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GOShawk

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President's Message

By Ed Maioriello

Dear Birders,

Our fall meeting on Jekyll Island has come and gone but was a memorable occasion. Our speakers, Dr. Scott Robinson and Diane Klement, gave interesting, informative, and entertaining presentations. The field trips yielded good birding, good camaraderie, and good weather – thankfully! But most importantly, it was great to see so many members in person whom I had not seen in quite a while.

One of the important functions of our fall meeting is that in odd-numbered years we hold elections for our officers. This year I am pleased to inform you that all five of our current officers, Steve Wagner, Adam Betuel, Jeannie Wright, Mike Weaver, and I agreed to server another term as 1st vice president, 2nd vice president, treasurer, secretary, and president, respectively, and were re-elected by the members present at the October meeting. In addition, the members voted to adopt a change to our bylaws that had required us to alternate years, having a winter meeting one year and a spring meeting the next. The change allows us to hold either a winter or spring meeting (or both) as seems



Yellow Warbler. Photo by Ed Maioriello.

best to the executive committee. It is my firm belief that this will help us to ensure a better turnout at the meetings and less likelihood of the Society losing money on poor turnouts at spring meetings.

Disappointing news from our meeting is that Dr. Bob Sargent will be unable to continue as our business manager. We are relieved that Bob will be able to continue as our *GOShawk* editor, chair of the education committee, and chair of the Bill Terrell student research grants committee. Given all that Bob does formally for the Society, as well as his unseen activities in the background that include, among many things, keeping me on track with my

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**Georgia
Ornithological
Society**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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<i>1st Vice President</i>	Steve Wagner
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For a list of grant, scholarship, and award committees (and their contact information) visit gos.org/executive-committee

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Sandwich Tern at Sapelo Island, October 8, 2023. Photo by Bob Sargent.

Welcome, New Members!

Brown Thrasher (Individual/Family)

Karen Anderson	Bluffton, SC
Jennifer Andrews	Atlanta, GA
Kathryn Byrd	Bluffton, SC
Maureen Carroll	Atlanta, GA
Amy Edwards	Crawford, GA
Adam George	Thomasville, GA
Scott Robinson	Gainesville, FL
Lisa Rose	Brunswick, GA

Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron)

Sally and Greg Bergquist	Alexander City, AL
Jack Bruce	Lawrenceville, GA
Tibbett Speer	St. Simons Island, GA

The Oriole Welcomes Submissions

The Oriole, the scientific journal of GOS, invites authors to submit general notes or research articles about Georgia bird life. We also publish book reviews. You can see examples in previous issues, 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.



Orchard Oriole. Photo by Dan Vickers.

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President's Message (continued from page 1)

responsibilities, I think that we can understand and encourage Bob's need to step down from the business manager role. Thank you for all that you do, Bob!

That being said, we need a business manager. From the bylaws:

"Section 6. The business manager shall be responsible for the business activities of the Society, including dealing with printers and the management of production, sales, and distribution of publications, insignia, and various other items. The business manager shall maintain an inventory of back issues of *The Oriole*, the *GOShawk*, sales copies of the Occasional Publications series, and other sales items, and shall fill and ship orders for these items."

The business manager serves a four-year term, is appointed by the president with the executive committee's approval, and has a voting position on the executive committee. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone looking to find a way to contribute to the GOS and learn more about how the Society operates. Please contact me if you or someone you know is interested in filling this needed role.

Thank you for your interest in the Georgia Ornithological Society.

Ed Maioriello
President, GOS

Mark Your Calendars Now!
GOS Winter Meeting: February 16-19, 2024

Don't miss our winter GOS meeting, which will be held at our regular meeting venue at Tybee Island. In addition to the usual four days of fabulous birding led by some of Georgia's very best, the agenda includes speakers on Friday and Saturday, and the Saturday banquet. The field trip schedule and speaker details will be distributed electronically in early December. The meeting location will be Hotel Tybee, 1401 Strand Ave., Tybee Island, GA 31328. Call (912) 786-7777 for reservations. Use the group code "GOS2024" to receive discounted rates: \$125.00/night for an inland room and \$199.00/night for an ocean view. A resort fee (\$35) and taxes are not included. The cutoff date for the group rate is December 30, 2023. For more details about the hotel, go to <http://www.hotelttybee.com/>



Seventeen-year-old Alex Stach of Decatur relishes his Kowa scope at Legacy Park on November 18, 2023. Alex was chosen by a GOS committee to receive this scope and tripod, which was donated to GOS by Ilze Henderson, widow of the late Dr. Rafe Henderson. Rafe, a renown epidemiologist and longtime GOS member, passed away in 2022. He donated his optics and birding library to GOS with the stipulation that the items be given to young birders who are serious about birds and conservation. Alex has participated in the YBC four times, Camp TALON twice, went to Camp Colorado this year, is involved in Georgia Audubon's Urban Ecologist Program, has created an interactive online site about bird identification, and is creating a field guide to Legacy Park. Congratulations, Alex! Photo by Bob Sargent.

