

GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society



Georgia Rare Bird Alert: (770) 493-8862

GOS on the web: www.gos.org

President's Message

By Bob Sargent

During January 28-30, 2005, GOS will meet with Alabama Ornithological Society at Lake Guntersville State Park in northern Alabama, about 70 miles west of Rome, Georgia. The 6,000-acre park features ridge-tops, meadows, and impoundments of the Tennessee River and overlooks the 66,470-acre Guntersville Reservoir. If you're thinking reservoir birding sounds only moderately appealing, think again. This reservoir and park have become magnets for wintering Bald Eagles and waterfowl. In fact, Alabama's Division of State Parks promotes visitation of this particular park through its Eagle Awareness Program, and "Eagle Week-ends," pre-paid two-day stays in the park, have become popular Christmas gifts. And if this still doesn't sound enticing enough, consider the Saturday night program for the meeting: Joan Garland, education outreach coordinator for the International Crane Foundation, will give a presentation on Operation Migration, the eastern Whooping Crane project (www.savingcranes.org/whatsnew/Migration_flocks.asp). For more information about Lake Guntersville State Park, call 800-548-4553 or visit www.dcnr.state.al.us/parks/lake_guntersville_1a.html.

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GOS will be mailing registration information for this meeting to our members in a few weeks.

On a different note, let me bring you up to date concerning some GOS issues and needs. As most of you probably know by now, Bob Chandler is now editor of *The Oriole*. Bob and the Editorial Committee are putting the finishing touches on two issues of the journal, and we hope to mail both within the next 3-4 weeks. If you haven't heard from Bob concerning a manuscript you submitted within the past one and a half years, please contact him. We hope to get the journal back on schedule soon, and will strive to ensure that we perform timely reviews and provide prompt feedback to manuscript authors. Regarding editorial issues, the committee is in the process of drafting guidelines to be used for streamlining the manuscript submittal and publication process. If you are aware of existing guidelines for journals that are similar to ours, and are impressed with those guidelines, please contact Marion Dobbs.

Speaking of contributions from members, a number of years ago GOS established an agreement with the University of Georgia to archive our most important records and files within the university's main library. We are currently bringing those archives, which include newsletters and meeting minutes, up to date. If you have any records, correspondence, or other documents that you feel might be worthy of inclusion within this collection, please contact me.

I'm looking forward to seeing each of you at the Birding Festival in October and in Alabama in January. Good birding!



Georgia Ornithological Society

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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<i>Editorial:</i>	Bob Chandler	478-445-0811
<i>Howe Research Grant:</i>	Bill Van Esseltine	706-543-3072
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Special Projects

<i>Georgia Rare Bird Alert</i>	770-493-8862
Jeff Sewell, Compiler	
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*Deadline for article submission is the 1st
of the month prior to publication.*

Welcome, New Members!

Mary Alice Stephenson	Atlanta
John and Nancy Hamilton	Atlanta
Rick and Sandy Krause	Lilburn
Debra Church	Guyton
Flora M. Clark	Columbus
W. Patrick and Alice Ann Holton	Leesburg
Leon and Diana Galis	Athens
Jeanne M. Lee	Gainesville

Correction:

Kenneth Dowling of Helena was mistakenly listed as Keith Dowling in the June *GOShawk*. We regret the error.

*GOS Membership lists are available upon request to
Angela McMellen, PO Box 181, High Shoals, GA 30645 or
<mcmellen@uga.edu>*

In Memoriam, Gordon Lee Hight, Jr.

Gordon Lee Hight, Jr., passed away at his home in Rome on August 3, 2004, at the age of 86. He was a member of GOS for more than 50 years and was also an active member and supporter of Alabama Ornithological Society.

Gordon was an active birder in the Rome area and participated regularly in Christmas counts, surveys and field trips. He will be missed by many in Georgia and Alabama.

Hey, Graduate Students!

The deadline for H. Branch Howe, Jr., Graduate Research Grants is slowly but surely approaching. Graduate students researching ornithological topics are asked to submit grant proposals by January 31, 2005. Three grants of up to \$2000 each will be awarded by GOS.

In the 14 years that GOS has been awarding Branch Howe, Jr., grants to graduate students engaged in ornithological studies, 24 such grants have been awarded, totaling \$28,440.

