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GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society
www.gos.org

President's Message

By Ed Maioriello

Dear Birders,

I did something interesting a couple of weekends ago. I completed a couple of Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes. I'm not bragging – I know people who do a lot more than two of them. It is a good deal of work. You must be at your route's beginning at 30 minutes before sunrise. At the start time, you bird for exactly three minutes then get in the car and go to the next stop, a half mile away. Here you bird for three minutes again and proceed until you reach the 50th stop. It takes roughly 5-½ hours, not counting the time you spend scouting the route ahead of time and entering the data afterward.

This is a nationwide project (started in 1966) run by the U.S. Department of the Interior and coordinated in Georgia by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The data collected is invaluable to the conservation of birds across the nation and to our awareness of the health of varying habitats. I'm happy to do my routes early each summer and look forward to doing them again next year. However, it's the data collection that I really want to write to you about.



There's a new sheriff in town. Ed Maioriello presides over his first meeting as GOS president. Photo by Adam Betuel.

The BBS routes are an example of citizen science, and citizen science is really what I would like to urge you to participate in. The easiest way for you to participate is by using eBird to record your findings when you go birding in the field or just in your backyard. The combination of the eBird and Merlin apps on your phone is a powerful tool. You provide the data to the Cornell Lab via the eBird app, and they in turn will keep up with your varied lists for you as well as continue to develop the eBird and Merlin apps.

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



Orchard Oriole. Photo by Dan Vickers.

Welcome, New Members!

Fledgling (Student)

Eric Cormier

Sandy Springs, GA

Brown Thrasher (Individual/Family)

Joe Burnam	Cairo, GA
Lindsay Carney	Cartersville, GA
Pamela Carrne	LaGrange, GA
Donald Farrell	St. Simons Island, GA
William Fleetwood	White, GA
Priscilla Fleshman	Blacksburg, VA
Rosy Harvey	Atlanta, GA
Paul Hutto	Woodstock, GA
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Tasha L.J. Messer	Tucker, GA
Hans Otto	Athens, GA
Elizabeth Pearce	Decatur, GA
Emma Rhodes	Foley, AL
Grace Walden	Gainesville, GA

Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron)

Michael Ayling	Atlanta, GA
Marc Jolley	Macon, GA
Tammy Kemper	Athens, GA
Sherry Rosen	Kennesaw, GA
Joel Volpi	Cornelia, GA

The Oriole Welcomes Book Review Submissions

The Oriole, the scientific journal of GOS, invites authors to submit general notes or research articles about Georgia bird life. But we also publish book reviews, so this is a special invitation to all you avid readers out there to write up a review of a recent publication that would be of interest to our membership. You can see examples in previous issues of *The Oriole*, which are available at the GOS website under Publications/Periodicals. Contact Jim Ferrari at jferrari@wesleyancollege.edu if you would like to discuss your ideas about a potential manuscript.

Go Paperless!

Want to save trees and reduce costs by receiving the *GOShawk* electronically? Contact Shannon Fair at gosmembership@gmail.com and tell her that you would like to receive it by e-mail.

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

The Great Backyard Bird Count and the Christmas Bird Counts provide useful information about which birds are overwintering in your area. I especially enjoy participating in the Georgia DNR's midwinter shorebird count. Perhaps you will be able to find some similar projects that you can participate in to help collect citizen science data. Others that I know have been submitting a daily checklist from their own gardens or a local birding hot spot; some have done a daily checklist for years.

If you are concerned about your ability to identify the birds correctly, going birding with more experienced birders is a good way to gain experience. Perhaps there is a local Audubon chapter or birding club in your area sponsoring bird walks that you could attend. Another great way to learn is to go on field trips at meetings of your Georgia Ornithological Society. We will be having our fall meeting on Jekyll Island this October. More details about the meeting can be found below in this newsletter.

I hope to see you on Jekyll Island! Good luck, and good birding.

