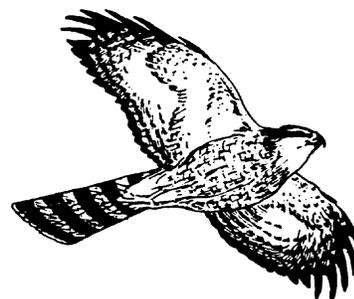


# GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society



Georgia Rare Bird Alert: (770) 493-8862

GOS on the web: [www.gos.org](http://www.gos.org)

## Report of the Spring 2006 Meeting in Kennesaw

Bill Lotz

For the first time in 22 years GOS held a meeting in the metro Atlanta area. Nearly one hundred birders gathered at the Hilton Garden Inn, scarcely a mile from one of the best spots in the Southeast for Neotropical migrants: Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. Despite the great location, migrants proved difficult to find because of very windy conditions that weekend. The program Friday night featured Ron Rohrbaugh, Project Director of the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker for the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Ron had just returned from Arkansas, where he had been in charge of dozens of professional ornithologists and volunteers who had been searching all winter for proof of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's existence. He presented a program filled with the history and mystique of the "Lord God Bird," those who studied it, and the tantalizing clues to its possible continued presence in the White River area of northeastern Arkansas.

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## Mark Your Calendars!

### 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival

October 13-15, 2006, Jekyll Island  
[www.coastalgeorgiabirding.org](http://www.coastalgeorgiabirding.org)

### 2007 GOS Winter Meeting

January 12-14, 2007  
 Tybee Island, Georgia  
 (see page 6)

On Saturday there were field trips to Kennesaw Mountain and Pine Log Wildlife Management Area, followed by a late afternoon poster session and a delightful banquet. Our Saturday program was presented by Greg Miller, one of the three birders portrayed in Mark Obmascik's excellent book, *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession*. We were fascinated with Greg's story of working full time and trying to do a Big Year in the American Birding Association (ABA) area on a limited budget. Unknown to Greg at the beginning of that year, 1998, there were several other birders who were doing a Big Year as well, one of whom held the record at that time. It is quite remarkable that three of the birders, including Greg, tallied more than 700 species. Since that year only one birder has been able to surpass 700! The anecdotes and experiences that Greg shared made for a memorable evening.

(continued on page 3)

## **Georgia Ornithological Society**

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<i>Conservation:</i>	Carol Lambert	770-939-7668
<i>Earle Greene Award:</i>	John Swiderski	229-242-8382
<i>Earth Share of Georgia:</i>	Mark Beebe	770-435-6586
<i>Editorial:</i>	Marion Dobbs	706-291-6956
<i>Howe Research Grant:</i>	Bill Van Esseltine	706-543-3072
<i>Membership:</i>	Libby Mojica	706-543-6903

#### **Special Projects**

<i>Georgia Rare Bird Alert</i>	770-493-8862
Jeff Sewell, Compiler	
Internet Transcriber rotates among:	
Steve Barlow, Michael Boehm, Jim Flynn, Steve Holzman, Marie LaSalle, Larry Russell, and Lois Stacey	

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Jim Ferrari, Editor  
242 Riverdale Drive  
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478-757-0293  
jferrari@wesleyancollege.edu

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of the month prior to publication.  
Text by e-mail is appreciated.*

## **Welcome, New Members!**

### **Northern Goshawk Life Members**

Kelly Hopkins Atlanta, GA

### **Bachman's Sparrow Members**

Sharon Brekke	Atlanta, GA
A. Stephen Johnson	West Point, GA
Diane Vary	Shannon, GA
Ted and Evelyn Antal	Fairmount, GA
George King	Atlanta, GA

### **Fledgling Student Members**

Kelly Jonske	Augusta State University
Judith Varga	Georgia College & State University
Carrie Criger	Georgia College & State University
Kirk Stodola	University of Georgia
Stacey Vigil	University of Georgia
Chris Winchester	University of Georgia
Allyson Read	University of Georgia
Randy Cass	University of Georgia
Jessica Rowell	Wesleyan College
Catrice Hayes	Wesleyan College

*The 2006 GOS membership list is available electronically via e-mail or as a hard copy. Please send your request to [membership@gos.org](mailto:membership@gos.org) (Libby Mojica) for an e-mail copy or to GOS, P.O. Box 181, High Shoals, GA 30645 for a paper copy.*



### **Address Changes**

If your address changes, please notify us directly by mail (P.O. Box 181, High Shoals, GA 30645) or by e-mail ([membership@gos.org](mailto:membership@gos.org)). As a non-profit organization, we are able to mail items to you at a bulk (i.e., discounted) rate. This is a great cost savings for us, but it means that our items WILL NOT be forwarded to you if you move. We do not want you to miss out on any of our newsletters, meeting announcements, or journals!