See the GOS web site (www.gos.org/grant.html) for the fine print on eligibility and the process for developing and submitting an application.

U.S. Air Force Uses GIS to Predict Bird Strike Hazards

By Mark Beebe

Perhaps less famous than other pioneering aviators, such as Eddie Rickenbacker or Charles Lindbergh, Cal Rodgers is responsible for several firsts in the history of flying. In an August 1911 contest in Chicago, Illinois, Rodgers set an endurance record, remaining airborne for 27 hours over nine days. Starting in the next month, he set a record for being the first person to fly across the United States, a feat he accomplished in 50 days. Rodgers was responsible for another important record. In April 1912, flying offshore of Long Beach, California, he encountered a flock of seagulls. One struck the aircraft and interfered with his controls, causing him to crash into the sea. The incident is considered the first documented bird-aircraft strike fatality in aviation history. The problem of sharing the skies with our feathered friends has not ceased as a result of technology. In fact, the opposite is true. As planes fly faster with quieter engines, bird encounters are more likely. There are approximately 3,000 bird strikes every year, at an average annual cost of \$45 million in the U.S. Air Force (USAF) alone. Worse than that, 33 fatalities have occurred since 1985. The military is particularly susceptible to bird strikes because they train at high speeds and low altitudes in aircraft that are vulnerable because they are often smaller and have fewer backup engines than large airliners.

Since World War II, the USAF has concentrated on mitigating the problem around airfields because the risks are greatest at takeoffs and landings. Over the years, practices have been developed to reduce the number of birds around runways, including the use of scarecrows, falconry, and pyrotechnic popper cannons to scare them.

According to the USAF Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) Team, efforts to digitally model bird strike risks began in the early 1980s. The initial Bird Avoidance Model (BAM) developed in 1982 was manual in nature. The USAF sponsored research that developed a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based model using Geographic Resource Analysis Support System (GRASS) software developed by the U.S. Army. However, a significant event prompted the USAF to redouble its efforts.

On September 22, 1995, an E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System plane, a high-tech radar surveillance platform based on a Boeing 707, crashed on takeoff from Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska. The crash ignited 125,000 pounds of jet fuel and killed the crew of 22 Americans and two Canadians. Several dead Canada Geese were found on the runway, and others were believed to have been sucked into the jet intakes, causing the engines to fail.

Two factors converged at that time. A tragic event occurred

at a time when significant research was being done in the academic community using GIS to model point phenomena. The researchers believed that they could create an interpolated model from point data over a landscape. Biologist picked up on the concept and quickly wanted to apply it.

BAM is a predictive bird hazard model that consists of 104 time period-based GIS raster grids that cover the U.S. The value of each cell, or pixel, in one raster grid is equivalent to the sum of the mean bird mass for all species present during a particular daily time period for one of 26 two-week periods per year. Bird weight and distribution were derived from a variety of sources, including 30 years of North American Breeding Bird Survey and Audubon Christmas Bird Counts as well as reported bird strikes recorded in USAF and Federal Aviation Administration databases for the past 20 years. Arrival and departure dates of bird species, acquired from refuge

(Continued on page 6)

Upcoming Events:

Jekyll Island Banding Station (JIBS)

Volunteer to assist in mist-netting and banding birds!
September 25 – October 17, 2004
For more information, call Chris Pitman at 770-339-0916 or see www.jibspage.org.

2nd Annual Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival

October 8-10, 2004
Jekyll Island, Georgia
For more information, see www.coastalgeorgiabirding.org.

Fund Raiser for the Georgia Museum of Natural History

November 6, 2004
State Botanical Garden of Georgia, at the University of Georgia.
Cocktails, a silent auction, and dinner (black tie optional); tickets are \$100 (\$50 is tax deductible). The theme is Georgia Birds. If you would like to donate items, please contact David Porter via e-mail at porter@plantbio.uga.edu or leave your phone number at the museum (706-542-1663). To receive an invitation or for further information, call 706-542-0464, 706-542-1663 or 542-3940 or e-mail: musinfo@uga.edu

Winter Meeting with Alabama Ornithological Society

January 28-30, 2005
Guntersville State Park, Alabama

Spring GOS meeting

April 22-24, 2005
Columbus, Georgia

A VISIT WITH KEN CLARK

By John Swiderski

Many of you have come to know and enjoy companionship with Ken Clark at GOS meetings for more than twenty years. But, as they say, there is more to his story.