In conservation,
Ed Maioriello
President, GOS



Here's a visual of one of the things you missed if you weren't with us in Hiwassee in May. View from the meeting hotel. Photo by Adam Betuel.

Mark Your Calendars Now!
GOS FALL MEETING: October 7-10, 2022

Don't miss this year's fall GOS meeting, which will be held at our long-time roost on Jekyll Island. In addition to the usual four days of fabulous birding led by some of Georgia's very best, we will have two captivating and remarkably accomplished speakers on the agenda.

Meeting hotel details: Villas by the Sea Resort, 1175 N. Beachview Drive, Jekyll Island, GA 31527. Call 912-635-2521, 800-841-6262, or visit www.villasbythesearesort.com.

The cut-off date for the GOS room rate is September 8, 2022, and "GOS Conference" is the group code. For more information, visit www.gos.org.



We'll be looking for you. Black-and-white Warbler. Photo by Bob Sargent.

GOS Returns to the Mountains

By Steve Wagner

After having to cancel our scheduled 2020 Spring Meeting because of Covid, it was nice to finally get back to the mountains for this meeting. The ~30 attendees enjoyed cooperative weather, good birding and two very informative presentations. Field trip locations included Brasstown Bald, Ivy log Gap Road, Burrell's Ford Road, Brawley Mountain and Tray Mountain. During the trips, 92 species were observed and/or heard (see complete list on page 5). Thanks to our field trip leaders (Larry Carlile, Ed Maioriello, Patrick Maurice, J.P. Moss, and Steve Wagner).

On Friday, Lily Martin, a graduate student at the University of Georgia, presented her just-finished master's research on estimating owl population density using remote audio recording data. She conducted the work in Georgia's Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, where she collected recordings of Eastern Screech-Owls, Barred Owls, and Great Horned Owls. Lily focused on the latter species as she explained the details of estimating density using this promising new methodology.

Saturday's speaker, Rob Meyer, discussed the Tall Timbers Research Station's efforts to maintain and expand the population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in the Red Hills region of South Georgia and North Florida. The fact that most of these RCWs that they work with are on private property creates a variety of complications as well as opportunities. Their primary goal is to make the Red Hills population resilient to the potential impacts of future hurricanes and/or wildfires by establishing new groups over a wider area and filling in gaps between groups.

Both of our speakers have received funding for their work from GOS.



GOS President Ed Maioriello, guest speakers Lily Martin and Rob Meyer, and GOS 1st Vice President Steve Wagner at the spring meeting in Hiawassee, Georgia. Photo by Adam Betuel.

Species Tally, GOS Spring Meeting, Hiawassee, Georgia, May 20-22, 2022*Compiled by Steve Wagner. 92 species*

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

Combo Youth Birding Competition Draws a Crowd

By Rick Lavender and Tim Keyes

Georgia's first Youth Birding Competition to blend in-person and virtual participation featured about 120 children and teens scouring the state for birds in a nine-day contest capped by an awards ceremony on April 26, 2022. The 16th annual birdathon organized by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources ran April 15-23. During that time, teams of kindergarteners through high-schoolers picked a 24-hour stretch and competed by age group to find the most bird species.

After being canceled in 2020 and changed to virtual last fall, the popular event returned to spring and in person this year. But DNR kept the virtual option to address Covid concerns and ease the need for teams to submit their bird checklist at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in Mansfield, a long drive for some. The hybrid approach led to 38 teams registering and a large, excited group showing at the Charlie Elliott banquet hall for the awards ceremony. Members from about 10 teams joined the livestreamed event.

The high school team Amazing Anhingas finished as the overall winner with 128 species. Four other teams – including the top elementary and middle school division teams – Birding with Baby Yoda and Pi-billed Grebes, respectively – listed 90 or more. The Elementary School Division's Lil Birdie Rascals raised \$735 for wildlife conservation, the most of any team. Fundraising for conservation is a voluntary part of the event. Teams raised \$2,638 total this year.