### Kennesaw Meeting *(continued from page 1)*

Sunday's Kennesaw and Pine Log field trips were repeated, along with the addition of one to Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area. A total of 130 species was seen or heard over the weekend (the full species list appears on page 4 of this issue). Our thanks go to all the field trip leaders, Chuck Saleeby, Giff Beaton, Malcolm Hodges, Georgann Schmaltz, Theresa Hartz, Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell, who tirelessly searched for birds that, for the most part, stayed hunkered down in the strong winds. And a big thank you goes to Anne Mursch, Steve Holzman, Helen Ogren and Barbara Brigham for their hard work in putting together another successful meeting. Please join us on Tybee Island for our Winter 2007 Meeting, which will be held January 12-14, 2007.



Willow Flycatcher. Photo © Dan Vickers.

### GEORGIA TARGET BIRD: The Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) Dan Vickers

NEW  
FEATURE!

Before 1973, Georgia birders looked for Traill's Flycatchers during spring and fall migration. Separated into two very similar subspecies, they could only be distinguished in the field by their songs. After ornithologists determined that they were in fact two distinct species, they were split into Alder and Willow flycatchers. A few Georgia birders are lucky enough to have heard an Alder Flycatcher singing during spring migration or calling in fall, when they are slightly more common. Willow Flycatchers fortunately have been a little easier to locate.

Sometime around the first week in May, a handful of Willow Flycatchers drop out of the night sky into a hundred-yard strip of brush and willows lining a small creek in Blairsville, Georgia. The next morning the burry "fitz-bew" of the males can be heard rising above the songs of Yellow Warblers, Yellow-

breasted Chats and Gray Catbirds as the flycatchers sing from the power line above the creek or from the tops of the willows. Sandwiched between the parking lots for the Ingles and the United Community Bank off Highway 515, this has been, for a decade, one of the most reliable places to view the Willow Flycatcher on its Georgia breeding grounds. Willow Flycatchers have also been found in recent years in Blue Ridge along the creek near the Ingles, in Dillard along the Little Tennessee River just down the road from the Dillard House, at Curtis Brothers in Greene County, and at the Honor Farm in DeKalb County.

#### GOS E-MAIL LIST

In order to more efficiently communicate with our members, GOS has established an e-mail list. The e-mail list 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 Libby Mojica, GOS Membership Chair, at [membership@gos.org](mailto:membership@gos.org).

## Bird List for the Spring 2006 GOS Meeting in Kennesaw (Friday, April 28 through Sunday, April 30, 2006)



Kentucky Warbler at Pine Log WMA.  
Photo © Dan Vickers.

Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Mallard  
Hooded Merganser  
Wild Turkey  
Northern Bobwhite  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Great Blue Heron  
Green Heron  
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron  
Glossy Ibis  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Merlin  
Peregrine Falcon  
Killdeer  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Solitary Sandpiper  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Rock Pigeon  
Eurasian Collared-Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
Eastern Screech-Owl  
Barred Owl  
Chuck-will's-widow  
Whip-poor-will  
Chimney Swift  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker

Pileated Woodpecker  
Eastern Wood-Pewee  
Eastern Phoebe  
Great Crested Flycatcher  
Eastern Kingbird  
White-eyed Vireo  
Yellow-throated Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Fish Crow  
Horned Lark  
Purple Martin  
Tree Swallow  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Brown-headed Nuthatch  
Carolina Wren  
House Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Eastern Bluebird  
Veery  
Swainson's Thrush  
Hermit Thrush  
Wood Thrush  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
European Starling  
Cedar Waxwing  
Blue-winged Warbler  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Northern Parula  
Yellow Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler  
Cape May Warbler  
Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Yellow-throated Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Prairie Warbler  
Palm Warbler

Bay-breasted Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Cerulean Warbler  
Back-and-white Warbler  
American Redstart  
Prothonotary Warbler  
Worm-eating Warbler  
Ovenbird  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Kentucky Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Hooded Warbler  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Summer Tanager  
Scarlet Tanager  
Eastern Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Blue Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Orchard Oriole  
Baltimore Oriole  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

*(List compiled by Bill Lotz)*



Chestnut-sided Warbler at Kennesaw Mountain. Photo © Dan Vickers.

