



VOLUME XLV, ISSUE 1, ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Save the Date:

### Atlanta Bird Fest 2019, featuring Noah Strycker and Dr. J. Marshall Shepherd



Eastern Screech Owl, by Mary Kimberly.

Atlanta Bird Fest is back for 2019! Each weekend between April 13 and May 19, 2019, enjoy exciting field trips, workshops, and other events to celebrate and enjoy Georgia's exciting spring migration period.

We are excited to welcome two special guests for Atlanta Bird Fest 2019. Big Year birder and author Noah Strycker (*Birding without Borders*) will join us during our opening weekend on April 13 and 14. He will guest co-lead two field trips at local birding hotspots during the weekend and present the Opening Weekend keynote address on April 14 at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda Center. Joining us for our Closing Celebration on May 19 at SweetWater Brewing will be the University of Georgia's Dr. J. Marshall Shepherd, a leading international expert in weather and climate. Look for more information soon on both of these Atlanta Bird Fest events.



This year's Atlanta Bird Fest logo features the Chimney Swift, Atlanta Audubon's conservation priority species for 2019 and 2020, designed by Atlanta-based artist Abigail (A.J.) DeWitt.

Other event highlights for Atlanta Bird Fest 2019 include a behind-the-scenes tour of Zoo Atlanta's bird collection, a guided tour of the avian-inspired artwork at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, nature photography workshops, Shorebird Weekend on the Georgia coast, Wine and Warblers in the north Georgia mountains, a look at fire-adapted landscapes and the birds that depend on this specialized habitat in the Coosa Valley Prairie, a nature sketching workshop, and more.

This year's Atlanta Bird Fest logo features the Chimney Swift, Atlanta Audubon's conservation priority species for 2019 and 2020. This year's artwork was designed by Atlanta-based artist Abigail (A.J.) DeWitt. A limited number of Atlanta Bird Fest T-shirts will be for sale beginning at our February 24 monthly meeting at Manuel's Tavern and through the Atlanta Audubon online store thereafter, with proceeds supporting Atlanta Audubon's conservation and education efforts.

Registration for Atlanta Bird Fest events will open for Atlanta Audubon members on March 1 and to the public on March 8. Please visit [www.atlantaaudubon.org/atlanta-bird-fest](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/atlanta-bird-fest) for more information and to preview the full schedule of events.

## INSIDE

- From the Executive Director ..... 2
- Two New Additions ..... 2
- Spotlight on Isabella Asztalos .... 3
- Ask Chippy ..... 3
- Volunteer Spotlight ..... 4
- A Million Thanks ..... 4
- Photo-of-the-Month Winner ..... 4
- Audubon Photography Exhibit ... 5
- Costa Rica Birding with Adam .... 6
- Field Trips & Live and Learn ..... 7
- Monthly Meeting Info ..... 8

### Atlanta Audubon Photo of the Month Competition

Atlanta Audubon has launched a Photo of the Month Competition. The competition is being organized by Ashkan Ojaghi, an Atlanta Audubon volunteer. By submitting an entry to the Photo of the Month competition, entrants will have a chance to have their favorite bird photo appear in *Wingbars*, Atlanta Audubon's monthly newsletter, and it may be used in other Atlanta Audubon online and print publications. In addition, each winning photo will be published under the photographer's name along with details about the bird species and location of photography. Photos must be submitted by the first of each month. To learn more or to read the complete guidelines, please visit [www.atlantaaudubon.org/photo-of-the-month](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/photo-of-the-month).



<https://www.linkedin.com>  
Search "Atlanta Audubon"



AtlantaAudubonSociety



@AtlantaGAudubon



Find us on:  
facebook®

## Board of Directors 2019

**Esther Stokes** | Chair  
**Rusty Pritchard** | Vice Chair  
**Ellen Miller** | Secretary  
**Charles Loeb** | Treasurer  
**Linda DiSantis** | Past Chair  
**Craig Bell**  
**Charles Bowen**  
**Gina Charles**  
**Roarke Donnelly**  
**Leslie Edwards**  
**Angelou Ezeilo**  
**Shannon Fair**  
**Jairo Garcia**  
**Melinda Langston**  
**Evonne Blythers Lapsey**  
**Ellen Macht**  
**David Schaefer**  
**Michael Wall**  
**ADVISORS**  
**Marcia Bansley**  
**Giff Beaton**  
**Mark Berry**  
**Raphael Bostic**  
**Robert Cooper**  
**Stacia Hendricks**  
**John Pruitt**

