



GOS Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grant 2025 - Report from Birds Georgia

Sarah Manning, Coastal Conservation Coordinator

Thanks to generous funding from the Bill Terrell Grant and subaward through Georgia DNR, Birds Georgia was able to monitor the newly created Cumberland Dividings Bird Island throughout the breeding season in 2025. Georgia DNR efforts through this grant were focused on restoring shell rakes for American Oystercatcher nesting.

Funding provided by GOS was used to purchase a kayak, lifejacket, and paddle, which allowed staff to access the Bird Island without a boat. Funding also covered time and mileage for the Coastal Conservation Coordinator to visit once weekly during the breeding season. Access was granted by the Church of Eleven22 at Cabin Bluff to launch from their dock, just 300 meters from the CI Bird Island.

Additionally, funds were used to purchase four Moultrie trail cameras and a subscription, which allowed constant monitoring of the breeding birds remotely - which allowed us to detect predation or disturbance as it was happening.

The Cumberland Dividings Bird Island was roped off by Georgia DNR staff and volunteers on May 2, 2025 and signs were removed on September 25, 2025. Black Skimmer decoys were added to aid in the recruitment of BLSK and audio lures were played when visiting.

Breeding species on the Bird Island included Least Tern, Black Skimmer, and Gull-billed Tern. American Oystercatchers were seen loafing on the Bird Island, but no nesting activity took place. Least Terns were successful in fledging approximately 16 young. Black Skimmers raised approximately 3 chicks to near fledging, but they were lost to predation. Gull-billed Terns nested and renested, but only 2 made it to hatching but were later predated, well before fledging.

The primary cause of failure at this colony was near constant predation pressure from a Great Horned Owl. It was seen on the remote cameras regularly predated young Least Terns and Black Skimmer chicks. The cause of failure for the Gull-billed Terns may also be attributed to the GHOW, but it was not confirmed on camera.

Over the 4 month period when breeding birds were present, 16 people landed on the island on 7 different trips (besides BG/GA DNR staff). Zero dogs were noted on the trail cameras over the breeding season.

High tides in September overwashed more than half of the newly formed Bird Island. All three species nested in the lower area and would have been at risk of overwash if the high tides had happened earlier in the season. Fortunately, the birds had completed nesting attempts by September and were not affected.

An eBird Hotspot: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L43707625> was created for ease of tracking. Data was collected on the Georgia DNR's FieldMaps app for colonial seabird nesting and updated weekly. See data below.

Overall, this colony shows great promise and the birds seem to be eager to utilize it. The owl should be removed in order for productivity to increase and the monitoring efforts should continue to be a priority at this site moving forward. Human disturbance was minimal but should be monitored.

Recommendations moving forward:

- Regular checks by law enforcement (in case of updated Bird Island Rule)
- Implement owl removal
- Continue to utilize trail cameras to monitor remotely
- Implement chick shelters, as there is no cover for predation or heat
- Continue to enhance dredge spoil islands and add bird islands through beneficial use of dredge material
- Educate the public on the importance of the Bird Island Rule and nesting seabirds and shorebird habitat

Photos



Black Skimmer Decoys. Cabin Bluff dock (Church of Eleven22) to the west.



Installing Black Skimmer Decoys. They worked!



Black Skimmers among decoys.



Least Tern chick.



Gull-billed Tern Nest.



24 July 2025. After breeding was pretty much over, flocks of shorebirds and seabirds utilized the Bird Island for roosting at high tide. ISS protocol was followed. Banded birds were noted and reported.



Black Skimmers tending newly hatched chick.



Great Horned Owl finding newly hatched BLSK chick.



Least Terns flushed from Bird Island. At the same time, 2 jet skis appeared on Bird Island. Note the temperature!



The owl visited multiple times a week, clearing out freshly hatched chicks, fledglings, and adults.