Youth Birding Competition champions the Amazing Anhingas pose with Tim Keyes and their trophy. Photo by Linda May.

Maegan Donnell and Grace Campbell of Decatur shared the Mentor Award for spending almost 15 hours helping lead and coordinate two teams, The McLendon Chickadees in the Primary Division and The McLendon Bluehawks in the Elementary Division.

The event also included a T-shirt art contest that drew 132 entries. Birding participants received T-shirts with an American kestrel drawn by Arvin Guo, a Suwanee ninth-grader and student at SKA Academy of Art and Design in Duluth. Guo received a \$100 Amazon gift card as the art contest grand-prize winner.

Although DNR announced most T-shirt division winners in early April, art contest coordinator Linda May saved news until the YBC banquet of the top entry from a youth who took part in the birding competition. That honor went to Adairsville's Abigail Moeller for her drawing of a Hooded Merganser. The 10th-grade homeschool student, who also won the award last year, birded with the Moeller Myrtle Warblers team. Winning art entries from 2022 are posted at <https://bit.ly/3KfQi6N>.

Combo Youth Birding Competition *(continued from page 6)*

The Youth Birding Competition and T-shirt Art Contest are sponsored by DNR's Wildlife Conservation Section, The Environmental Resources Network Inc. or TERN – friends group of the Wildlife Conservation Section – and others, including Georgia Ornithological Society and the Georgia and Albany Audubon societies. Visit georgiawildlife.com/YBC for more details.

YOUTH BIRDING COMPETITION RESULTS**High School Division**

Amazing Anhingas (128 species), and overall competition winner
Grebes (121 species)
Bird Nerds (93 species)

Middle School Division

Pi-billed Grebes (90 species)
Awesome Anhingas (86 species)
The Bold Eagles and Blue Jays (tied at 85 species each)

Elementary School Division

Birding with Baby Yoda (90 species)
Kestrels (51 species)
The Falcons (35 species)

Primary School Division

Eagle Eyes (62 species)
Pileated Pair (29)
Best Friend Bird Watchers (19 species)

Fundraising (division leaders)

Lil Birdie Rascals, Elementary Division, \$735
Best Friend Bird Watchers, \$150: Primary
Pi-billed Grebes, \$616.50: Middle
Moeller Myrtle Warblers, \$100; High

Fundraising for conservation is voluntary.

Top Rookie teams (first-year teams)

Primary: Pileated Pair (29 species)
Elementary: Lil Birdie Rascals (33 species)
Middle: Blue Jays (85 species)
High: Bird Team (22 species)

Georgia DNR's Linda May poses with Arvin Guo, winner of the T-shirt art contest. Photo provided by Georgia DNR.



Camp TALON's 12th Edition*By Bob Sargent*

Last winter I received a bit of a shocking text message from Julie Duncan, my long-time Camp TALON (Teen Adventures Learning about Ornithology and Nature) co-leader. For the first time since we dreamed up this annual six-day endurance test, Julie was not going to be participating. It felt like we were organizing a comedy routine that would include Jerry Lewis, but not Dean Martin, or perhaps a better analogy would be a train heist involving the Sundance Kid without Butch Cassidy. Yeah, I know I'm showing my age and most of the people who read this (it's a big assumption that anyone will read it, of course) will likely be Googling now to figure out who I'm talking about. Julie has been hinting at retiring from the camp for the last couple of years, but that's not why she went missing. Instead, her daughter was due to deliver her first child—and Julie's first grandchild—the week before the camp. (Note: Granddaughter, daughter, and grandmother are all doing fine as I type this.) I happened to be sitting in front of my work computer when I read that text, and for a brief moment I wondered if, as with 2020 when nearly everything seemed to be canceled, there might not be a TALON this year. Then my eyes focused on the ever-scrolling hamster wheel of incoming email on my computer, saw a message from a co-worker, and I realized that a life jacket might have just been thrown in the direction of the sinking camp. It was an email from my co-worker Linda May. Like Julie, Linda is a gifted teacher, supremely organized, is great with kids, and possesses a deep curiosity (and knowledge) about nature. She's also a terrific photographer.