### STAFF

**Nikki Belmonte** | Executive Director  
nikki@atlantaudubon.org  
**Adam Betuel** | Director of Conservation  
adam@atlantaudubon.org  
**Melanie Furr** | Director of Education  
melanie@atlantaudubon.org  
**Michelle Hamner** | Director of Development  
michelle@atlantaudubon.org  
**Dottie Head** | Director of Membership and Communications | *Wingbars* Editor  
dottie@atlantaudubon.org  
**Victor Fioresi** | Administrative and Finance Manager  
victor@atlantaudubon.org  
**Lillie Kline** | Habitat Conservation Program Coordinator  
lillie@atlantaudubon.org  
**Ryan Schultz** | Education Program Coordinator  
ryan@atlantaudubon.org  
**Mim Eisenberg** | *Wingbars* Proofreader  
mim@wordcraftservices.com  
**COORDINATORS**  
**Teresa Lyle** | Field Trip Director  
teresalyle0@gmail.com  
**Melinda Langston** | Wildlife Sanctuary Program Coordinator  
sanctuary@atlantaudubon.org

*Wingbars* is the official newsletter of Atlanta Audubon Society and is published 10 times a year. We feature news, upcoming events, meetings, field trips, and projects. We hope you will join us. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect policies of Atlanta Audubon Society.



# From the Executive Director

By Nikki Belmonte

Happy New Year, everyone! As I type, sunshine is finally

streaming through my window after several soggy weeks. I will say, however, that the spirit of the people in our birding community has not been dampened at all, and it was refreshing to share a drink and a bowl of soup with many of you during the holiday and Christmas Bird Count seasons. People are what make Atlanta Audubon and birding around Georgia bright and sunny.

I got to meet some great people at the end of December, when my family and I visited Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama, known for its wintering grounds for large numbers of waterfowl and cranes. We planned the trip well before the government shutdown and were relieved to find that the gates to the park were still open. Despite the famed observation deck and all other facilities being closed, we still managed to have a memorable time spotting a few of the 14 wintering Whooping Cranes visiting this year (a lifer for the whole family) and bird with people from all over the Southeast from the one accessible area of the refuge. In this photo I've included you'll see a few folks we met—some birders, some curious tourists, and my daughter—taking in the sight of 10,000 Sandhill Cranes and hundreds of ducks such as Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Northern Shovelers. It was yet another chilly, soggy day met with the disappointment of limited access to a national park, yet everyone was full of enthusiasm,



Nikki's 6-year-old daughter, Charlie, takes a look through the scope at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Nikki Belmonte.

scanning for rare finds and coming together over the humbling view of an endangered species.

People are what make birding and Audubon great. In this issue, you will read about some amazing people in our flock, like our Greening Youth intern, Kiana, and one of our Atlanta Urban Ecologists, Isabella Asztalos, a 13-year-old birder/artist. We have new staff and new board members. Every person is making our days and Atlanta Audubon's future brighter. We still have the winter doldrums to endure, but I hope that you will get out birding or to an Atlanta Audubon program to find those bright spots as we wait for spring to come.



Ryan Schultz joins Atlanta Audubon as the new Education Program Coordinator.

## Two New Additions to the Flock

Atlanta Audubon is excited to welcome two new additions to the Atlanta Audubon flock. Ryan Schultz joins the Atlanta Audubon team as the education program coordinator. Ryan will be assisting Melanie Furr, director of education, with education and outreach programs, helping us offer more educational programming to students, teachers, and other groups.

Ryan is a native Atlantan with a strong passion for the natural world from an early age. Graduating from Georgia College and State University, Ryan was able to further his interests in ornithology by focusing his senior thesis project on a breeding pair of Osprey nesting on Lake Sinclair. He has been working in environmental education for five years, gaining experience with several of Atlanta's science-based organizations, such as Chattahoochee RiverKeeper, Atlanta Botanical Gardens, and Zoo Atlanta. An avid long-distance backpacker and self-proclaimed animal nerd, Ryan is excited to be a part of the Atlanta Audubon team.

Kiana Leveritte joins Atlanta Audubon for a one-year internship focusing on the Wildlife Sanctuary Program. Kiana was hired as part of an Audubon in Action grant from National Audubon Society for on-the-ground conservation and equity, diversity, and inclusiveness work in Atlanta. Atlanta Audubon partnered with the Greening Youth Foundation to hire Kiana.