Prowling a skimmer nest (even though it had already eaten this one)



High Tides in August

Appendix

Predation and Disturbance Data

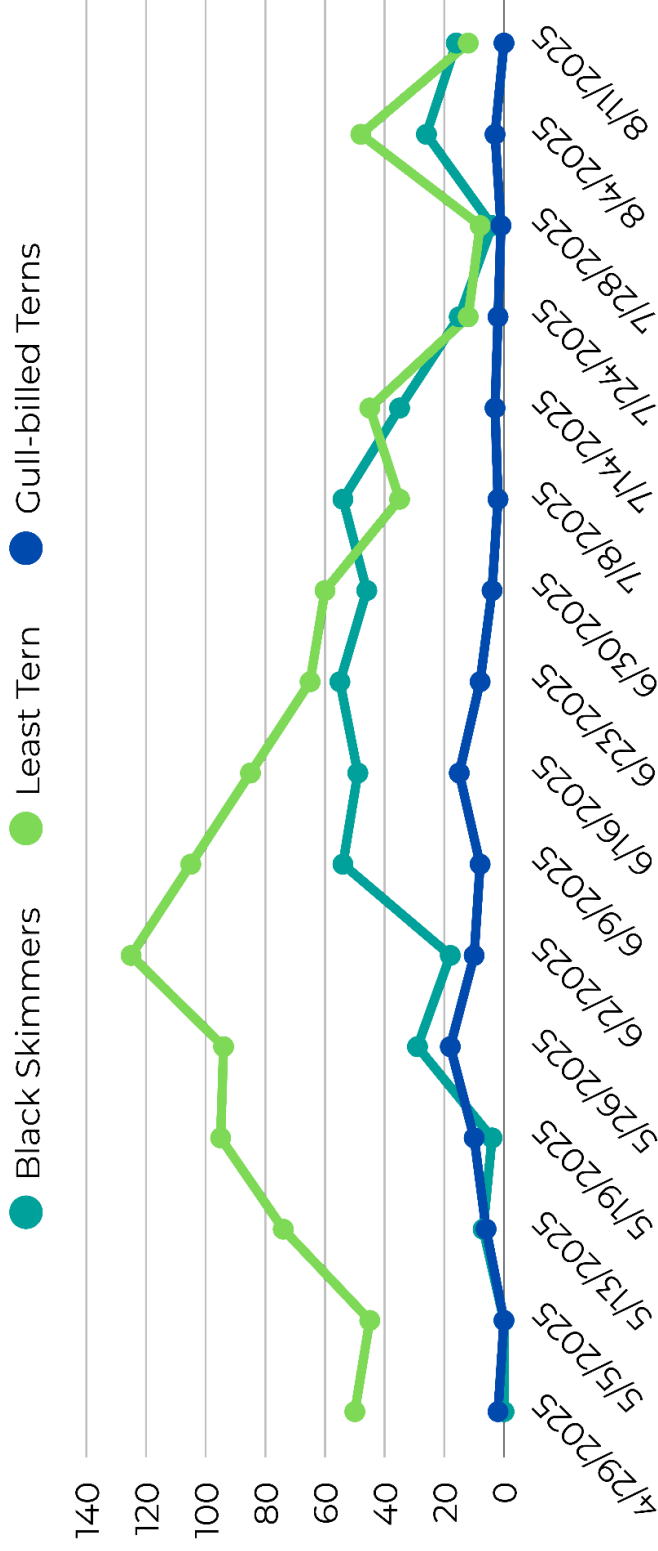
Dates for Owl Visits (Confirmed)	Notes
5/25/2025	
06/07/2025	
06/08/2025	
6/13/2025	
6/16/2025	
6/17/2025	Owl carrying a Least Tern chick caught on camera
06/23/2025	Owl visited during this time but was not on the cameras, however, fresh tracks were noted
07/03/2025	
07/09/2025	
7/11/2025	
7/13/2025	
7/15/2025	Predated Black Skimmer (recent hatch) in front of camera
7/19/2025	
7/20/2025	

Dates of Human Disturbance (Confirmed)	QTY	Description
5/16/2025	2	People
5/24/2025	2	People, looking for shark teeth
6/1/2025	2	Jet skis
06/21/2025	2	People
07/04/2025	2	Boats, # people unk. Left beer bottles and small grill behind
08/04/2025	2	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Visit Survey
08/09/2025	4	2 adults, 2 kids