Perhaps the title of this piece should really read: A Visit with Ken and Arlene Clark, for, you see, this happy couple were married on New Year's Eve of 1943 at Marana Army Air Field near Tucson, Arizona, while Ken was training to be a fighter pilot in the Army Air Force. Other than being separated in 1944 and 1945 while Ken served in the Pacific, they have been enjoying life together all these years.

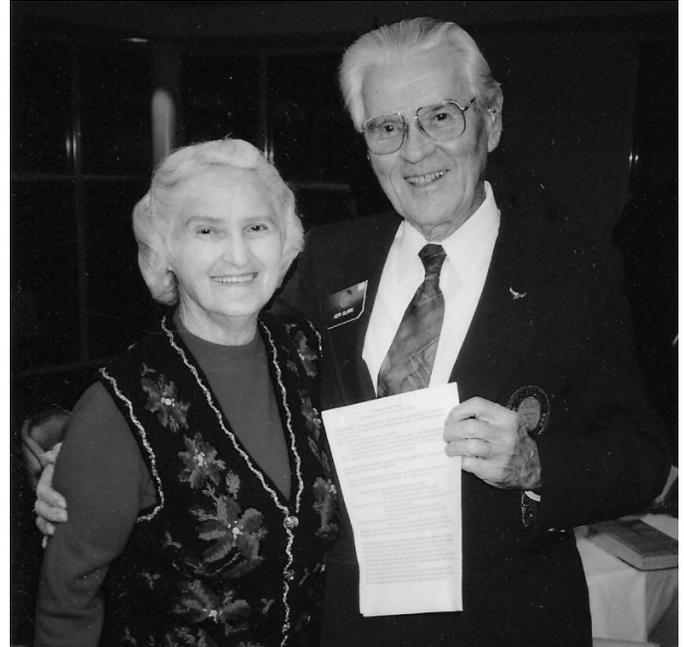
Born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1923, Ken saw a lot of the country as a youngster, as his father was a traveling salesman who took the family to New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana and Iowa before settling in Seattle, where Ken completed high school. Following high school, Ken spent two years with a repertory theatre company until he enlisted in the Army Air Force in June of 1942.

Eventually, he was selected for pilot training and was assigned to fly P-38 fighters in the Pacific. He flew 100 combat missions, helping to push the Japanese to eventual defeat in 1945. He is proud of the fact that he was one of the first combat pilots to land in Japan at war's end as part of General Douglas MacArthur's air honor guard. It is obvious from talking with Ken many times about his military career that the Lockheed P-38 twin-engine fighter was the second love of his life.

Ken and Arlene found military life agreeable, and Ken remained on active duty following World War II, continuing to maintain pilot proficiency while holding a number of teaching assignments in the U.S. and Britain before returning to the air as a transport pilot and later squadron commander in the Military Airlift Command. He served as commander of airbase wings in Illinois and Puerto Rico before coming to Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia as inspector general for the base. He retired from the U.S. Air Force as a colonel in 1974.

After his military retirement, Ken worked with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, which gave him the opportunity to travel extensively in our state. He also has served on various boards and authorities in Bibb County and is an active supporter of the Air Force Museum at Warner Robins and World War II veterans associations.

Asked about his interest in birds, Ken responded that he and Arlene always had a bird book handy at the various stops in his military career, but were not active in a club or the Audubon Society, having had a number of



Ken and Arlene Clark

other interests during their military years. Arlene became an ardent shell collector, whose collection can now be seen at the Macon Museum of Arts and Sciences. Their longtime interest in horses continued into their retirement years.

After their military days, they lived first on a three-horse ranch in west Bibb County (Paso Fino horses were their main interest) and later moved closer to town. Ken joined Ocmulgee Audubon late in 1974 and quickly became active in various capacities, including editor of their newsletter for some 13 years. He modestly says that it was a small outfit and everyone had to serve in some capacity!