A native of Chicago, Kiana received her bachelor's degree in environmental science and natural resources management from Tuskegee University in May 2018.

"Throughout college, I participated in various academic research programs and professional opportunities that taught me a great deal about what being a passionate environmentalist really means. Some of those opportunities included working with ornithologists at Kansas State University in the Konza Prairie as well as ecologists and environmental engineers with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management," says Kiana. "At Tuskegee University I also served the community through various agricultural and environmental extracurricular clubs on campus, including the Wildlife, Forestry and Natural Resource Conservation Club, Women in Agriculture Club, and MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences). I was also a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. I feel so blessed with such an amazing opportunity, and look forward to learning new things, making a difference and soaking in all that can while working with Atlanta Audubon Society. Being in the outdoors is my happy place," she says.



Kiana Leveritte, our new Intern at Atlanta Audubon.

# Spotlight on Isabella Asztalos: City of Norcross Youth Conservation Leader

By Dottie Head

Sometimes you meet someone who just makes you say “wow!” That was my reaction when meeting Isabella Asztalos, from Norcross. A 13-year-old, home-schooled 8th grader and two-year participant in the Atlanta Urban Ecologists (AUE) program, Isabella’s resumé is impressive. What’s more impressive is her knowledge of and compassion for the natural world (especially birds). Young people like Isabella give me hope for our future.

Isabella was part of AUE during the 2017-18 school year. She enjoyed it so much that she signed up again for 2018-19. If you’re not familiar with the program, AUE is an eight-month program offered by Atlanta Audubon, Blue Heron Nature Preserve and The Amphibian Foundation. These groups, along with other sponsors, collaborate to offer students in grades 8 through 12 an exciting glimpse into the world of wildlife conservation. By visiting different venues in the metro area, participants gain a diversity of experiences that include going behind the scenes at Zoo Atlanta, banding wild birds, and exploring Arabia Mountain’s rich ecological systems. Each session is led by professionals who facilitate the learning and expose students to a variety of conservation and environment-based career pathways.

Isabella was fortunate to connect with Tixie Fowler, though Tixie argues it’s the other way around. Regardless, Tixie and Isabella were neighbors living within easy walking distance of Johnson Dean Forest, a small remnant pocket of forest located near bustling downtown Norcross. When joining them on a recent chilly morning walk through the forest, the camaraderie between the two was evident.

Tixie is the executive director of Gardens for Growing Community, a non-profit dedicated to connecting youth and nature. Despite the age difference, Tixie and Isabella hit it right off, and Isabella became Tixie’s “right-hand helper” for many of the local workshops and community presentations that she organizes. “Isabella has always been very willing to jump in and help with all the details that go into setting up and running our conservation workshops,” says Tixie. “She also is an avid and hungry learner, and even when



The certification of Johnson Dean Forest was a team effort spearheaded by Tixie and Isabella. Photo by Dottie Head.

the content was on an adult level, she would sit patiently and fully engaged, soaking up every word. Her love for birds and her ability to identify them by song as well as shape and color totally amazes me. I wasn’t a birder before I met Isabella, but she opened that world up to me.”

As an environmental educator, Tixie is actively involved in organizing community outreach activities, workshops, and presentations. Isabella was usually seen at her side, helping set up and manage events. They partnered with the Atlanta Coyote Project in an effort to calm their neighbors’ fears about urban coyotes. Isabella helped the Norcross Garden Club conduct a “Bats as Pollinators” workshop and was a huge help at the club’s annual

(Continued on Page 5)

## ASK CHIPPY



Barred Owl, by Stephen Ramsden.

**Q:** We are new to the area and bought a home in Atlanta where the previous owner had installed an owl box. He indicated that after a few years, a barred owl had taken up residence and started raising babies annually. (We are in Vinings, only two blocks away from the Chattahoochee.)

At the closing, I did not think to ask him about the maintenance of the box. It is quite high up on a tree, but do I need to have it cleaned out annually?

He had indicated that the owl usually was not in the box from late summer to early winter; however, we did see it yesterday in our front yard.

We know a lot more about songbirds and other raptors, but our knowledge of owls is low. Whatever guidance you can provide would be greatly appreciated. We would like to see the owl thrive and continue to reside in our back yard.

