



June 2017
Vol. 44, No. 2

GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society
www.gos.org

President's Message

By Larry Carlile

Dear GOS members,

By the time you read this, my first *GOShawk* message to you as President, we'll have convened and concluded what I'm hoping will be a wonderful spring meeting at Unicoi State Park. We'll have heard from Stephen Ferguson, a Bill Terrell Graduate Research Grant recipient, about sex hormones and Florida Scrub-jays. We'll have heard from Drs. Jill Penn and Mia Malloy, and Maribel Fernandez, biology instructors at Georgia Gwinnett College, about the avian banding studies they are conducting on their campus. I hope that we'll have seen and heard good birds and experienced good weather on several mountain field trips that will have been led by some of the best birders in the state.

If you didn't attend the meeting, you may not know yet that Steve and Rachael Holzman are leaving Georgia for the Great Northwest as they take new positions in Bend, Oregon. We'll miss them greatly and wish them the best of luck in their professional endeavors.



New GOS President Larry Carlile. Photo by Ed Maioriello.

You'll be glad to know that Rachael's position as *GOShawk* editor will be assumed by Past-President Dr. Bob Sargent, who steps into the role with this issue. The Nominating Committee is still looking for someone to assume my former role as 1st Vice-President. So if you're interested in the position, please get in touch with Bill Lotz and let him know! You'll also be glad to know that Steve Holzman received the Earle R. Greene Memorial Award at the spring meeting in recognition of his years of service to GOS and for single-handedly creating online

(continued on page 3)

CONTENTS

- 1 President's Message
- 2 New Members
- 2 GOS Fall Meeting Information
- 4 2016 Earle R. Greene Award

- 5 Adventures in Africa
- 7 Young Birder Costa Rica Scholarship
- 8 GOS Advocacy
- 9 The Oriole on SORA
- 9 2017 Scholarship Recipients
- 10 Youth Birding Competition
- 11 Species List for the Spring Meeting



Georgia Ornithological Society

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For a list of grant, scholarship, and award committees (and their contact information) visit gos.org/executive-committee

GOShawk is published quarterly
(March, June, September, December)

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*Deadline for article submission is the first
of the month prior to publication.
Submission by e-mail is appreciated.*

Welcome, New Members!

Fledgling (Student)

Angela Monetta Grayson, GA

Bachman's Sparrow (Individual)

Chris Showalter Lilburn, GA
Kaye London San Diego, CA
Sue Swanson Berkeley Lake, GA
Sarah Mambry Marietta, GA
Elizabeth Jewett Randolph, VT
Franklin Marchman Sharpsburg, GA

Mark Your Calendars Now! GOS FALL MEETING

October 6-9, 2017

Villas by the Sea on Jekyll Island

We'll host field trips to premier birding destinations on barrier islands and inland sites. Ryan Chitwood, a M.S. student at UGA and a recipient of GOS' Bill Terrell Graduate Student Research Grant, will be our Friday night speaker. He will talk about Black-throated Blue Warblers at the southern end of their range and how a warming climate apparently is inducing northward range shifts. Our Saturday evening keynote speaker will be Noah Strycker, who famously set a worldwide Big Year record in 2015 (6,042 species!). Join us as he recounts his Big Year.

**Look for meeting registration details soon on
gos.org**

GOS Grant Application Deadlines

Norene Boring, Undergraduate Student Research Grants, September 15, 2017

GOS Opportunity Grants, No Deadline

More information about these grants is available on the GOS website, gos.org.

President's Message *(continued from page 1)*

communities for Georgia birders in the form of the GABO-L e-mail list and the GOS Facebook page. (Editor's note: The story of Steve receiving this award will appear in the next issue.)

For those of you who don't know me very well, I live in Savannah with my wife, Kelly, and my two daughters, Nina and Lillian. I became a member of GOS in 1993, a year before I began my current position as a wildlife biologist at Fort Stewart. I've served GOS as 1st Vice-President since the fall of 2014. I currently chair the Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grant Committee and serve on the Opportunity Grant Committee.



Stephen Ferguson speaks at the Friday night program during the spring meeting at Unicoi State Park. Photo by Ed Maioriello.