Dr. Robert Cooper Receives the 2023 Earle Greene Award

Remarks Given by Bob Sargent at the Fall Meeting

It is my honor to recognize the recipient of the 2023 Earle Greene Award. Georgann Schmalz, the chair of the award committee, couldn't be here, so she asked me to make this presentation. When I asked her to share with me the comments she drafted, she told me that the recipient was writing them and that I should ask him! I guess that's sort of like being asked to write your own work performance evaluation. I contacted him and told him I would write this. The downside to this decision is that you will have to endure what surely is a longer address from my pen, and I can't blame screwups in my remarks on someone else.

Among his many accomplishment, Earle Greene served as the second president of GOS and was the founder of the Louisiana Ornithological Society. GOS's most distinguished award was established in his memory in 1975, the year he passed away. People can be nominated for achievements in ornithology, for promoting birding, or for service to GOS. This year's recipient probably is best known for his accomplishments in ornithology and for teaching that subject, but he has made invaluable contributions to the other two categories.

Bob Cooper joined the faculty of the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia in 1997 after serving on the faculty at Humboldt State University and the University of Memphis. He retired from UGA in 2021 as the Dennis and Sara Carey Distinguished Professor of Forestry and Natural Resources, *Emeritus*. During his career, Bob taught ornithology to roughly 900 students, directed the research of 48 graduate students, and authored or co-authored more than 150 peer-reviewed publications.



Bob Sargent (left) presents the award plaque to Bob Cooper. Photo by Adam Betuel.

Bob's work has been recognized by awards from the Audubon Society, Partners in Flight, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithological Society and serves on the Board of Directors of Georgia Audubon and the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. He is also the current president of the Coastal Georgia chapter of the Audubon Society, and he is the chair of GOS's Branch Howe, Jr., Graduate Student Grant Committee.

Many of Bob's former graduate students have received grants from GOS and have given oral or poster presentations at our meetings. Because of this, I have gotten to know several of them. They are carrying on his legacy of excellence in research, teaching, and conservation. I thought it would be fun and interesting for you and for Bob to hear from them, so what follows are quotes that several of them shared with me recently or that I borrowed from articles in *The Yellowthroat*, newsletter of Oconee Rivers Audubon, or from the Warnell School's magazine. In reaching out to these students I was reminded of what an exceptional group of scientists they are; they literally are on the frontlines, engaged in bird conservation across the world.

Dr. Robert Cooper Receives the 2023 Earle Greene Award *(continued from page 4)*

Multiple students told me that Bob introduced his ornithology class by proclaiming that “birds are the coolest organisms on this planet.” And then he proceeded to prove this bold statement to them. Another common theme they related to me is how Bob always treated his students as colleagues and as family.

Joanna Hatt said that “...having a friendship with his students may have been as important to Bob as serving as their advisor. I vividly recall when we went to an AOU meeting in Jacksonville, and he explained that the majority of the ‘work’ at a conference actually gets done during the evening social. That astute observation still resonates with me and has been extremely helpful throughout my career.”

Mason Cline and Joanna Hatt wrote that Bob’s “...laid-back style and lack of concern about conformity was inspiring. Even if things were falling apart, his feathers only ever seemed slightly out of place. His calm demeanor helped to produce self-motivated and grounded students...”

Clark Jones captured Bob’s quick wit through his story about his class encountering another birder during a field trip. Clark recalled that “It was early, the students were still groggy, and everyone was quietly looking through their binoculars at a small flock of nondescript wintering warblers. Before anyone had a chance to identify the birds or point out field marks to the students, the unknown proud birder exclaimed, ‘The Yellow-rumped Warblers are ubiquitous.’ To which Bob retorted without hesitation, ‘Yeah! And they’re everywhere too!’” Clark expressed fond memories for the low-country boils that were always an important part of those trips.

Bob served on Betsy Kurimo-Beechuk’s graduate committee. Betsy told me that “Bob was always patient, kind, and never scoffed at my less than stellar ideas. Once I graduated, I began working as a research coordinator and once again was working with Bob. It was through my experience working as a research coordinator that I learned that while Bob is talented at many things, computers are not one of them. He is more than deserving of any award you all want to give him, as long as it’s not technology related.”

Brady Mattson described a field trip with Bob’s class to the Mississippi coast to witness birds making landfall in spring. He described how “...a male Scarlet Tanager landed on top of Bob’s shoe. Bob stood still observing the emaciated and brightly plumaged songbird and then said, ‘This is a Zen moment.’”

Nico Arcilla said that one of her favorite Bob quotes is “It’s okay to interrupt a conversation for a bird.” Nico spent a summer studying Louisiana Waterthrushes for another one of Bob’s grad students. She recently encountered a waterfall and plants exhibit in an airport in Sweden that was accompanied by a recording of a singing Louisiana Waterthrush. She sent a recording of the airport singer to Bob, who responded by saying, “I guess it’s like us listening to ABBA!” Nico went on to say about Bob that “He has remained one of the most important mentors in my life and been like a father to me in many ways.”