**A:** How wonderful that your yard is home to Barred Owls. Clearly, the location of your home, with large trees and proximity to the Chattahoochee, is ideal habitat if they have raised young year after year. Although experts advise putting in a layer of dry leaves or wood chips when first installing the nest box, there is no need to do any additional maintenance after nesting season.

The breeding season for Barred Owls begins in mid-January, peaks in March, and can extend through mid-May. Barred Owls usually lay two to three eggs, which incubate for 28 to 33 days. Young owls fledge about 42 days after hatching.

You may want to consider reporting data to NestWatch, a monitoring program that collects data on nests to track the status of birds. You can learn more about this citizen science program at <https://nestwatch.org>.

Enjoy these beautiful birds and their distinctive “Who cooks for you?” call.

Happy Birding! —Chippy

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## On the Peel & Stick Crew

By Steve Phenicie

(This is the 33rd in a series on Atlanta Audubon volunteers.)

Somebody has to get this newsletter ready to go to the post office after it arrives from the printer, and those who do it sometimes proclaim, "I really don't do all that much" for Audubon. Yet they do.

Preparing each issue for mailing takes about 10 to 12 hours, with an average of five to eight people working between an hour and an hour and a half each,

according to Dottie Head, our director of membership and communications.

Some of the Peel & Stick volunteers are there for practically every issue; others participate occasionally. Those who have helped in the last year or so are (sorry if anyone got left out): Sally Davis, Sandy Miller, Larry Stephens, Mary Lou Collins, Kelsey McKenna, Anita Chilcutt, Phyllis

Hawkins, Nannette Dooley, Steve Cook, Max Brown, Toni Smith, Stella Wissner, Judy Candler, Marcia Jenkins, Kit Robey, Gwen Barnett, Linda Frederick, Jack and Martha Fasse, Gina Charles, Andrea Abelman, Susan Loeb, Jency Shell, Vin Gleespen, Mary Kimberly, and yours truly.

The process starts with folding each copy of the newsletter in half and placing it into a mail tray. Then comes the peeling and sticking. You'll notice that *Wingbars* comes with three stickers affixed to it to hold it together, and there's a prescribed way to put

them on—two on the right side and one on the left. As some people take the stickers off a roll and attach them to a mail tray, others grab them and attach them to the newsletters. When that process is finished, an address sticker is attached to each copy. Each month Audubon, with a membership of just over 1,200, sends about 600 copies of *Wingbars* via snail mail.



At a recent Peel and Stick session, participants were, from left, Larry Stephens, Martha Fasse, Gwen Barnett, Jency Shell, Sandy Miller, Jack Fasse, and Steve Phenicie.

Photo by Dottie Head.

The rest of the membership takes the newsletter electronically.

"We have a great camaraderie and generally pass the time sharing stories about birding, traveling, kids, and grandkids. It's an easy job with good conversation, but it's also important to the organization because it allows us to distribute *Wingbars* in a timely manner without incurring the cost of a mailing house," Dottie says. At a recent session, the topics discussed included football, growing avocados, the November election, one participant's recent surgery, another's high school reunion, a postal problem, and jury duty. Peel & Stick is also a good place to pick up the inside scoop from Dottie about what Audubon has coming down the pike in the way of events and trips.

You can thank the Peel & Stick volunteers for helping get this newsletter to you.

# THANK YOU!

## A Million Thanks...

... to our bird walk leaders for December and January: **Jason Ward, Anne McCallum, Tom Painting,** and **Mary Kimberly** ... to **Max Brown, Kit Robey,** and **Stella Wissner** for painting the Giving Wall in honor of all of our Georgia Gives Day 2018 donors ... to **Laura Waddick, Mary Nevil,** and **Sandy Miller** for assembling Audubon Gift bags for the 2018 holiday party ... to **Jack and Martha Fasse, Les Cane,** and **Robyn and Steve Newman** for their help with the party and Silent Auction ... to **Melinda Langston, Les Cane, Little St. Simons Island, Patagonia Atlanta, Wild Birds Unlimited Atlanta, Wild Birds Unlimited Decatur, Seth Dietchman, Mim Eisenberg, Dottie Head, Melanie Furr, Adam Betuel, Lou Clymore, Janice Edwards, Luke Green, Dunwoody Nature Center, Les and Harriet Cane, Henning von Schmeling, Woody Hickox,** and **Mary Kimberly** for their donations to the 2018 Silent Auction ... to **the bidders** – too numerous to mention – who made the Silent Auction a success ... to **the participants** – again too numerous to mention – in the Christmas Bird Counts held in Atlanta, Roswell, Peachtree City, Marietta, and Amicalola Falls ... to **Larry Stephens, Jack and Martha Fasse, Anita Chilcutt, Stella Wissner, Linda Frederick, Vin Gleespen,** and **Mary Kimberly** for their help with December/January Peel & Stick ... to **Sandy Miller** and **Laura Waddick** for their assistance mailing invitations ... to **Michele Buchanan** for her help with educational outreach.