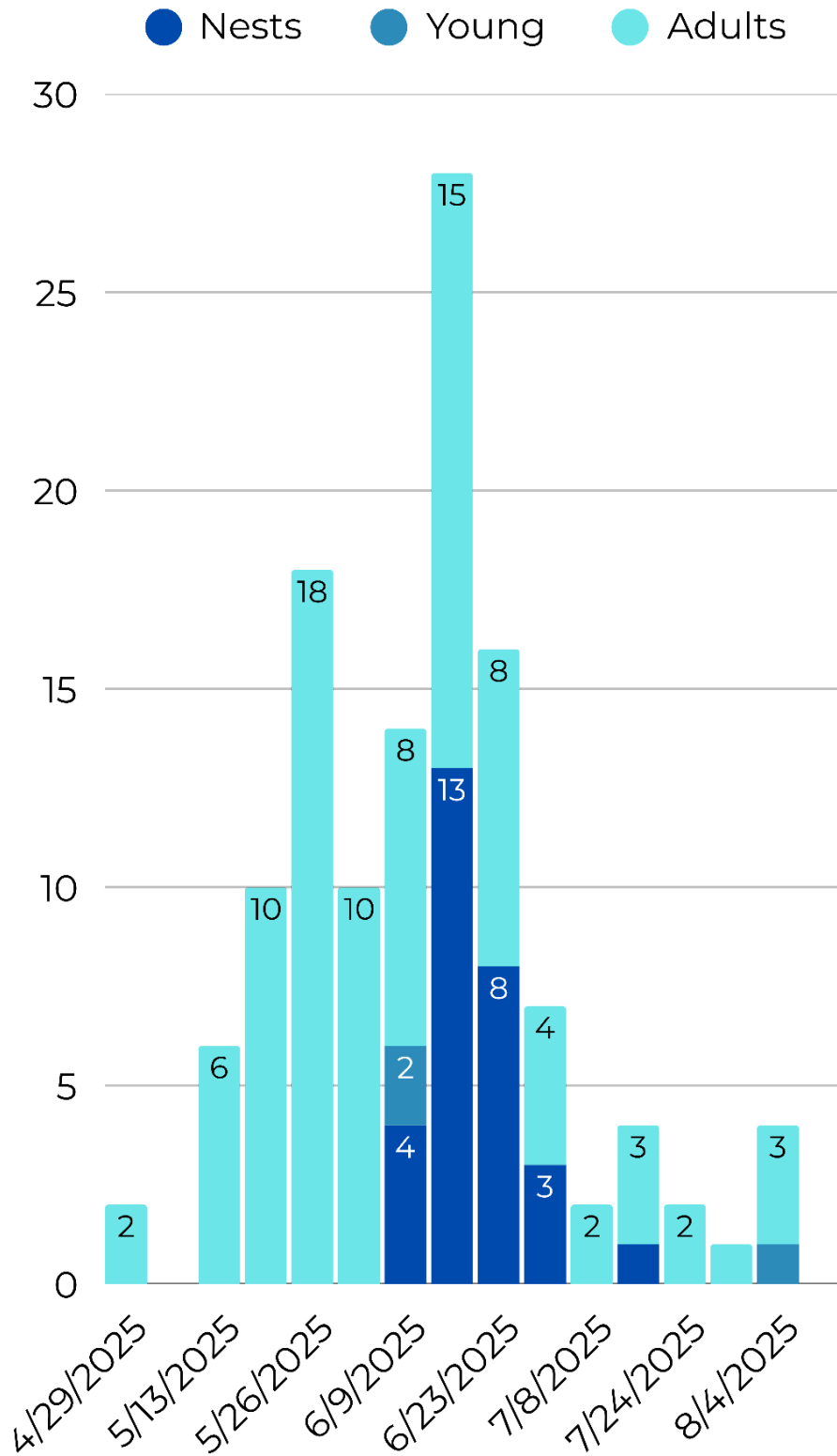
Number of Nests, Young, and Adults for each species

	Black Skimmers			Least Terns			Gull-billed Terns		
Visits	Nests	Young	Adults	Nests	Young	Adults	Nests	Young	Adults
4/29/2025	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	2
5/5/2025	0	0	0	0	0	45	0	0	0
5/13/2025	0	0	7	22	0	74	0	0	6
5/19/2025	0	0	4	66	0	95	0	0	10
5/26/2025	0	0	29	82	16	94	0	0	18
6/2/2025	0	0	18	75	5	125	0	0	10
6/9/2025	9	0	54	20	32	105	4	2	8
6/16/2025	8	0	49	30	14	85	13	0	15
6/23/2025	11	4	55	9	16	65	8	0	8
6/30/2025	6	3	46	8	2	60	3	0	4
7/8/2025	8	2	54	0	0	35	0	0	2
7/14/2025	3	0	35	10	0	45	1	0	3
7/24/2025	0	0	15	7	0	12	0	0	2
7/28/2025	0	0	4	5	1	8	0	0	1
8/4/2025	0	0	26	0	0	48	0	1	3
8/11/2025	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	0
8/18/2025									
	45	9		334	86		29	3	