I am gratified to be able to work in a well-burned longleaf pine ecosystem and spend a good bit of my time in the field monitoring and managing robust populations of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, gopher tortoise, and eastern indigo snake. And, like most of you, when I'm not working or fulfilling family duties, I can be found in the field looking for birds! I especially enjoy birding when I know that the information I collect is used by researchers to monitor avian populations on large geographic scales. Long-term efforts like the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) are invaluable to researchers tracking the status and trends of our beloved avifauna. Each year, I participate in two Christmas Bird Counts

(Harris Neck and Savannah), two Breeding Bird Surveys (Darien and Everett City), the Great Backyard Bird Count, International Migratory Bird Day, and as many Georgia Shorebird Surveys as I can manage. I'm very much looking forward to running my BBS routes when I return from the spring meeting at Unicoi State Park. By the way, there are several vacant routes in Georgia. Check with Georgia DNR's Todd Schneider to see if there is a route that you can adopt.

My goal as President will be to continue the fine work GOS has done to promote bird conservation through the scientific study of birds and the conservation of vital bird habitat. I look forward to working with our dedicated Executive Committee and our revered Treasurer, Jeannie Wright, to fund as fully as possible our grant programs and educational opportunities for young birders. Ultimately, though, I'm here to serve you, the membership. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any concerns or if you have a great idea you feel would benefit the GOS.

Finally, don't forget to mark your calendars for our fall meeting on Jekyll Island, October 6-9, 2017. See you there!



Drs. Mia Malloy and Jill Penn, and Maribel Fernandez, speakers for the banquet program during the spring meeting at Unicoi State Park. Photo by Ed Maioriello.

Lydia Thompson Receives The 2016 Earle R. Greene Award

By Steve Holzman

Steve Holzman presented the Earle R. Greene Award at the winter meeting to Lydia Thompson for her dedication to protecting and promoting birds and birding on the Georgia coast, especially on Jekyll Island. This presentation was originally scheduled for the October 2016 meeting, but a hurricane foiled that plan. Lydia has seen more than 700 bird species in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. She banded the first Townsend's Warbler and the first Northern Wheatear in Georgia and has completed 45 Breeding Bird Surveys over the past 30 years. Lydia was instrumental in the creation and review of sites for the Colonial Coast Birding Trail and guided Jekyll Island through the process of being declared an Important Bird Area. She was also a guiding force in the creation and management of the former Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival, which was based on Jekyll Island from 2003 to 2009, serving as director of all seven festivals. Additionally, Lydia served as president of Coastal Georgia Audubon Society from 2004 to 2007.

In addition to her passion for all things associated with birds, Lydia has been an artist and print maker since 1974. She has also written articles for *The Jekyll Islander*, the biweekly newspaper of that island, since 1999, *Bird Watchers Digest* in 2004 and 2014 and ABA's *Winging It* in 2007, and she has illustrated articles for *American Birds*, *Birding*, and *Napa-Solano Audubon*. Since 2010, Lydia has written a column called the "Nature Connection" for *Golden Isles Magazine*. She is also a book author and illustrator, producing *Birdfinding in the Golden Isles* in 1998, which she updated it in 2005 and again 2015. She completed her first children's book, *Willa Gets Her Friendship Bands*, in 2016.



Steve Holzman and Lydia Thompson, January 14, 2017. Photo by Ed Maioriello.

Lydia spends summers monitoring and protecting nesting plovers on Jekyll's South Beach via Operation Plover Patrol, an education campaign designed to bring awareness to the public about beach-nesting birds. The "patrol" expanded its reach to St. Simons Island in 2016. Lydia leads weekly morning bird walks on Jekyll Island, as she has done for decades, sharing her spotting scope with participants and with passing tourists. Lydia also volunteers each year to assist with teaching the students of Camp TALON. To learn more about Lydia and her efforts on behalf of birds, visit her two blogs: artworksforbirds.blogspot.com/ and coastalgeorgiabirding-lydia.blogspot.com

Go Paperless!

Want to save trees and reduce printing costs by receiving the *GOShawk* electronically? Contact Shannon Fair, the GOS membership chairperson, at gosmembership@gmail.com, and let her know that you would like to receive the *GOShawk* by e-mail.

Adventures in Africa

By Ellen Miller

Tanzania and Kenya have 1,137 and 1,080 species of birds, respectively, along with multitudes of large and small mammals. For someone who grew up watching Mutual of Omaha's *Wild Kingdom*, East Africa was an obvious "top of the list" destination. In April I, along with Mike Weaver, finally made the trip. We went on a Rockjumper Birding Tours trip called "Birds and Big Game" and found the trip to be all it was advertised to be and more. Having never been to Africa before, I was very pleasantly surprised by the quality of the lodges where we stayed and the tourist infrastructure in general.