## Photo-of-the-Month Winner

The winner of the February Photo of the Month Competition is a photo of an Eastern Bluebird snapped by Steve Rushing. The photo was taken in his front yard, a certified Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary, in the Glenwood Estates neighborhood in the City of Decatur.

The photo was taken with an Olympus OMD EM1 Mark II camera.

• ISO: 800 • Shutter speed/Aperture: 1/25 sec and F5/6S  
Focal length: Olympus M.Zuiko 300mm Pro + 1.4 extender, (840mm FF equivalent) • No flash.

The image was cropped with a slight tone change in Adobe Lightroom 8.0.

Congratulations on this great image, Steve!



This shot of an Eastern Bluebird is the winner of the February Photo of the Month Competition. Photo by Steve Rushing.

# Join us for the Audubon Photography Exhibit Public Opening on February 9

Join us this February as Atlanta Audubon hosts the Audubon Photography Awards Exhibition at Brickworks Gallery in Atlanta. We will hold a public opening “drop-in” style event on Saturday, February 9, from 4:30 to 7:00 PM, where members and guests are invited to view the exhibit. From 4:30 to 5:30 PM, National Audubon’s Chief Network Officer David Ringer will be in attendance to meet members and guests. In addition to promoting greater strength, diversity, and capacity throughout the Audubon network, David leads Audubon’s Bird-Friendly Communities program, in which Atlanta Audubon is a leading national chapter. Following the public opening on February 9, the exhibit may be viewed through February 24 at Brickworks Gallery during their regular business hours. Brickworks Gallery is located at 686-A Greenwood Avenue NE in Atlanta.

Selected from more than 8,000 entries, the winning photos were published in the Summer 2018 issue of *Audubon* Magazine and show birdlife at its most vivid, vulnerable, formidable, and elegant. This year’s exquisite photographs celebrate the splendor of many bird species protected under the 100-year-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), the most important bird conservation law, which is currently under siege in Congress and by the Department of the Interior.

Thank you to Atlanta Audubon member and Brickworks Gallery owner Laura Adams for hosting the exhibit on behalf of Atlanta Audubon.

## Viewing and Parking Details

Drop in between 4:30 and 7:00 PM (David Ringer meet-and-greet from 4:30 to 5:30 PM)

February 10 through February 24: Viewing available during the gallery’s open hours on Wednesday through Saturday from 12:00 to 6:00 PM, and Sundays by appointment from 12:00 to 5:00 PM. Contact Laura Adams at Brickworks Gallery at 912.596.3147 to set up Sunday viewing appointments.

Please note: Parking is extremely limited. Guests are encouraged to utilize a rideshare service such as Uber or Lyft, or parking may be found throughout the neighborhood on Greenwood Avenue on the east side of Ponce de Leon Place.



Wood Duck, by Scott Soriano, Honorable Mention, Audubon Photography Awards.

## Spotlight on Isabella Asztalos

(Continued from Page 3)

plant sales. She also provided Tixie with valued insight into making activities more interesting for kids.

“Isabella was my assistant with the Kids in Conservation summer workshops, during which youth spent the day outside exploring the forest and learning about various areas of conservation, sort of a mini, localized AUE,” says Tixie. “If anything was boring or confusing, she would suggest ideas about how to make it better for kids.”

“She was also a great help with the other younger participants,” continues Tixie. “Although Isabella doesn’t generally talk a lot, when the subject is about birds, wild animals, and nature, her whole face lights up, and both kids and adults listen very respectfully to what she has to say. And the AUE instructors love her because she asks great questions!”

Isabella and Tixie are both active with the Friends of Johnson Dean Forest, a group of local conservation-minded volunteers who created and continue to maintain the trails and nurture natural habitat within the 11-acre city preserve.