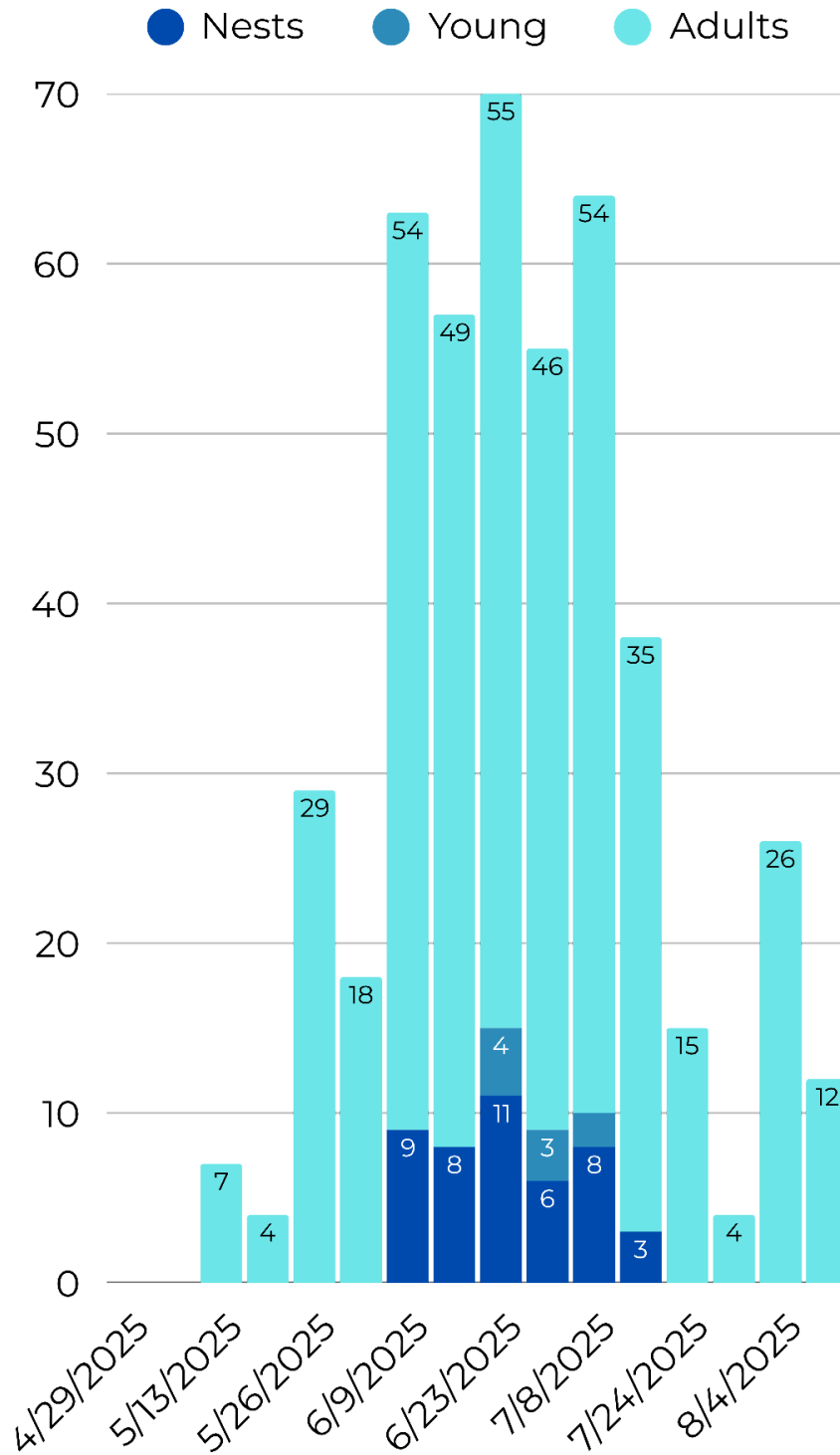
Adults Present on Bird Island



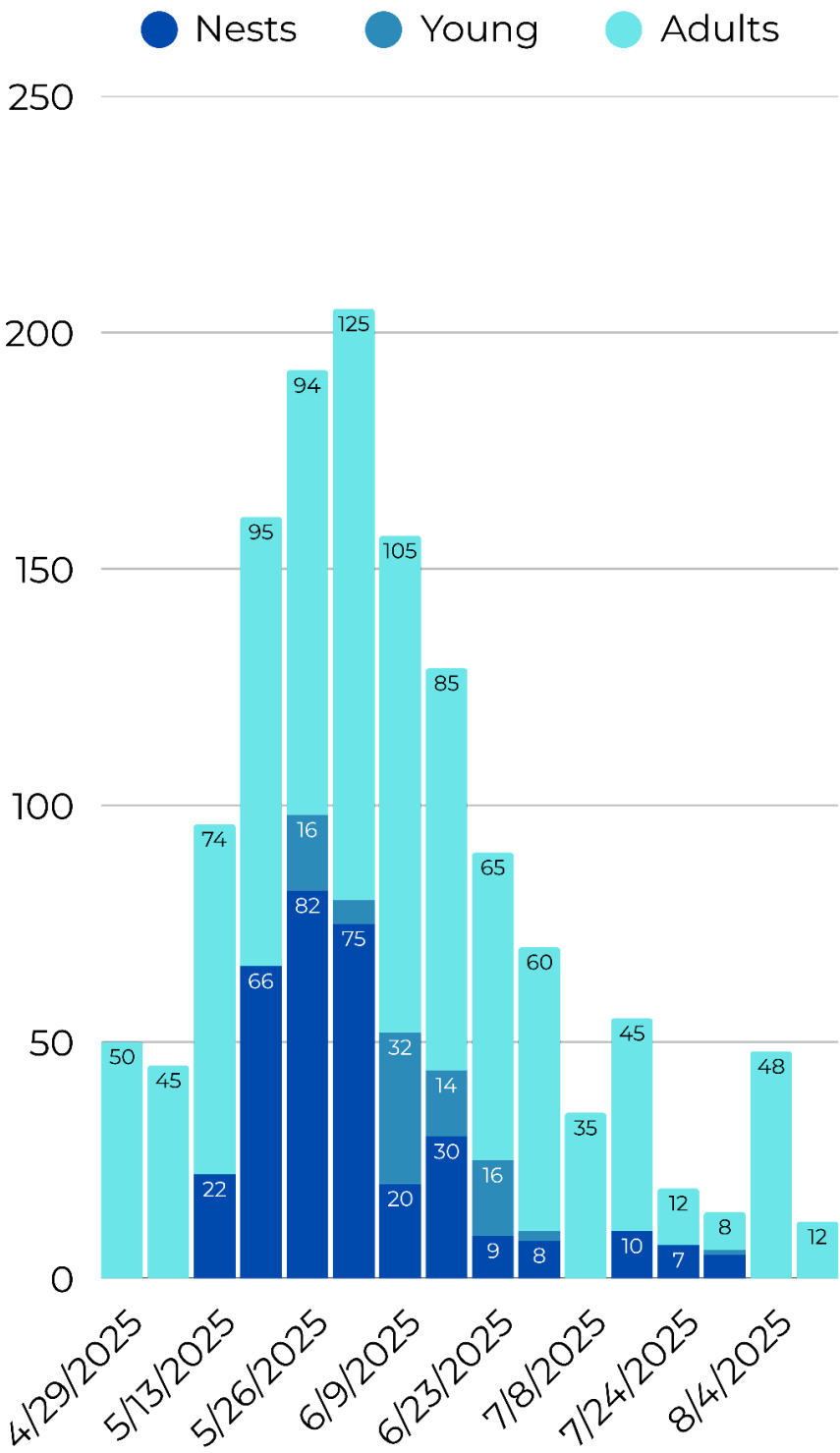
Gull-billed Terns



Black Skimmers



Least Terns



Expenses

Birds Georgia Budget GOS Grant to Monitor Cumberland Dividings Bird Island 2025					
Type	Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total (\$)	Details
<i>Salaries</i>	Coastal Conservation Coordinator time	\$39.41	100	3940.51	4 hours per site visit, completed 1 time a week for the duration of the breeding season (22 weeks - May thru August) and time for data entry, report writing, social media, and outreach
<i>Mileage</i>	Mileage (round trip to site)	\$27.00	22	\$594.00	40 miles round trip for 22 visits to the dock
<i>Equipment</i>	Kayak + Paddle	\$249.99	1	\$246.10	<u>Kayak+Paddle</u> to access Bird Island from adjacent dock
	Moultrie Camera Subscription	\$321.80	1	\$321.80	
	Moultrie Cameras and batteries	\$106.74	4	\$426.94	
	Waterproof Speaker	\$39.95	1	\$39.95	<u>Speaker for audio lures</u>
	Lifejacket	\$111.20	1	\$111.20	
			Total	\$5,680.50	RECEIVED MARCH 2025

Receipts available below.

Ordered Item(s)

Curbside / Pickup In Store

Please wait for your Ready for Pickup Email
before arriving at your TSC store.