Abby Sterling, who is here in the audience tonight, said that “...my lab mates and I would often joke that if we had a question for Bob but couldn’t find him, all we had to do was send out a note that there were cookies in the office, and he’d materialize.” She explained to me how Bob’s dedication to his students can be summed up by his personal philosophy, which he kept on his website: “You will have my support under just about all circumstances. You don’t have to worry about failing or have me lose faith in you.”

Dr. Robert Cooper Receives the 2023 Earle Greene Award *(continued from page 5)*

Bob, everyone in this room wants to make a difference on behalf of birds. You have done so. There isn't enough time for me to read everything else his students and lab staff had to say. I should stop. Please help me in recognizing our 2023 recipient of the Earle Greene Award: Dr. Bob Cooper.



Dr. Abby Sterling (above), one of Dr. Cooper's former graduate students, presents a poster at the fall meeting. Photo by Bob Sargent. Bob Cooper (right) poses with his Earle Greene Award. Photo by Adam Betuel.



Scenes from the 2023 GOS fall meeting, which was based at Jekyll Island, Georgia, October 6-9. Clockwise from above: 1) Birders search for elusive warblers in the maritime forest canopy; 2) The attendees gather for an evening program at the conference center, Villas by the Sea; and 3) A banded Piping Plover searches for the next food morsel. Photos by Adam Betuel.

Help Prevent Bird-Building Collisions

By Lauren Gingerella

Nearly a billion birds die annually by colliding with buildings in the United States¹. The landscape that was once natural habitat has been developed with man-made structures that become obstacles for birds. Bird-building collisions happen day and night throughout the year. Most collisions occur during fall and spring, when much of North America's bird population migrates between breeding and wintering sites.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on a sidewalk in front of an Atlanta building. Photo by Adam Betuel.

A main driver of bird-building collisions is glass windows. Glass is nearly invisible to birds because they are unable to see and process glass the same way that people do, such as using visual cues like window frames to know there is an object there. Glass often reflects the environment around it as well, so birds may think they are flying into a tree or proceeding through open sky, but instead hit the window's mirrored image.

Birds that migrate at night and rely on stars for navigation are particularly susceptible to light pollution emanating from illuminated buildings and other human-made structures. Artificial lighting attracts birds, which then causes them to strike buildings, or become disoriented and fly around lighted structures such as

communication towers when they should be migrating. In October of 2023, nearly 1,000 migrating birds died in a single night after hitting a Chicago convention center. A combination of lighting and weather conditions favoring a significant migration event resulted in a year's worth of bird-collision deaths in one night at this particular building².

Project Safe Flight is a conservation program aimed at understanding, monitoring, and mitigating migratory bird-building collisions. After observing numerous dead birds in city streets, New York City Audubon started Project Safe Flight, which is now implemented in multiple cities across North America, including Atlanta. Georgia Audubon facilitates the Atlanta program and has a team of volunteers who monitor the perimeter of metro buildings for killed or injured birds. Additionally, Georgia Audubon has been installing special film that disrupts window reflection on Atlanta-area buildings and nature centers. This project is made possible with grant funding support in part from the Georgia Ornithological Society.

There are several ways to reduce the number of bird deaths from building collisions, including prevention methods you can implement at your home. One simple solution is to move bird feeders and birdbaths within three feet or affixed to a window, or more than 30 feet away. Placing these features close to a window ensures that birds will not hurt themselves when taking off. Treating windows to deter collisions can be accomplished with a range of methods. Tempera paint, tape, or special window film can be applied to create patterns that break up reflections. Companies that produce and sell window treatments are CollidEscape, Feather Friendly, Solyx, and Acopian Bird Savers. A few low- or no-cost prevention methods include hanging strings, ribbons, netting, or Mylar flash tape in front of windows or letting your windows stay dirty. Other options to reduce reflection are multiple window decals placed no more than two inches apart, removable exterior screens, and motorized solar shades.

Help Prevent Bird-Building Collisions *(continued from page 7)*

Bird-conscious lighting practices are beneficial for both birds and people. Simply turning off unnecessary lights at night and illuminating only the needed areas prevents collisions and saves energy and money. Automatic timers, dimmers, and motion sensors can assist with illuminating only the desired areas, as needed. Audubon's Lights Out program is a national effort to persuade building owners and managers to turn off excess lighting during fall and spring migration, so birds have safe passage during their nighttime flights. Both homeowners and commercial building managers can support the Lights Out program by turning off outdoor lights between midnight and sunrise, drawing blinds or curtains to reduce indoor lighting spilling outdoors, and installing motion sensors for outdoor lighting.

Finally, policy makers need to join in the effort to prevent bird-building collisions by passing bird-friendly legislation. In 2019, New York City enacted legislation that all new buildings are required to be constructed with bird-friendly design requirements. Several other cities in North America have enacted similar design requirements in recent years, including Toronto, Ontario, and Portland, Oregon, while the entire state of Minnesota created a law that applies to all state-owned buildings and major renovations³. Any community can adopt this type of legislation, and the American Bird Conservancy³ has resources available if you are interested in advocating for a bird-friendly building ordinance. Bird-friendly legislation is a major step forward toward saving birds from building collisions, and more communities should adopt these ordinances. Losing a billion birds from the skies annually is unacceptable, and it is going to take a multi-solution approach to fix this problem.