Images from the Spring 2006 GOS Meeting in Kennesaw



GOS President Bob Sargent holds aloft the new GOS cap, which sports an embroidered orchard oriole. Caps may be purchased for \$15 via the society website, [www.gos.org](http://www.gos.org). Photo © Dan Vickers.



Greg Miller, the speaker at the Saturday evening banquet, relates his adventures from his birding Big Year. Photo © Dan Vickers.



Ron Rohrbaugh, project director of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker search being conducted by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Photo © Dan Vickers.



Bob Sargent congratulates Hart County Middle School teacher Brad Smith on receiving a GOS Opportunity Fund grant for \$1,000 to finance bird-related science projects for his special education class. Photo © Dan Vickers.



GOS members on the Kennesaw Mountain field trip led by Giff Beaton react to cries of "Male Cerulean Warbler!" Photo © Dan Vickers.



Wesleyan College senior Catrice Hayes and her faculty advisor Jim Ferrari at the Saturday poster session. Catrice presented her honors thesis work on tree preferences of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Photo © Rafe Henderson.

## GOS WINTER 2007 MEETING

Bill Lotz

We've decided to "stay home" this time. The next winter meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society will be held on Tybee Island January 12-14, 2007. Our headquarters hotel will be the Ocean Plaza Beach Resort. Please note that this is the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday weekend.

The Friday night program will be presented by Renee Carleton, DVM, who is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. Renee is the recipient of one of our 2006 H. Branch Howe Jr. Graduate Student Research Grants, and will present a program on her research project, "Disease Ecology of Eastern Bluebirds in North-west Georgia."

Saturday night the featured speaker at the banquet will be Christopher Cokinos, author of *Hope is the Thing with Feathers*, a hauntingly poetic book which details the heartbreaking demise in North America of six bird species (e.g., Carolina Parakeet, Heath Hen, Passenger Pigeon, etc.), but still manages to convey a sense of hope for the future of bird conservation in this country.

There will lots of field trips to some great birding spots around the Savannah area, and we have scheduled two pelagic trips, one on Saturday and one on Sunday, with Monday as a "weather day." More information about the pelagic trips will be posted on the GOS website and on the GABO listserv in the fall.

Please plan on joining us on Tybee Island for a fabulous winter meeting.

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## The All Women's Birding Bust

Georgann Schmalz

During the fall of 2000, Theresa Hartz, Lisa Hurt, Emily Jo Williams and I were perusing the Big Day reports submitted by various birders in Georgia. Being fairly observant, we noticed that nearly all these Big Days were done by teams of men. Very few women appeared to be involved in intense birding events, and we wondered why more women didn't keep state lists or county lists, do Big Years, or participate in any competitive birding.

With these questions in mind, we created the event that became known as the All Women's Birding Bust. We stoically put up with all the jokes about having AA, A, B, and C divisions and whether we would be walking three or four abreast, etc. We firmly refused the offers of three men who wanted to dress in drag and join us.

Georgia's first All Women's Birding Bust was held on Saturday, May 5, 2001. Seven teams and 26 women birded during the day, either in their neighborhoods or beyond. Two teams began in the north Georgia mountains and finished on the coast. A combined total of 168 species was seen during the day. We followed all ABA Big Day rules and tried not to speed or get traffic tickets. Artist Deb Zaremba graciously designed T-shirts for everyone in 2001, a tradition that lives on, with Mary Jane Stone taking over the illustrations.

The most difficult part of the AWBB for my team, the Thrashers, was not stopping to admire the birds. We lost time gaping at the 200 Bobolinks in one field. We had to wait ten minutes for Theresa's Grasshopper Sparrow to show itself - a life bird for her. (She doesn't list heard-only birds.) Even Lisa put her foot down and refused to budge until she saw a secretive Painted Bunting. It was hard. I quickly became the ogre, chanting "Keep moving, keep moving." In truth, I had very little authority over this group of women, but I did have the car keys. So we kept moving. I have no idea if the other teams looked as comical as we did, dashing here and there, leaping out of the car, leaping back into the car, shouting, "I got it. Did you?" "What do you mean, you didn't hear it?" "Keep moving, keep moving."

The Second Annual All Women's Birding Bust was held on April 20, 2002, with ten teams and 28 women again birding locally or from mountains to coast. "My teammate Mary has never been birding before . . . She is more the backyard enthusiast, but she had a blast! She is still talking about seeing her first Scarlet and Summer tanagers!" said Julia Elliott.

In 2003 the Gaggles wrote, "We all really enjoyed ourselves. The Bust is a place for us to improve our birding skills and get out and have some fun."