LT CRUZE SIS SUNSET FUSION KAYAK
SKU# 2340809
Quantity: 1
Price: \$229.99
Subtotal: \$229.99

Store Pickup Location:
1584 Boone ST
Kingsland, GA 31548

Order Summary

Subtotal	\$229.99
Tax	\$16.10
Total	\$246.09

Payment:
VISA 2901

Billing Address:
825 Warner Street
Suite B
Atlanta, GA 30310



Order Reference Only - Store Use Only

1:51



Search or ask a question



View order details

Order date Mar 25, 2025
Order # 114-1347775-0125845
Order total \$151.11 (2 items)

Cancel items >

Arriving tomorrow by 10 PM



JBL Go 4 - Ultra-Portable, Waterproof and Dustproof Bluetooth Speaker, B...

Sold by: Amazon.com
\$39.95



Onyx A/M-24 Automatic/Manual Inflatable Life Jacket, U.S. Coast Gu...

Sold by: Amazon.com
\$101.27

Track package >

Write a product review >

Buy it again >

Change Payment Method >

Payment information

Payment method
Visa ending in 2901

Ship to

Sarah manning
311 BRIARWOOD CIR
KINGSLAND, GA 31548-6652
United States

Order Summary

Items:	\$141.22
Shipping & Handling:	\$0.00
Total Before Tax:	\$141.22
Estimated Tax Collected:	\$9.89
Order Total	\$151.11

Frequently bought with JBL Go 4 - Ultra-Portable...



6:52



Q Search or ask a question



amazon.com

Details for Order #114-8856857-3649030