Golden-crowned Kinglet on an Atlanta sidewalk.
Photo by Adam Betuel.

References

¹Loss, Scott R., Will, Scott, Loss, Sarah S., Marra, Peter P. 2014. Bird–building collisions in the United States: Estimates of annual mortality and species vulnerability. *The Condor*, 116 (1): 8-23. <https://doi.org/10.1650/CONDOR-13-090.1>

²Schneider, Clare M. 2023. Nearly 1,000 migrating birds died after crashing into Chicago building. <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/09/1204641722/nearly-1-000-migrating-birds-died-after-crashing-into-chicago-building>

³American Bird Conservancy. 2023. Glass Collisions, Existing Bird-Friendly Legislation and Ordinances. <https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/existing-ordinances/>

Where Are They Now?

By Graydon Hidalgo

(Editor's note: I continue to contact past recipients of GOS scholarships and past participants of Camp TALON, asking them to write articles describing what they are doing in their careers.)

Hi there! My name is Graydon Hidalgo, and I was a recipient of the Georgia Ornithological Society scholarship to attend Camp Colorado in the summer of 2017. My experience birding in the Rockies was transformative. I was connected with local researchers dedicated to uplifting youth in ornithology and exposing students to birds from montane forests to the high alpine. After the camp, one of the camp counselors asked me to write a blog for Leica Optics about my time birding in the mountains. Here is an excerpt from my blog I wrote when I was 17:

“Over the week, my absolute favorite trip was our hike through the Alpine Tundra, the crowning jewel of Rocky Mountain National Park. Without a doubt, this great National Park has the most accessible alpine tundra habitat of anywhere else on the continent. The feeling of being 12,000 feet on top of the world is simply ethereal. It is a feeling that never leaves you. The alpine wind is crisp and thin as it sweeps across the tundra and your skin, you feel as if you could fly away with the breeze. There is such purity within the air that with each breath you become lighter in weight, as if you have joined the atmosphere.”

I am currently in the first year of a Ph.D. program in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department at the University of Colorado, Boulder. My journey to higher education has been circuitous and unbelievably rewarding.

Before my scholarship to Camp Colorado, I had been attending Camp TALON since I was twelve. Camp TALON was foundational to my career in ornithology. Each summer, Dr. Bob Sargent and Julie Duncan would take us to the coast of southeast Georgia to learn about and witness the abundance of life. We boated to a variety of southern barrier islands, hiked through the vast Okefenokee swamp, rode in the back of trucks across hard-hammock and longleaf pine forests, and all the while finding as many birds as we could get our binos on. At the end of each visit to the barrier islands, we would take a trip to Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, arguably the crowning jewel of the week. We received a personal tour of the Wood Stork rookeries and witnessed hundreds of wading birds in breeding plumage nesting along with them. Camp TALON sounds like a fairy tale to a budding ornithology student, and it truly was.



Camp TALON at Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuge, June 2013. Gray is in the front row, fourth from the right. Photo by Kimberly Hayes.

Where Are They Now? *(continued from page 9)*

My last year attending camp was the summer before my junior year of high school. As we were saying our goodbyes, my dear friend Emma Dickinson mentioned a wild pair of Peregrine Falcons on the cliffs of Tallulah Gorge State Park. The nest was monumental, as it was the first wild Peregrine eyrie in Georgia in more than 80 years. Emma and I visited the park to find the falcons the following weekend, and the minute I saw my very first Peregrine chick it was over; my dream of becoming an ornithologist was set.

The same summer I attended camp in Colorado, I made my way to Montana, where I started my first volunteer field season as a Peregrine Falcon and Golden Eagle nest counter with the director of the Montana Peregrine Institute, Jay Sumner. I tracked Peregrine Falcons in spotting scopes, often from miles away, to record valuable data on productivity and nest success. After Jay introduced me to the University of Montana's Wildlife Biology Program, the deal was sealed. In 2017, I moved across the country from Atlanta to study in Montana.

During my four years at UM, I worked in Dr. Erick Greene's bioacoustics lab, helping analyze data and doing my research. In 2018, I began my undergraduate research project with Dr. Greene, exploring distant early warning systems in alarm responses in the nuthatches and chickadees. I sought to answer the question: do birds use their avian neighbors as sentinels? My goal was to gain a deeper understanding of the interspecific listening abilities of chickadees and nuthatches. Specifically, I tested if they use Townsend's Solitaires and Downy Woodpeckers as sentinel species. I achieved this by playing three different acoustic stimuli from both suspected sentinels to mixed-species flocks of chickadees and nuthatches.