In 2004 the Sedge Wrens commented, "We had a great time on what was the first 'big day' attempt for either of us, and we're aiming for 'most improved' for next year!"

In 2005, Women with Altitude said, "Celebration and dinner followed at my cabin near Vogel State Park, and we three went to bed with smiles on our faces. Then, in the darkness of the still night, one by one, each of us heard, 'Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?' Number 80!!!!!! Now that was the end of a perfect day!!"

(continued on page 7)

### Birding Bust (continued from page 6)

In 2006 the AWBB attracted 14 teams and 45 women from all over the state plus participants from South Carolina and Wisconsin joining teams. The Birding Pals wrote, "The AWBB seems to have become a tradition now for lots of folks, [with] many teams returning each year for the event, and teams getting special hats made, etc. Our team looks forward to it each year, and now has a history of stories we recount from previous years, i.e., 'Remember when Wendy thought a wet House Sparrow was a Kestrel?'"

And so the event has grown. One hundred and sixty-one species, the most seen in a single day during the AWBB, is a record shared by two teams. Each year teams increase their expertise and numbers of species. While a friendly competition developed among three or four teams, the intent of the AWBB has not changed: to get out and enjoy some birding, relish the excitement of seeing new birds in new places, and feel the satisfaction of improving birding skills.

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## Winter Hummingbirds in Georgia

*Rusty Trump*

When you think of hummingbirds, what season comes to mind? Most people think of summer, when the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds compete in their aerial dogfights for supremacy of your sugar water feeders. If you enjoy hummingbirds, you can also try to attract one of the wintering western species to your yard. Eleven species of hummingbirds have been documented in Georgia, including Green Violet-ear, Broad-billed, Buff-bellied, Magnificent, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Anna's, Calliope, Broad-tailed, Rufous, and Allen's. Two additional species have occurred near Georgia. A Green-breasted Mango was in Charlotte, North Carolina, the fall of 2000, and this past winter, a Costa's Hummingbird was in Montgomery, which became Alabama's first state record of this species. Almost all of these species occurred in the fall or winter.

Hummingbirds that occur in the fall and winter in the Southeast are commonly called winter hummingbirds. By far, the most common winter hummingbird species in Georgia is the Rufous Hummingbird. In a typical year, the Rufous makes up more than 80 percent of the winter hummingbird reports. The next most common winter species are the Black-chinned, Ruby-throated and Calliope. It is interesting that the Calliope Hummingbird was not documented in Georgia until 1998, but since then at least 19 records for Georgia have been documented.

Some may be surprised that Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are found during the winter in Georgia. While some winter Ruby-throats are injured or unhealthy, which possibly prevents them from completing their migration, others



Broad-tailed Hummingbird. Photo © Rusty Trump.

have successfully spent the winter here. These Ruby-throats are found especially below the Fall Line in the coastal plain, and along the coast. This past winter, an apparently healthy female Ruby-throat spent the winter in the northwest corner of Georgia just a few miles from the Tennessee state line. Another female Ruby-throat returned to the same yard in Augusta to spend her second winter in Georgia.

You never know what species of hummingbird may decide to visit your yard in the winter. This past winter in Georgia, the unexpected visit was by three Broad-tailed Hummingbirds. Previous to that, only three accepted records of Broad-tails had ever been recorded in the state. In addition to the Broad-tails in Georgia, this species was also reported last winter in Tennessee and Alabama. It would be interesting to know what event caused this small influx of Broad-tails to the Southeast.

We learn a little more every year about the distribution and number of species of hummingbirds that come to Georgia. I recommend that you leave at least one feeder out all year. If you should attract a hummingbird, it is best to put out a second feeder. Who knows? You may get a second one. One yard near the mountains seems to have multiple winter hummingbirds every year. This year, three Rufous spent the winter there.

To prepare the nectar, mix it just like you do in the summer, four parts water to one part white table sugar. If you should get a hummingbird after November 1<sup>st</sup>, please let me know about it. You can either e-mail me at [rusty\\_trump@hotmail.com](mailto:rusty_trump@hotmail.com), report it on the Georgia Hummer website at [www.gahummer.org](http://www.gahummer.org), or you can call me at 770-844-8651. With your help, we can continue to piece together the picture of Georgia's winter hummingbirds.



# 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:

_____	Bachman's Sparrow (Regular)	\$20.00
_____	Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Sustaining)	\$30.00
_____	Northern Bobwhite (Patron)	\$50.00

**(The above are annual rates for individuals or families; below are rates for individuals only)**

_____	Fledgling (Student)	\$10.00
_____	Northern Goshawk (Life Membership)	\$300.00

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

NAME(S):

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