In twenty days we had more than 500 species of birds, of which only two were heard-only birds. Birdlife International reports 10 endemic bird families in continental Africa and close to 1,400 endemic species. On our trip we saw endemics such as Secretary Bird, Ostriches (Common and Somali), Southern Ground Hornbill, Vulturine Guineafowl, Widowbirds, and Hamerkop, as well as numerous weavers, rollers, and



Mike Weaver and Maasai guides in Tanzania. Photo by Ellen Miller.



Mt. Kilimanjaro, African elephants, and Gray Crowned Cranes. Photo by Ellen Miller.

gorgeous starlings. Additionally, we had more than 60 species of mammals including the "Big Five" (lion, leopard, water buffalo, African elephant, and rhinoceros).

In addition to the diversity and sheer volume of birds and other animals, some of the birding experiences were almost surreal: On one occasion we birded on foot in forest on the slopes of Mt. Kenya and had a guard with semi-automatic rifle along in case of encounters with buffalo or elephants. He was a good spotter and found a pair of Verreaux's Eagle-owls for the group. As we came to a clearing in the forest, there was tea and coffee set up along with regular milk or "elephant milk" (whiskey) for us to take a break from the arduous demands of birding. (I'm thinking of suggesting that GOS consider adding this feature to our field trips.)

However, my favorite birding experience of the trip was in search of a Tanzanian endemic called Beesley's Lark. This lark is found only in two small areas of northern Tanzania. It is not known how many Beesley's Larks exist, but the number is thought to be very low, perhaps as few as 50. One of the areas where the lark is found is called the Lark Plains, where several different lark species are found. Our guide explained

to us that Maasai villagers graze their cows and goats on this land. In order to involve the villagers and make it worth their while to help protect the birds, the guide had taught some



Beesley's Lark in Tanzania. Photo by Ellen Miller.

Maasai herders what the Beesley's Lark looked like and paid them. He thought they "might" help in finding the bird. As we drove across the plain, we saw three Maasai boys standing completely still in a triangle about 30 feet long on each side. The guide said something on the order of "they've got the bird." We made a beeline for the closest Maasai, looked out the window of the vehicle where the guide directed, which was in the middle of the triangle of boys, and there was a Beesley's Lark! I had visions of the search for the lark being similar to the search for Henlow's Sparrows, and if you have ever done that you know it is a challenge, to put

it nicely. The Beesley's Lark turned out to be one of the easiest birds I've tried to see and one of the rarest, and was found by Maasai tribesmen. Once we got our fill of the bird, we exited the vehicle to thank the Maasai boys who were around 13 or 14 years old. We asked if we could take photos of them, and they were happy to be photographed. After we got photos, they wanted to take photos. One of the Maasai pulled a cell phone out of his robe....and took photos with Mike!

I would encourage anyone who has an interest to take the plunge and do a trip to Africa. Your life list will thank you.

Vulturine Guineafowl. Photo by Ellen Miller.



Mammals can be cool, too! Tarangire National Park, Tanzania. Photo by Ellen Miller.



Know a Teen Birder Who Wants to Go to Costa Rica? Seriously!

CALLING ALL BIRDERS AGES 15 TO 18

THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Now Accepting Applications for the
2017 RICHARD PARKS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR YOUNG BIRDERS

You can attend the Hog Island Audubon Costa Rica Camp

Application deadline is July 15, 2017

The Georgia Ornithological Society will send one lucky teen to participate in Hog Island Audubon's Costa Rica Camp December 26-31, 2017. The GOS will cover the full cost of the camp plus the round-trip airfare from Miami to Costa Rica. The recipient will be expected to pay for travel costs to and from the Miami airport and will, of course, be required to acquire a passport. Scholarship recipients arrange their own travel. For more information about Hog Island Audubon's Costa Rica Camp, visit <http://hogisland.audubon.org/programs/teen-week-costa-rica>

How to apply: The applicant must be at least **15 and no older than 18 during the camp session** and **must be a Georgia resident**. Complete the application form and write an essay (500-word minimum) about your interest in birds and birding, your involvement in the Georgia birding community, what you will do with the knowledge you will gain from this camp, your career goals, and how you will spread your interest in birds to friends. Include at least three letters of recommendation with the application. Scholarship recipients are expected to write an article, with pictures, describing their experiences at the camp for the *GOShawk* newsletter. To see other issues of this newsletter, visit <http://www.gos.org/GOSHawkarchive>

Note: You are not eligible to apply if you have previously received two or more birding camp scholarships from GOS.