During the summers while I was at UM, I strived to obtain as much field experience as I could. In the summer of 2018, I worked for the World Wildlife Fund as a grassland avian point count technician for their sustainable ranching project. I was trained to work with private landowners across South Dakota, whom I talked with daily. The following summer, I was hired by Intermountain Bird Observatory as a backcountry avian point count technician to survey IMBCR grids in western Montana. The dual projects gave me a well-rounded understanding of wildlife conservation from the perspectives of public and private land ownership. The summer following my graduation, I was employed with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies to survey Mexican Spotted Owls across New Mexico and Arizona. With each field season, I grew more confident in my ability to tackle more responsible positions.

In February of 2022, I moved to the Big Island of Hawai'i to monitor the prevalence of avian malaria in the endemic forest birds as an Avian Disease Associate with the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i. Along with four other biologists, I mist netted and banded all species of honeycreeper to collect individual blood samples to test for malaria.



Gray in a University of Colorado hoodie overlooking the Continental Divide above Boulder, Colorado. Photo provided by Gray.

Where Are They Now? *(continued from page 10)*

In addition to our banding efforts, we monitored weekly lines of mosquito trapping stations and assisted the Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife with fence building, trapping invasive species, and counting Nene. What I valued most, however, was my work to preserve the highly endangered Palila. Today, it is estimated that there are a mere 600 Palila left. My position gave me a unique opportunity to search for Palila nests as part of efforts to preserve the species. I was also given the responsibility of mapping vital māmane forests. The crowning achievement of my time on the island was my discovery of the only recorded successful Palila nest of the 2022 breeding season. My contribution to the recovery of the Palila is the greatest honor of my career.



Gray holding a recently banded 'Iwi. Photo provided by Gray.

I am now a full-time Ph.D. student in the Safran Lab at the University of Colorado, Boulder. For my dissertation, I will be sampling the genome of North American Barn Swallows across the Continental Divide to investigate if the Canadian Rockies are acting as a migratory divide and promoting reproductive isolation. In addition to my work in conservation genetics, I will be heavily involved in my advisor's educational program, Side by Side: a program dedicated to uplifting students from underrepresented groups in the field of STEM, using artwork as our medium. This coming summer, we will be designing a camp for students to stay at the University of Colorado for 10 days and create interactive puppets inspired by migrating birds. In the coming years, we will transport these puppets along the routes of the birds they are inspired by to migratory bird festivals across central and southern America.

The Safran Lab: <http://www.safran-lab.com/>
Side by Side: <https://www.sidebyside.world/>

I would not be where I am today without Camp TALON and Camp Colorado. Bob Sargent and Julie Duncan will forever be the start of my journey, and I will never forget their dedication to my growth as a scientist and as an individual.

Where Are They Now?

By Ewan Pritchard

As a Georgia youth birder, I competed every year in the Youth Birding Competition, and ever since I was 12, I attended Camp TALON. These experiences formed my perspective on observing, learning from, and interacting with the outdoors. At the end of 9th grade, I received the GOS Parks Scholarship to attend ABA's Camp Colorado. I remember on the flight to Denver, as the plane banked, seeing the formidable wall of the Rocky Mountains rising vertically from the prairie below. The leap of excitement I felt lasted through the shuttle ride across the plains, through the rusty red Ponderosa-spotted foothills, and above the craggy ravines along cliff-hugging highways to reach the YMCA of the Rockies. That week was awesome, and that was the year that I succumbed to the grip of birding as a lifestyle, not a hobby.

Where Are They Now? *(continued from page 11)*

In 12th grade I went to stay with my grandfather in Scotland to help with farm work and finished the semester online. During the 10-day quarantine period upon arrival, I remember staring out the window at a frosty field, picking through pipits and skylarks, learning the differences in their size, shape, and foraging behavior. After school ended, I postponed my enrollment to Georgia Tech to stay for a gap year.

Through some twist of fate, I embarked upon a bikepacking trip through France and Spain on a \$90 Trek bike, sleeping under a tarp borrowed from my grandfather's barn for shelter, with two weeks of sifting through eBird reports and Google maps routes to prepare. One month in, as I was biking through pine flatwoods reminiscent of south Georgia, I crested a hill, and I looked at the horizon and saw what looked like clouds. Through my binoculars I realized they were very distant mountains.

I was looking at the Pyrenees, the mountain range that forms the border of France and Spain. I had not expected to be able to see them from so far off, and it immediately brought me back to my first view of the Rockies. This time, instead of a 12-passenger van carrying me to my destination, it was my own legs propelling me onward. The ride up and over 5,540 feet of elevation was exhausting, but it was punctuated by sightings of Griffon Vultures, and the hunt for the much-sought-after Lammergeier drew me onward. After finally reaching the top, I cruised down the Spanish side to spend my 19th birthday hiking and resting from the three-day ascent. The feeling of elation and exhaustion seeing a lifer after days of biking to see it, with no guarantee of its presence, was addicting. After two months and 1,300 miles of camping, biking, and birding, which I called "birdpacking," I said goodbye to the worn-out bike, logged the last new birds of the trip, Trumpeter Finch and Ferruginous Duck in Almería, and returned to Scotland. Almost a year later, I started college to study Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech.