Ken and Arlene attended their first GOS meeting at Jekyll Island in the fall of 1979 at the invitation of Don Mitchell and signed on as members. As was typical throughout his life, Ken was not reluctant to serve in various capacities with GOS either, including serving as president from 1995 to 1999. He also documented and modernized our meeting procedures and worked to foster an interest in documenting the history of GOS. Ken was recognized for his outstanding and effective service to GOS when he was presented with the Earle R. Greene Memorial Award in 2001.



Sibley Field Guide Donations

By Bill Lotz
1st Vice President

At the January 2003 Executive Committee meeting of GOS, Ted Reissing, the *GOShawk* editor at the time, suggested that GOS purchase two dozen copies of the *Sibley Guide to Birds* to donate to various birding sites around the state that have been particularly accommodating to birders and perhaps would not have a field guide on hand.

Ted's original idea was brought about by the rather unwelcoming reception that birders have received at a certain sod farm in Bartow County, and how that reception is such a contrast to most of the operators of sod farms, brickyards and farm ponds that have been very cooperative with polite requests from birders to bird on their property.

Ted's suggestion was voted on and approved at that meeting. At the Ex-Com meeting in June of 2003, some board members were given several copies each of the Sibley guide to distribute. Here is a list of where the books have gone so far:

By Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell:

1. Clayton County Water Authority – Land Management Office 8/03
2. Julia and Fred Knight – landowners of Legacy Sod, Bartow Co. 8/03
3. Judy Gaines – landowner on Stiles Rd., Bartow Co. 8/03 (She has been very receptive to birders on her land.)

By John Swiderski:

4. Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area, Lowndes and Lanier Cos.

By Russ Wigh:

5. Statesboro Sod Farm, Bullock Co.
6. Steve Amick – operator of the pelagic boat, Chatham Co. 6/04

By Marion Dobbs:

7. Atlanta Supersod (Turfgrass America), Floyd Co. 9/03

By Bill Lotz:

8. Little St. Simons Island Lodge naturalists, Glynn Co. 8/03

By Bob Sargent:

9. Perry Super Sod Farm, Houston Co., 7/03
10. Ocmulgee National Monument, Bibb Co., 7/03
11. Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, Jones Co., 7/03
12. Cherokee Brickyards, Bibb Co., 7/03

There are still several more copies available; if you have a suggestion for placement of one of these (i.e., some of the new sod farms that we are starting to discover around the state), please let me know.

What is Earth Share of Georgia?

By Mark Beebe

GOS is an active member of Earth Share of Georgia (ESG) and receives funds from them to support GOS functions and activities.

Earth Share of Georgia (originally incorporated as the Environmental Fund for Georgia) plays a vital role in promoting environmental education, volunteerism and charitable giving by partnering with businesses across Georgia. Since its founding in 1992, employees across the state have generously pledged their financial support and time to the important work of Earth Share's sixty member organizations. These contributions are growing exponentially as more and more businesses move to place the environment alongside United Way and other approved charities as a key recipient of annual employee payroll pledges. Earth Share now participates in more than sixty government and corporate campaigns, including: State Charitable Contributions Program, the Combined Federal Campaign, Primerica, Worldspan, Emory University, Turner, and City of Atlanta. In 2001, the Environmental Fund for Georgia became a state partner of Earth Share, the nation's oldest and largest environmental workplace fundraising organization. Now, thanks to this partnership, Earth Share of Georgia represents not only the best of Georgia's environmental organizations, but the most reputable in the nation, as well.

In addition to workplace giving campaigns, Earth Share plays a pivotal role as a communication and coordination nucleus. Their centralized website offers up-to-date environmental news and events, organizes volunteers for Down to Earth Day, an annual Atlanta celebration in honor of Earth Day, and supports Earth Share of Georgia's ultimate goal of promoting a healthy environment and an active citizenry.

ESG offers citizens one smart and simple way to care for our air, land and water. ESG partners focus on issues such as clean air and water, urban greenspace, energy conservation, environmental education, land and wildlife habitat protection, and ornithological research.

For a complete list of partnering businesses and member charities, visit www.earthsharega.org For more information on Earth Share of Georgia or to offer an environmental choice in your workplace giving campaign, contact Elicia Fritsch-ESG at 404-873-3173.