The winner will be selected on July 30, 2017.

Mail your application materials to

Dr. Robert Sargent / 2017 Parks Scholarship
(Costa Rica)
1263 Clairmont Place, Macon, GA 31204

Applications may be submitted electronically
(Subject: Costa Rica GOS Parks Scholarship) to kywarbler@cox.net

All submissions must be in PDF format. Unreadable applications will be returned.



GOS Advocacy

By Nathan Farnau

The City of Johns Creek in north Fulton County is planning an active-use development along the Chattahoochee River. The targeted parcel of land, called the Cauley Creek property, is immediately adjacent to a separate property owned and managed by the National Park Service as part of the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area. These two properties combine to form one of the few remaining open-country habitats in metro Atlanta. More than 135 species of birds have been recorded on the properties, including American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and Savannah, Vesper, and White-crowned Sparrows. For most Atlanta birders, finding areas where sightings of these species are reliable requires a long drive out to rural parts of Bartow, Newton, or Henry Counties.

Johns Creek's proposal would convert the Cauley Creek property into a complex of manicured ball fields and parking lots. This development would drive all of these grassland species out, and a natural jewel nestled in the heart of metro Atlanta would be lost. In light of the city's proposal, GOS thought it important to speak out against the development. We've submitted a public statement and have contacted members of the city council sympathetic to our position. As conservation chair, I'll be monitoring the situation as the chorus of voices against the project grows. Stay tuned!



Wild Turkeys seen at Smithgall Woods State Park during the spring meeting. Photo by Ed Maioriello.

The Oriole Goes Worldwide

By Renee Carleton

Volumes 70-71 (2005-2006) through 76 (2011) of *The Oriole* are now available to the worldwide ornithological community via SORA, the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive database hosted by the University of New Mexico. Older issues will be added over the next year, and more recent issues will be added two years after publication. To see these volumes, or those of journals such as *Auk* and *Condor*, visit <https://sora.unm.edu/>

Do you have an interesting observation of bird behavior or unusual sighting to share with GOS members and other ornithologists? Please consider submitting a “General Note” for publication in *The Oriole*. You do not have to have a lot of writing experience to have your note featured in our journal. We're here to help you, but need your help in getting the word out through your “General Notes.”



The 2017 Recipients of the Parks Young Birders Camp Scholarships

By Bob Sargent

The GOS awarded four scholarships to teen birders to attend birding camps this summer. These scholarships cover the entire cost of the camp registration fees and up to \$500 in travel expenses. This brings to 31 the number of teens sponsored by GOS since this scholarship source was established and named for Dick Parks in 2007. The 2017 recipients:

- I. Camp Colorado: John Deitsch and Josiah Lavender
- II. Camp Avocet: Emma Dickinson
- III. Hog Island Audubon Camp: Ewan Pritchard

To see the list of past recipients and Dick's biography, go to gos.org/youngbirderscholarship



Some of Georgia's young birders on a Camp TALON field trip on Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuge, June 2013. Photo by Kimberly Hayes.

Twelfth Annual Youth Birding Competition

The Georgia Youth Birding Competition (YBC) took place April 29-30, drawing a diverse crowd of young birders who learned about and enjoyed the outdoors as they ranged from the coast to metro Atlanta looking and listening for birds. About 80 youth ages 4-18 took part. Teams used as much of the 24-hour period as members wanted to count native bird species. Forty percent of participants were first-timers.

The Chaotic Kestrels led all teams with 160 species. Patrick Maurice and Angus Pritchard of Atlanta, Sam Murray of Augusta, John Deitsch of Duluth, and Josiah Lavender of Watkinsville birded from St. Simons Island to middle Georgia, finishing long after midnight Saturday and starting again before dawn Sunday. For Maurice, who graduates this spring, Sunday ended his 10th and last YBC as a competitor. Why take part for 10 years? "It's so fun!" Maurice said. "It gets other people interested in birds, and working with other birders has helped me become a better birder." Murray, the team's other senior, credits the 2011 birding movie *The Big Year* with kindling into flame an interest his father had encouraged. "That movie showed me how competitive birding can be," he said. Murray plans to study ecology at the University of the South. Maurice will focus on ecology or wildlife biology at the University of Georgia.