Following a few months of being swamped with classes, I found an unexpected community of fellow bird lovers when I joined the "GT Bird Nerds" GroupMe. Since then, we have become an official club, and I have been able to share and revisit many sites that I know from the YBC and Camp TALON, like Piedmont NWR, Altamaha WMA, and Gould's Inlet on St. Simon's Island.

Since my bike trip, I have done a couple more "birdpacking" trips: backpacking for endemics of Jamaica's Blue Mountains with Patrick Maurice, a Georgia young birder, and bus birding the Argentinian Atlantic Forest with my brother Angus and Hannes Leonard, a young birder I met at Camp Colorado in 2018. The strength of these connections would never have been possible without Camp TALON and GOS.

However, after visiting far places in the U.S. and abroad for birding, I am finding local birding more and more rewarding. Exploring every patch of trees and grass on



Camp TALON in June 2017. Ewan is on the far left, wearing an orange baseball cap. Photo by Bob Sargent.

Where Are They Now? (continued from page 12)

campus for warblers and sparrows, walking around the neighborhood trying to find my DeKalb County Great-horned Owl, and getting to share those birds and places with others, watching their interest ignite and grow, is my new passion. I am grateful to GOS for creating and supporting opportunities for youth birders and aspiring ornithologists to kindle their interest in birds and the outdoors, and to foster relationships through these shared experiences.

Ewan (back left) and other Georgia Tech Bird Nerds at Butler Island, Altamaha WMA.

Where Are They Now?

By Josiah Lavender

When I began birding at the age of 11, I was drawn by the diversity of species, behaviors, and plumages, and the ability of birds to fly and turn up in unexpected places that made looking for them exciting. As I became more involved in the hobby, I found that birding also meshed with other interests and aspects of my personality. For example, I wanted to record my observations of the natural world, so I began making lists of the bird species I saw in my parents' yard in a 24-hour period. I was naturally competitive, and so I made a life list, county lists, and a yard list, and engaged in friendly listing competitions with other local birders. I soon discovered eBird, a citizen science database where birders can submit their observations. Using eBird sparked my interest in bird conservation as I began to realize how valuable my own observations could be to science and conservation. eBird also opened my eyes to the vast network of birders across the continent, many of whom were teenagers or preteens like myself.

I soon began looking for ways to meet other birders. I attended local bird walks and participated in the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' annual Youth Birding Competition. These activities exposed me to environments and people that encouraged my interest. However, I was most impacted by birding camps I attended a few years later, thanks to the Georgia Ornithological Society.



John Deitsch (left) and Josiah Lavender model their GOS caps at Camp Colorado, July 2017. Photo provided by John.

Where Are They Now? (continued from page 13)

When I was 16, I received a GOS scholarship to attend the American Birding Association's Camp Colorado in northern Colorado. For a week that summer, while my friends were off at church camps or other summer camps, I was out looking for birds in the Rocky Mountains with a group of equally obsessed teenagers. I still remember the van ride from the Denver airport to Estes Park, Colorado, where we stayed. I found it hard to believe that all my fellow passengers also were avid young birders. The following year, I received a GOS scholarship to attend a Hog Island Audubon camp on Hog Island, Maine. While the scenery, habitats, and bird species were mostly different, both camps had a similar effect on my development as a young birder.

Birdwatchers have been broadly stereotyped as “weird,” which made me feel uneasy at first. However, my experience at these camps eliminated my fear of what people might think of my hobby. My fellow bird campers were smart, ambitious, socially adept, and unashamed of birding. I began to be proud of my hobby, and this newfound confidence led me to share my interest with others. Not long after attending the Hog Island Audubon camp, I started leading bird walks and teaching classes on bird identification and photography. I met many people who were eager to learn about birds, and this motivated me to learn more and continue sharing my knowledge with others. Mentoring beginning birders and helping people learn more about birds and bird conservation remains one of my primary ambitions.



Josiah searches for banded Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina.

Hog Island, Camp Colorado, and Camp TALON, a young birder camp on the Georgia coast hosted by GOS that I attended in 2019, also offered wonderful opportunities to learn from people with careers in ornithology and conservation. Our camp counselors had a diversity of professional backgrounds that spanned the spectrum of nonprofit, state government, and academia. They talked to us specifically about their careers and organizations and broadly about professional opportunities in the field. They also used their scientific training and expertise to educate us on the big picture of birds and birding in the regions we visited. They taught us about how unique habitats were shaped by elevation, climate, and human disturbance, and how characteristics of these habitats resulted in unique species and behaviors. These conversations were pivotal in my development, as I had begun to consider how I might turn my bird interest into a career. I became fascinated with bird ecology (i.e., the study of how birds interact with their environment).

I deepened this interest as an ecology student at the University of Georgia, where I studied the breeding ecology of Painted Buntings on the Georgia coast, as well as through field jobs where I helped with bird-related projects. Now, as I apply to Ph.D. programs in ecology and evolutionary biology, I look back and see my bird interest gradually morphing from primarily wanting to see new species and build my personal lists to being fascinated by the evolution, biology, and natural history of birds. My experiences in coastal Maine and Georgia and the mountains of Colorado allowed aspects of my birding interest, such as recording my bird observations, to develop into a scientific interest that has directed the course of my life and led me to a more profound enjoyment of birding.