Fast forward to June 4-9 and Linda and I, with the assistance of two outstanding interns (both were previous camp attendees), were leading 15 students from six states on another chock-full-to-the-brim ornithology camp. Our base camp returned to Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island after a one-year hiatus. As usual, we traveled by bus and boat to many of the best birding destinations in southeastern Georgia, including Little St. Simons Island, Altamaha WMA, Jekyll Island State Park, Andrews Island Causeway, St. Simons Island, Harris Neck NWR, Sapelo Island, and Ft. Stewart. Also as usual, many other teachers met us at stops during the week to give their time and talent on behalf of the campers. The teen birders learned about habitats and management practices, bird species identification, avian anatomy and physiology, how birds fly and how and why they sing, migration, beach ecology, conservation issues, island history, career opportunities, and journaling. They had the opportunity to meet and learn from technicians involved with sea turtle nesting and shorebird research, talked with biologists about endangered species management, the use of prescribed fire, land acquisition, and, on Little St. Simons Island, witnessed and participated in bird banding.



One of the campers meets a Painted Bunting. Photo provided by Erika Torres.

Camp TALON's 12th Edition *(continued from page 8)*

Least Bitterns at Harris Neck NWR. Photo by Linda May.

The campers recorded 116 bird species, forwarded to me nearly 80 eBird checklists, took hundreds of photos, met and connected with like-minded teens from other places, and several made a point of collecting names, phone numbers, and addresses of potential career mentors.

There are so many people to thank: Gene Keferl for showing us the marshes, isolated ponds, beaches (with Wilson's Plovers and nesting Least Terns) of Jekyll Island; Stacia Hendricks, Katie Higgins, Kim Savides, and Clark Rushing for a day of hands-on banding and ecology lessons on Little St. Simons Island, and thank you in particular to Wendy and Hank Paulson for supporting this visit to the island every year; Chuck Hayes for another guided tour of Harris Neck NWR and a "behind the scenes" visit to the rookery. The campers are still talking about the Least Bittern encounter; Malcolm Hodges, Fred Hay, and Blaine Tyler for another Sapelo island grand adventure. We got soaked, couldn't find the chachalacas, and had a vehicle problem, but it was perfect; and Larry Carlile who, despite

getting his part of the week cut short because the bus malfunctioned, introduced the campers to the ecology and management of rare birds and amphibians. Camp TALON would not be possible without support from TERN, the Georgia Ornithological Society, and Georgia Audubon.



Camp TALON class of 2022 at Little St. Simons Island. Photo by Stacia Hendricks.

Looking Back at a Winter's Backyard Big Day

By Josh Jackson

It's not yet lunchtime on this mid-January day, and I've already seen or heard 33 different species of birds from my backyard, a new personal record. I've kept a running tally almost every day since the pandemic shuttered our office and sent me working from home. I never would have guessed that my small, urban yard could match the chaotic energy of my office and recording studio in downtown Atlanta.

Of course, I've taken steps to encourage my local avifauna that this little patch of Belvedere Park, just east of the city, is the place to be. The first move was installing a feeder pole that looks like some steam-punk contraption out of a Jean-Pierre Jeunet film. Eight different tubes, cages, and trays hang from its wrought-iron arms, and a large cylindrical baffle keeps the squirrels from eating all its goodies. A big circular tray full of water sits on the ground at the edge of a wall of bushes and trees 20 feet from my window, providing for a cold drink or a splash in the bath. I've added some native plants and ripped out my English ivy, but it'll be a while before they grow to maturity. But a layer of leaves covers my yard, thanks to the tolerance of my wife for my newfound obsession for the birds and also thanks to my newfound hatred of the leaf blowers roaring elsewhere in my neighborhood. The Eastern Towhees, Hermit Thrushes and Brown Thrashers love to pick through the messy layers covering the grass, looking for insects and hidden seeds.