This work, inspired further by what she learned in the Kids in Conservation workshops, motivated Isabella to solicit the Norcross City Council last fall for a mayoral proclamation formally recognizing Johnson Dean as a valuable community asset. She also asked them to commit the funds needed for signage that would designate the preserve as an Atlanta Audubon Certified Wildlife Sanctuary. Isabella was assisted by 7-year-old Abby Maguire, another nature enthusiast she met in the Kids in Conservation workshops.

For their presentation to the City Council, Isabella and Abby laid out Audubon’s requirements for wildlife sanctuary certification and explained why protecting native birds and plants is important. They engaged (and in some cases stumped) Council by asking several questions such as “What are



Lillie Kline, Atlanta Audubon’s habitat conservation program coordinator, presents the official Wildlife Sanctuary Certification sign to Isabella at the Johnson Dean Forest Certification. Photo by Tixie Fowler.

the four things that wildlife need to survive and thrive?” and “Why are birds important?” Taking the request very seriously, Council members asked the two girls several questions in return, and were impressed by their thoughtful and knowledgeable answers.

“After much discussion about protecting native birds and plants, the Mayor asked the girls to name their favorite bird,” recounts Tixie. “Abby instantly replied ‘the flamingo’, which cracked everyone up and basically sealed the deal on the decision to support the girls’ request.”

Fast forward to fall, when Atlanta Audubon certifiers visited the property and, agreeing with the young girls’ assessment, officially approved it as an Atlanta Audubon Society Certified Wildlife Sanctuary. By this time, Isabella had been invited to serve on Sustainable Norcross’ Bee City USA Committee and was asked to help develop a Youth Advisory Committee for the Sustainable Norcross team. Keep in mind, Isabella IS ONLY 13 YEARS OLD!

Unfortunately, Isabella is unable to continue these commitments because her father accepted a new position in south Florida, and Isabella’s family relocated just before the first of the year. This ended her involvement with the City of Norcross and broke Tixie’s heart in the process.

“She was my nature buddy. I feel like an essential part of me is missing,” says Tixie. “But her mother recently sent me a video showing the siblings playing in the new pool, while Isabella was totally absorbed in exploring their new back yard and making some well-thought-out decisions about where to hang her bird feeders. She truly and deeply loves wild things.”

While we’re all sad to see Isabella move to Florida, we can only imagine what conservation issues she will find to get involved with in her new home. Tixie assures me that they are keeping in touch and that she will send us updates.

In the meantime, Tixie is helping Isabella sell her bird-themed note cards back here in Atlanta. The cards are available in the Atlanta Audubon store, with proceeds split between helping Isabella keep her birdfeeders full of tasty seeds and suet and supporting the Atlanta Audubon programs that have given Isabella the confidence and resources to make a difference in wildlife conservation. You may purchase sets of Isabella’s notecards in the Atlanta Audubon online store at [www.atlantaaudubon.org/shop-in-our-online-store](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/shop-in-our-online-store).

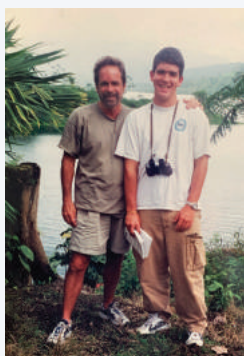
# Costa Rica Birding: Then and Now

By Adam Betuel

When I was 12 years old, my stepmom, Midge, entered my life. Even at a young age, I knew I was lucky to have this person in my life. She and I got along well and often teamed up as we forced my poor dad to tag along on wild adventures. While I have always felt supported by my quartet of parents, Midge and I formed a unique connection when the world of birds entered my life a few years after our families' union. It was not until I took an introduction to ornithology class at age 16 that I realized Midge had been a bird lover and casual observer all along. Midge's interest ramped up after I infected her with my newfound enthusiasm for birds, and she and I teamed up on all family visits and vacations to chase wildlife. Many of the central Florida hotspots (Lake Apopka, Orlando Wetlands, Merritt Island NWR) became must stops when I was in town, and a trip to Hawaii really expanded my ornithological worldview.