Remembering Our Friend, Ashley Harrington: The Essence of Kindness and True Grit

By Bob Sargent



Ashley Harrington banding kestrels. Photo by Nathan Klaus.

Former GOS business manager Ashley Harrington passed away at a hospice facility in Macon on October 17, 2023. After a long career at Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Ashley worked as a technician on Georgia DNR biologist Nathan Klaus’s west central Georgia field crew until increasing health problems in the wake of cancer surgery forced him to retire a couple of years ago. Those problems also led him to resign (reluctantly) his GOS business manager duties, a role he excelled in on behalf of the society from 2009-2021. Ashley suffered serious injuries as a young man in Vietnam and years later was diagnosed with a blood illness he was told likely developed as a result of his repeated exposure to Agent Orange during the war. Prior to his retirement, his weekend regiment - after spending the week on prescribed burns and other projects for DNR - was to undergo chemo treatment on Saturdays, spend Sundays feeling terrible, and be back on the job on Mondays. He did this for years and never complained. In fact, Ashley was one of the most positive, generous, “isn’t life wonderful?” people I ever met. He treasured being a member of the DNR team, and giving up that job hurt his soul. He loved banding kestrels and was a great role model to the young technicians (and all of us older folks, too!) employed on Nathan’s crew

each year. When others were inclined to focus on and complain about life’s weeds, Ashley only saw flowers. He truly gushed thankfulness for each and every day he was given. His infrequent

visits to DNR’s Rum Creek office were a work highlight for the office staff. Even though my office is at the far end of that building, the moment he arrived I knew it because of his booming enthusiasm and because in no time at all he had everyone in the building laughing. Nathan recalled that Ashley carried milk bones in his DNR truck and was on a first name basis with every dog for at least six counties around his work area. Per Nathan, "Earning the friendship of hundreds of dogs is a great testament to who Ashley was."



A constant sight at GOS meetings for nearly 12 years: Ashley Harrington manning the merchandise sales table. He loved people, laughter, birds, dogs, serving GOS, and sharing stories. Photo by Ed Maioriello.

GOS Fall Meeting Summary, October 6-9, 2023

By Steve Wagner

Approximately 84 attendees participated in our Fall Meeting activities, which included interesting and entertaining presentations on Friday and Saturday, the banquet, and field trips. For the weekend, participants found 165 species (see list below) on field trips to Altamaha Sound, Altamaha WMA, Altama Plantation WMA, Andrews Island Causeway and Disposal Site, Cannon's Point, Clayhole Swamp WMA, Cumberland Island, Glennville Wastewater Treatment Facility, Harris Neck NWR, Jekyll Island (banding station, hot spots, welcome center), St. Catherines Island, and Sapelo Island. As always, thanks to our field trip leaders (Adam Betuel, Kris Bisgard, Larry Carlile, Malcolm Hodges, Gene Keferl, Tim Keyes, Ed Maioriello, Pete Moore, J.P. Moss, Evan Pittman, Bob Sargent, Bob Sattelmeyer, Eliot VanOtteren, and Dan Vickers).



Diane Klement presents her Painted Bunting research at the fall meeting, Jekyll Island, October 6, 2023. Photo by Bob Sargent.

Our Friday speaker, Diane Klement, is an M.S. student in the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia and a recipient of a H. Branch Howe Graduate Student Research Grant from GOS. In her Friday evening presentation, "Painting the Bunting: Linking Birds to Plant Communities through Fine-Scale Space Use," Diane shared experiences and observations from her field research with Painted Buntings on Little Saint Simons Island.



Scott Robinson, Ordway Professor of Conservation Biology at the Florida Museum of Natural History, gave the Saturday Keynote address. His talk, "Mixing Birding and Science: A Personal Journey," covered his lifelong interest in birding and ornithology. Dr. Robinson's early research career began in the tropical forests of eastern Peru. While working there in 1982, he and Ted Parker set a World Big Day record of 331 species. Currently, he and his graduate students are working on a variety of research projects, primarily in the tropics. He shared several interesting examples of this research examining the diversity, behavior, and ecology of tropical birds.

Dr. Scott Robinson takes the audience along as he narrates a wide array of tropical birding adventures and research projects performed by him, his graduate students, and colleagues. Photo by Adam Betuel.