[Print this page for your records.](#)

Order Placed: April 17, 2025

Amazon.com order number: 114-8856857-3649030

Order Total: \$426.94

Not Yet Shipped

Items Ordered	Price
3 of: Energizer AA Batteries, Ultimate Lithium Double A Battery, 24 Count	\$43.01
Sold by: Amazon.com Services, Inc	
Supplied by: Other	

Condition: New	
2 of: Moultrie Edge 2 Cellular Trail Camera - Auto Connect Nationwide 4G LTE - On Demand 36MP Photo - 1080P Video with HD Audio - 100 Ft Detection Range - Low Glow Flash	\$134.99
Sold by: Amazon.com Services, Inc	
Supplied by: Other	

Condition: New

Shipping Address:

Sarah manning
311 BRIARWOOD CIR
KINGSLAND, GA 31548-6652
United States

Shipping Speed:

FREE Prime Delivery

Payment information

Payment Method:	Item(s) Subtotal: \$399.01
Visa ending in 2901	Shipping & Handling: \$0.00

	Total before tax: \$399.01
	Estimated tax to be collected: \$27.93

Billing address

Adam Betuel
825 WARNER ST
SW STE B
ATLANTA, GA
30310-3426
United States

Grand Total: \$426.94

To view the status of your order, return to [Order Summary](#).

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[M]



SM

\$42.98

\$42.98

\$58.96

\$58.96

\$58.96

\$7.99

\$7.99

\$7.99

\$34.99

Total: 321.80