Blue Jay and Northern Cardinal sharing a bath. Photo by Josh Jackson.

My bedroom is also my office, so the first thing I see when I wake up in the morning is often birds landing on the feeder, and this morning seemed particularly busy. Each season of backyard birdwatching has its charms (the awkward young fledglings in the summer, the variety of migrants in the spring and fall), but winter is simply my favorite. As food becomes scarce, the seeds, nuts, mealworms and suet become an attractive source of needed fats and protein. The Pine Warblers and Eastern Bluebirds that are year-round residents in Atlanta don't bother with my feeders the rest of the year, but are daily visitors during our coldest months.



Pine Warbler at the feeder. Photo by Josh Jackson.

Since 2020, I've seen 83 species in my tiny yard. Today's list started with the Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee, Northern Cardinal and Brown-headed Cowbirds on the feeder when I first sat down at my desk. When I headed outside to refill the seeds, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet swooped right down, three feet from my face. One of our tiniest birds, it only flashes its bright-red head feathers when it's agitated, and this one showed no sign of fear or frustration with my presence as it nibbled calmly on the suet an arm's length away.

Looking Back *(continued from page 10)*

As I sat outside with my coffee and binoculars, checking email, a small flock of Red-winged blackbirds descended into the trees and continued to hang out, occasionally foraging at the seed feeder, drinking from the water dish or picking through the leaves. I've seen close to a thousand of these birds flocking around the city in the last week, but I know, thanks to a distinct patch of white feathers on its head, that one particular bird I've named Spot has stopped by my feeder each day. I keep checking blackbirds for that patch, but I'm still waiting for Spot to drop by today.

Some of the birds on today's yard list aren't interested in my food and are only here for a fly-by. I saw both of our resident vultures, Turkey and Black, soaring high overhead, scouting for a carcass on which its brethren can feed. An enormous Red-tailed Hawk flew directly above me, even giving its magnificent shriek and coming to rest in the top of my birch. Two pairs of European Starlings zoomed past, dark shadows identifiable only by their wedge shape. And my most unusual sighting today was of 219 Ring-billed Gulls flying in a giant V thousands of feet above me. I know there were 219 because I took a photo on my phone and just counted the blurry dots.



Red-bellied Woodpecker. Photo by Josh Jackson.

Other less frequent visitors to my backyard who have helped grow the list today include an Orange-crowned Warbler hopping around my bushes, a Dark-eyed Junco who's been here all week, and a Chipping Sparrow, a bird I see frequently around town but seldom at home. I saw Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers foraging in the trees, Yellow-rumped Warblers busily gleaning tiny insects from the leaves, and a shy Blue Jay, who never ventures too close when I'm outside.



Yellow-rumped Warbler. Photo by Josh Jackson.

Three of the birds on my list I haven't laid eyes on yet, but I've distinctly heard—the croaky caw of an American Crow in the distance, the high-pitched hum of Cedar Waxwings nearby, and the harsh call of a Northern Flicker high in the canopy next door.

My office right now is my back patio, and my colleagues are a diverse, colorful, and wonderfully noisy bunch. Of course, even working from home you can't always get away from office strife. My 34th bird of the day just showed up, a Cooper's Hawk looking regal and powerful, but hugely unpopular among the staff. My yard has gone completely quiet. Where I see little creatures to be cataloged and appreciated, she just sees her next meal.

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Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron)	\$50
Fledgling (Students only)	\$20

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Tara Reigel, graduate of Wesleyan College in Macon, is the first recipient of GOS' Young Birder Optics Award. Here she receives a Kiowa 66 mm scope and Manfrotto tripod in April from Bob Sargent. Photo by Kara Kostiuk.