Species Tally, GOS Fall Meeting, Jekyll Island, Georgia, October 6-9, 2023*Compiled by Steve Wagner; 165 species*

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Willet	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Canada Goose	Lesser Yellowlegs	Downy Woodpecker
Wood Duck	Laughing Gull	Pileated Woodpecker
Blue-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Northern Flicker
Northern Shoveler	Herring Gull	American Kestrel
American Wigeon	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Merlin
Mottled Duck	Caspian Tern	Peregrine Falcon
Green-winged Teal	Common Tern	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Ruddy Duck	Forster's Tern	Acadian Flycatcher
Wild Turkey	Royal Tern	Eastern Phoebe
Pied-billed Grebe	Sandwich Tern	Eastern Kingbird
Eared Grebe	Black Skimmer	White-eyed Vireo
Rock Pigeon	Wood Stork	Blue-headed Vireo
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Anhinga	Philadelphia Vireo
Common Ground Dove	Double-crested Cormorant	Red-eyed Vireo
Mourning Dove	American White Pelican	Loggerhead Shrike
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Brown Pelican	Blue Jay
Chimney Swift	Great Blue Heron	American Crow
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Great Egret	Fish Crow
Clapper Rail	Snowy Egret	Carolina Chickadee
Sora	Little Blue Heron	Tufted Titmouse
Common Gallinule	Tricolored Heron	Tree Swallow
Black-necked Stilt	Reddish Egret	Barn Swallow
American Avocet	Cattle Egret	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
American Oystercatcher	Green Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch
Black-bellied Plover	Black-crowned Night-Heron	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Wilson's Plover	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Semipalmated Plover	White Ibis	House Wren
Piping Plover	Glossy Ibis	Marsh Wren
Killdeer	Roseate Spoonbill	Carolina Wren
Whimbrel	Black Vulture	Gray Catbird
Long-billed Curlew	Turkey Vulture	Brown Thrasher
Marbled Godwit	Osprey	Northern Mockingbird
Ruddy Turnstone	Northern Harrier	Eastern Bluebird
Red Knot	Cooper's Hawk	Veery
Sanderling	Bald Eagle	House Finch
Dunlin	Red-shouldered Hawk	Seaside Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	Red-tailed Hawk	Savannah Sparrow
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Eastern Screech-Owl	Song Sparrow
Western Sandpiper	Great Horned Owl	Eastern Towhee
Short-billed Dowitcher	Barred Owl	Yellow-breasted Chat
Wilson's Snipe	Belted Kingfisher	Bobolink
Wilson's Phalarope	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Eastern Meadowlark
Spotted Sandpiper	Red-headed Woodpecker	Orchard Oriole
Greater Yellowlegs		

Species Tally, GOS Fall Meeting (continued from page 17)

- Baltimore Oriole
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Common Grackle
- Boat-tailed Grackle
- Ovenbird
- Northern Waterthrush
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Black-and-white Warbler
- Tennessee Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Hooded Warbler
- American Redstart
- Cape May Warbler
- Northern Parula
- Magnolia Warbler
- Bay-breasted Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Palm Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Summer Tanager
- Scarlet Tanager
- Northern Cardinal
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Blue Grosbeak
- Indigo Bunting
- Painted Bunting



From left to right, Sabiha Syeda, Jordyn Hardy, Mackie Wallace, and Muniza Khan of Wesleyan University in Macon, Georgia, stand next to a research poster by Jordyn, Mackie, and Dr. Jim Ferrari. From the fall meeting at Jekyll Island, October 6, 2023. Photo by Jim Ferrari.



Scenes from the fall 2023 meeting. Scott Robinson (above) searches for tree-top warblers at the amphitheater pond at Jekyll Island on October 7th. Malcolm Hodges (left) guides birders at Long Tabby, Sapelo Island, on October 8th. Photos by Bob Sargent.



CAMP **TALON***

Teen **A**dventures **L**earning **O**rnithology and **N**ature

June 1-6, 2024 – St. Simons Island, Georgia

TALON is a one-of-a kind camp for teens with a strong interest in the outdoors, birding and ecology. Each day the adventure begins as we travel by charter bus to barrier islands, state parks, wildlife management areas and refuges along Georgia's coast. Evening classes challenge our campers with presentations and quizzes about bird identification, songs, behavior, flight, migration and other "birdy" topics. At camp's end we come home with new and improved birding skills, a better understanding of coastal ecology, and great memories!

Small Camp ~ Exceptional Experience

Length of camp: 6 days, 5 nights



Availability: Space for 20 campers.

Serious students: For beginner to experienced birders who don't mind long, hot, sometimes "buggy" days on beaches and in marshes.

Ages: Boys and girls ages 14-19. Older birders who have attended before may be eligible for internships.

3:1 student/teacher ratio. Trips and classes led by biologists, ornithologists and environmental educators, each with 20+ years of experience.

Sponsors: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, TERN, Georgia Ornithological Society, and Georgia Audubon.

Birding Itineraries

Base camp: Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island.

Potential trips: Little St. Simons Island, Ft. Stewart, Altamaha WMA, St. Simons Island, Jekyll Island, Sapelo Island, Andrews Island, and Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge.

Registration

Until April 12: \$400 (paid in full).

April 13-May 1: \$450 (paid in full).

Cancellations after May 1, 2024, will not receive \$100 of the paid registration fee.

Registration details at georgiawildlife.com/CampTALON

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Brown Thrasher (Individual/Family Membership)	\$35
Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron)	\$50
Fledgling (Students only)	\$20

Please visit <http://www.gos.org/join-us>



Reddish Egret, Cabretta Beach, Sapelo Island, on October 8, 2023. Photo by Bob Sargent.