The Youth Birding Competition "is giving [participants] a good, positive experience in the field," said Tim Keyes, YBC coordinator and a wildlife biologist with DNR. The event also featured a T-shirt art contest that drew 248 entries. Birders turning in their checklists Sunday were given shirts featuring a blue jay drawn and painted by Ava Wang, 16, a 10th-grader at SKA Academy of Art and Design in Duluth.

The teams raised \$1,951 for conservation, a voluntary part of the event that pushed the 12-year total past \$20,000. Tom Painting, mentor of the Pi-ed-billed Grebes, was given the 2017 mentor award.

Sponsors included TERN, GOS, Atlanta Audubon Society, Eagle Optics, and Partners in Flight.

The 2018 Youth Birding Competition is set for April 27-28.

High school division

Chaotic Kestrels (160 species), and overall competition winner
Wood Thrushes (141 species)
Pi-ed-billed Grebes (127 species)

Middle school division

Ugly Ducklings (78 species)
Beautiful Bluebirds (67 species)
Redhawk 2 (62 species)

Elementary school division

Amazing Anhingas (71 species)
Bird Nerds (52 species)
Macaw (49 species)

Primary school division

Bufford Bluejays (48 species)

TOP ROOKIE TEAMS (first-year teams)

Elementary – Macaw (49 species)
Middle school – Redhawk 2 (62)
High school – Pi-ed-billed Grebes (127)



Winning T-shirt art entry by Ava Wang, SKA Academy of Art and Design.

Species List from Spring 2017 Meeting at Unicoi State Park, Georgia

Compiled by Larry Carlile

91 Species

Birds observed during field trips to Brasstown Bald, Smithgall Woods State Park, Sosbee Cove and Popcorn Overlook, Tallulah Gorge State Park, Tray Mountain Wilderness, and Unicoi State Park. Most Sunday trips were cancelled due to heavy rain.

Canada Goose	American Robin
Wood Duck	Gray Catbird
Mallard	Brown Thrasher
Wild Turkey	Northern Mockingbird
Great Blue Heron	European Starling
Turkey Vulture	Cedar Waxwing
Red-shouldered Hawk	Ovenbird
Broad-winged Hawk	Worm-eating Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Louisiana Waterthrush
Rock Pigeon	Black-and-white Warbler
Mourning Dove	Swainson's Warbler
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Kentucky Warbler
Barred Owl	Common Yellowthroat
Chuck-will's-widow	Hooded Warbler
Eastern Whip-poor-will	American Redstart
Chimney Swift	Northern Parula
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Bay-breasted Warbler
Belted Kingfisher	Blackburnian Warbler
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Yellow Warbler
Downy Woodpecker	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Hairy Woodpecker	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Northern Flicker	Pine Warbler
Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow-throated Warbler
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Black-throated Green Warbler
Acadian Flycatcher	Canada Warbler
Eastern Phoebe	Eastern Towhee
Great Crested Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow
White-eyed Vireo	Dark-eyed Junco
Yellow-throated Vireo	Song Sparrow
Blue-headed Vireo	Summer Tanager
Red-eyed Vireo	Scarlet Tanager
Blue Jay	Northern Cardinal
American Crow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Common Raven	Blue Grosbeak
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Indigo Bunting
Barn Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Cliff Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark
Carolina Chickadee	Common Grackle
Tufted Titmouse	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Orchard Oriole
White-breasted Nuthatch	House Finch
Brown-headed Nuthatch	American Goldfinch
Winter Wren	
Carolina Wren	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	
Eastern Bluebird	
Veery	
Wood Thrush	
Swainson's Thrush	

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Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society
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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please complete this form and mail with your payment to Georgia Ornithological Society Membership, P.O. Box 11926, Atlanta, GA 30355. You can now join online at <http://www.gos.org/join-us>

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Annual membership rates for individuals and families (circle your choice)

Bachman's Sparrow (Individual Membership)	\$25
Quail Covey (Family Membership)	\$35
Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron)	\$50
Fledgling (Students only)	\$15

Life Membership Rates for individuals

Northern Goshawk	\$450
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