What to Do If a Dead Bird Is Found?

By Mark Beebe

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord). First detected in North America in 1999, it is closely related to St. Louis encephalitis virus, which is found throughout the United States. West Nile virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito, which becomes infected by biting a bird that carries the virus. While there are many species of mosquitoes, *Culex pipiens* and *Aedes albopictus* are the ones most commonly associated with the West Nile virus.

West Nile virus cannot spread directly from birds to people. However, dead birds should not be handled with bare hands. Most county health departments are taking reports of dead bird sightings. To report a dead bird, contact your local county health department. Report any birds that do not have an obvious cause of death, such as injuries from power lines, collisions with cars, bridges, buildings or gunshots. See if there are any signs of trauma on the bird. Missing feathers, broken legs or wings, signs of blood, or the head lying at an odd angle are signs of trauma. If there are any signs of trauma on the bird, then the bird is ineligible for testing. Birds with signs of trauma should be reported and properly disposed of. Only Blue Jays, crows and raptors are being tested. If the bird has been dead for 24 hours, shows sign of trauma, has bugs on it, is not a jay, crow, or raptor, or is not picked up within 24 hours, then report the dead bird and dispose of it properly. Use gloves to carefully place dead birds in a doubled plastic bag and then place the dead birds in the outdoor trash or bury the bird three feet in the ground.

When you call the county health department, you will be asked the date you saw the bird(s), the number and location of the bird(s), a description of the bird(s), and your address. Your report will be combined with reports throughout Georgia so that the state can track the presence of the West Nile virus throughout the region. While county health departments are interested in collecting information about dead birds as part of their effort to understand the virus, they will not be picking up every bird reported. However, they encourage residents to report all dead bird sightings to assist their monitoring effort. If you do not receive a telephone call from the county health department to arrange pickup of the dead bird within 24 hours of making the report or by the next business day, please dispose of the dead bird.

The most common breeding sites for mosquitoes include birdbaths, clogged gutters, unused wading pools, buckets, flower pots, and pet dishes. By draining or emptying stagnant water from items such as wading

pools and flower pots, or by replacing the water in birdbaths and pet dishes at least twice a week, you can prevent thousands of mosquitoes from being born. For more information, contact your local health department. A good website for information is www.health.state.ga.us. The website lists the telephone numbers of all health departments in Georgia and also has a link to a CDC (Centers for Disease Control) site that shows a map of Georgia counties and other states with confirmed human cases of West Nile virus.

Bird Strikes *(continued from page 3)*

managers nationwide, are factored in as well as data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners in Flight program.

For their GIS work on the BAM, the GIS developers for the BASH team currently use ArcView 8.x with the ArcGIS Spatial Analyst and ArcGIS Geostatistical Analyst extension. Military and civilian pilots can access the model at a publicly accessible website, www.usahas.com/bam, which was developed with ArcIMS. The idea is for the flight planner to sit down ahead of time and determine relative risk. The Avian Hazard Advisory System (AHAS) incorporates BAM historical data and updates it with radar weather information, so it's near real-time risk. Currently, the USAF flight crews are instructed to access BAM and AHAS to look at their predictive risk. It is a preflight checklist item.

As long as birds and aircraft share the skies, there will be collisions. It is difficult to quantify how many incidents have been avoided by flight planning using the model. However, some users state they've seen up to a 70% reduction in damaging bird strikes, saving potentially tens of millions of dollars and, doubtlessly, lives. Birders participating in the collection of bird field data play an essential role in improving these models, which ultimately save taxpayers money and protect human lives.

GOS E-Mail List

In order to more efficiently communicate with our members, GOS is establishing an e-mail list, which will be used to communicate with you about bird conservation issues, membership renewals, birding events in Georgia, and occasional items that may be of interest to GOS members.

If you wish to add your e-mail address to the GOS database, please contact Angela McMellen, GOS Membership Chair, at angela_mcmellen@yahoo.com.

GOS Conservation – Recent Activities

By Carol Lambert

Since becoming active at the end of last year, the GOS Conservation Committee has been involved in several issues and anticipates having an ongoing role in many others. Although not all of these matters involve birds or habitat specifically in Georgia, we feel that it is time for GOS to take a more proactive role with other environmental organizations, both in Georgia and elsewhere, and work together on issues that ultimately impact bird populations anywhere.

