great looks at shorebirds, waders, and ducks, including a beautiful Cinnamon Teal. Rachel and I selected the Bald Point State Park/Alligator Point trip and had great views of sea ducks, and a Parasitic Jaeger offshore. The trip leader (John Murphy) then asked the group if we wanted to drive 30 minutes or so to Carrabelle to see an adult male Vermillion Flycatcher. Everyone was game, so we headed that way and were rewarded with great looks. See Rachel's great photo collage at <http://tinyurl.com/vefl-fl>.

Folks began arriving back at the meeting location in late afternoon. We gathered again for a poster session by graduate students from around the state. Our thanks go out to Clark Jones, Elizabeth Hunter, Abby Sterling, Anna Joy Lehmicke, Alexia Barret, Emily Kemp, and Shannon Curry. Some of these students have benefitted from the Howe or Terrell grant programs. Our members were able to interact with the students and ask questions about projects involving Oystercatchers, Piping Plovers, nuthatches, Seaside Sparrows, and White Ibis. These poster sessions help illustrate our commitment to ornithological research in the state, and we are glad that the students are able to take time to come to these meetings to display their work. At this point, final voting for our photo contest revealed the "Best in Show" winner. Earlier voting on Facebook determined the three finalists: Real-life Angry Birds – A Yellow-crowned Night Heron photographed by Marvin T. Smith at Lake Sheri in Valdosta; Birds from an IBA – A Kentucky Warbler photographed by Rachel Holzman at the State Botanical Garden in Athens, Georgia; and Birds seen on a GOS Field Trip – A Virginia Rail photographed by Richard Hall at the Sterling Creek Wastewater Treatment Area in Richmond Hill, Georgia. Meeting attendees voted Marvin's Yellow-crowned Night Heron as "Best in Show." He received registration for two at our next GOS meeting. Thanks to all the photographers who participated and sent in their photos. You all do fantastic work!

After the banquet, Dr. Reed Bowman presented work on the longest continuous study of a marked population of birds in North America. Scrub-jay research at Archbold Biological Station was initiated back in 1969 by renowned ornithologist and evolutionary biologist Glen Woolfenden, was continued by the current director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, John Fitzpatrick, and is now in the capable hands of Dr. Bowman. Dr. Bowman's engaging presentation touched on the topics of Florida Scrub-jay demographics, cooperative breeding, habitat needs, and territoriality—and the effect that fire

(or lack of fire) has on these parameters. Compiling these data is intensive and requires locating every nest, banding every member of the population, and mapping the territory of each family group. More than 40 years of banding data has generated a pedigree that spans more than 10 generations of Florida Scrub-jays. Monthly surveys locate every individual in the population, and annual surveys of peripheral habitats locate emigrants that have left the main study area. Combined with weather and detailed habitat data, researchers at Archbold have been able to make inferences about how individuals and family groups respond to stressors such as fire and low-quality urban habitats. In the future, they hope to use genetics and environmental conditions to understand more about the evolution of the Florida Scrub-Jay and management practices that will ensure its long-term survival.

Larry Carlile did the countdown, and with later additions from Sunday and Monday field trips we came up with a very respectable list of 176 species observed. Highlights were the Whooping Cranes, Vermillion Flycatcher, Limpkin, and Cinnamon Teal.

Larry Carlile, Compiler
176 species observed

List of species reported from all field trips

Canada Goose	American Coot	American Crow
Muscovy Duck	Limpkin	Fish Crow
Wood Duck	Sandhill Crane	Tree Swallow
Gadwall	Whooping Crane	N. Rough-winged Swallow
American Wigeon	Black-necked Stilt	Carolina Chickadee
Mallard	American Avocet	Tufted Titmouse
Blue-winged Teal	American Oystercatcher	White-breasted Nuthatch
Cinnamon Teal	Black-bellied Plover	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Northern Shoveler	Semipalmated Plover	Carolina Wren
Northern Pintail	Piping Plover	House Wren
Green-winged Teal	Killdeer	Winter Wren
Canvasback	Spotted Sandpiper	Sedge Wren
Redhead	Greater Yellowlegs	Marsh Wren
Ring-necked Duck	Willet	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Greater Scaup	Ruddy Turnstone	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Lesser Scaup	Sanderling	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Surf Scoter	Western Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird
White-winged Scoter	Least Sandpiper	Hermit Thrush
Black Scoter	Dunlin	American Robin
Bufflehead	Short-billed Dowitcher	Gray Catbird
Common Goldeneye	Long-billed Dowitcher	Northern Mockingbird
Hooded Merganser	Wilson's Snipe	Brown Thrasher
Red-breasted Merganser	Parasitic Jaeger	European Starling
Ruddy Duck	Bonaparte's Gull	American Pipit
Northern Bobwhite	Laughing Gull	Sprague's Pipit
Red-throated Loon	Ring-billed Gull	Cedar Waxwing
Common Loon	Herring Gull	Black-and-white Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Caspian Tern	Orange-crowned Warbler
Horned Grebe	Common Tern	Common Yellowthroat
Wood Stork	Forster's Tern	Palm Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Royal Tern	Pine Warbler
Anhinga	Rock Pigeon	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American White Pelican	Eurasian Collared-dove	Yellow-throated Warbler
Brown Pelican	White-winged Dove	Eastern Towhee
American Bittern	Mourning Dove	Bachman's Sparrow
Least Bittern	Common Ground-dove	Chipping Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Great Horned Owl	Field Sparrow
Great Egret	Barred Owl	Savannah Sparrow
Snowy Egret	Buff-bellied Hummingbird	Henslow's Sparrow
Little Blue Heron	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Nelson's Sparrow
Tricolored Heron	Black-chinned Hummingbird	Fox Sparrow
Cattle Egret	Calliope Hummingbird	Song Sparrow
Black-crowned Night-heron	Rufous Hummingbird	Lincoln's Sparrow
White Ibis	Belted Kingfisher	Swamp Sparrow
Glossy Ibis	Red-headed Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow
Black Vulture	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Summer Tanager
Osprey	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Bald Eagle	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Northern Flicker	Eastern Meadowlark
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	Rusty Blackbird
Cooper's Hawk	American Kestrel	Common Grackle
Red-shouldered Hawk	Peregrine Falcon	Boat-tailed Grackle
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Phoebe	Brown-headed Cowbird
Clapper Rail	Vermilion Flycatcher	Baltimore Oriole
King Rail	Loggerhead Shrike	House Finch
Virginia Rail	White-eyed Vireo	American Goldfinch
Sora	Blue-headed Vireo	House Sparrow
Common Gallinule	Blue Jay	