We are working on a Conservation page for the GOS website which members and others can check regularly for current information on these issues and to easily find contact information for their legislators. We will not provide a form letter on issues, since we feel that individual, original statements of position are more effective with public officials. Our Membership Chair, Angela McMellen, is developing an e-mail list that will enable us to quickly alert members about issues and potential threats to bird welfare. Please be sure that you keep your e-mail information current with her.

- 7/03 & 7/04: Supported USFWS plan to reduce the Mute Swan population in the east by 67% (from a population of 14,300 to 4,675 in 5-10 years). The original plan was blocked by animal rights groups, and we have now also endorsed a second statement. The swans have destroyed crucial nesting areas of native, indigenous plants and animals. These large, aggressive birds attack and kill other birds and have destroyed breeding colonies of waterbirds such as Black Skimmers, Least Terns, Common Terns and other waterfowl. They are especially a problem in the Chesapeake Bay of Maryland and Virginia.
- 12/03: Supported an effort by the American Bird Conservancy and the Tennessee Ornithological Society concerning the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Mountaintop Mining/Valley Fill in the Appalachian region of the eastern U.S. This would involve the destruction of 380,000 acres of forest for coal mining over the next ten years, which would significantly impact high-quality nesting areas of Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Wood Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo and Acadian Flycatcher.
- 3/04: Supported legislation at the federal level to remove introduced, non-native species (including Mute Swans) from the protection of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- 3/04: Discussed the (federal) Land & Water Conservation Fund issues with The Nature Conservancy, as they pertain to protection of tracts along the Conasauga River, Jacks River and Holly Creek watershed and the Etowah River, as well as the Forest Legacy program, through which funding could be obtained to complete acquisition of lands for the Broxton Rocks WMA in Coffee and Telfair counties. Letters supporting this funding were sent to the Georgia delegation.
- 5/04: Began discussions with Coastal Georgia Audubon and DNR about the possibility of implementing a Shorebird Nest Protection Zone on the south end of Jekyll Island. A possible plan would be to close off nest areas to people and dogs, install many more interpretive signs, and recruit local and visiting volunteer monitors to be on site during the busy weekend and holiday periods.
- 6/04: Urged support of the Forest Wildlife Conservation Amendment proposed in the U.S. House of Representatives, which offered increased forest and habitat protection by blocking harmful changes governing forest management practices (i.e., the Forest Service would no longer protect healthy populations of wildlife; reduce public input into the long term plans; eliminate sound science as a basis for forest management, etc.)
- 7/04: Endorsed a National Audubon public comment letter to the Bureau of Land Management regarding species-sensitive areas of the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, in particular Teshekpuk Lake, an 860,000-acre wetland that provides breeding habitat and stop-over areas for huge numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds. An additional letter of comment from GOS was sent in August.
- 8/04: Became aware of and concerned about the possible development of the south end of Jekyll Island. Discussions are under way with Coastal Georgia Audubon and others in an effort to have a role in the planning process for this fragile area.

We urge you to contact us with your concerns about issues relating to the conservation of species and habitat in your area. If you are an officer or member of a local bird or conservation organization, we should all be working as partners on these issues. Our voice and impact will be enhanced by the participation of many groups.

GOS Conservation Committee: Carol Lambert, Chair (Tucker/Atlanta); Lydia Thompson, Member (St. Simons Island); Michael Bell, Member (Bainbridge).

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

TO: Georgia Ornithological Society
P.O. Box 181
High Shoals, GA 30645

Please enroll the undersigned as a member of the Georgia Ornithological Society for the calendar year.
Dues are enclosed as follows:

_____ Regular \$20.00 _____ Sustaining \$30.00
_____ Patron \$50.00 _____ Student \$10.00

(The above are annual rates for individuals or families.)

_____ Life Membership \$300.00

_____ Please send me a list of publications available from the GOS.

NAME(S):

MAILING ADDRESS:

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

PLEASE SEND ADDRESS, PHONE OR E-MAIL CHANGES TO:
Angela McMellen, GOS, P.O. Box 181, High Shoals, GA 30645

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