Midge and my father became complete enablers to my bird addiction when I was allowed to give my input on our family vacation destination at age 16. Obsessed with the ads at the back of the monthly *Audubon* magazine I was now receiving (a new Christmas present), I thought long about Asa Wright in Trinidad & Tobago and the Green Jays of South Texas. Ultimately,

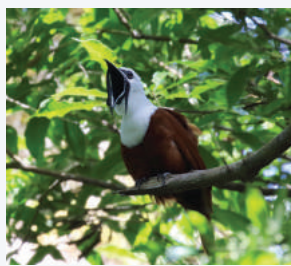
Costa Rica was my choice, and amazingly, we actually were able to go there the following year. Though everything in Costa Rica was amazing, I will never forget the excitement and overwhelming sensation of birding for the first time in the tropics. When it was just Midge and I, we struggled (but enjoyed) identifying the dozens of nearly identical woodcreepers and flycatchers. When we were out with a guide, it's a miracle we didn't injure our necks whipping our heads left and right as he effortlessly called out a Trogon to one side or a hummer zipping past in the other direction. On this trip I fell in love with the tropics, with the idea of field work, with the connectedness of our hemisphere, and the unimaginable bird diversity found



17-year-old Adam with his father in Costa Rica in August 2002.

across the region.

In the 16 years since that first trip, I have been lucky enough to visit the Neotropics on multiple occasions. These trips have ranged from backpacking adventures to bird fieldwork to a honeymoon, but each trip has deepened my love and appreciation for the habitats and birds found to our south. While recently reading Victor Emanuel's memoir, *One More Warbler: A Life with Birds*, I was struck by a quote from Christmas Bird Count founder Frank Chapman that apparently resonated with Victor as much as it did me:



Adam says "The Three-wattled Bellbird was my favorite bird during our trip, and I will never forget its amazing song." Photo by Dan Vickers.

*For my own northern woods and fields I have the affection born of long and close association; but they lack the romance, the mystery, the enchantment, the inexhaustible possibilities of tropical forests... One forms a lasting and intimate friendship with nature in the north, but falls hopelessly in love with her in the south. But even while she lures she repels and perhaps herein lays her endless fascination. One is never quite sure of her. Her most winsome aspect may be deceptive, or it may be a dream of rare delight.*

Half of my life later, I am thrilled to be heading back to Costa Rica, and hopefully you will want to join me, as that country has been selected as the next Atlanta Audubon international birding destination. Along with help from Costa Rica Expeditions, I will be leading a 10-day tour of this amazingly diverse nation. We will start in the highlands south of San Jose, where we will visit a shade-grown coffee farm and bird banding station. Next, we will head to Carara National Park on the Pacific Coast. Finally, we will lead the group northward to Tenorio Volcano. This itinerary will allow us to see somewhere around 350 different species of birds, including the breathtaking Resplendent Quetzal and Scarlet Macaw. Howler monkeys, sloths, crocodiles, and many other non-feathered animals could also be spotted.

Our trip is scheduled for January 17 through January 26, 2020. Registration will open at 8:00 AM on Friday, February 1. The group size is limited to 12. You can learn more about this trip on our website at [www.atlantaudubon.org/costarica2020](http://www.atlantaudubon.org/costarica2020).

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to e-mail me ([adam@atlantaudubon.org](mailto:adam@atlantaudubon.org)) or call the Audubon office (678.973.2437). I hope you can join us and see why I find Costa Rica and tropical birding so enthralling.



17-year-old Adam with his stepmother, Midge, in Costa Rica (2002). He credits Midge with encouraging his love of birding.

## Now Accepting Scholarship Applications for Hog Island 2019

For more than two decades, Atlanta Audubon Society has awarded two annual scholarships to attend National Audubon's renowned summer ecology camps. Camp fees and up to \$300 travel expenses are provided by the scholarship.

### Louisa Echols Scholarship for Educators

The Louisa Echols scholarship will enable the recipient to attend Audubon Camp at Hog Island in Maine to enhance his/her knowledge of the environment and incorporate that knowledge on the job. The scholarship recipient will attend "Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week" from July 14 to 19, 2019. The recipient will participate in a host of Audubon Camp field trips, including a boat trip to the restored Atlantic Puffin and Tern colony on Eastern Egg Rock, intertidal explorations, and hiking through Hog Island's unspoiled spruce-fir forest. The camp's inspiring and experienced instructors will discuss the latest trends in environmental education and share their favorite approaches, methods, and activities for engaging children with nature and citizen science.

Eligibility requirements and more information about the camp are available at <http://hogisland.audubon.org/sharing-nature-educator-s-week>.

### Edward Barnsley Scholarship for Youth

The goal of the Edward Barnsley Scholarship is to instill in the recipient a love, respect, and sense of stewardship for the natural world by attending Audubon's "Coastal Bird Studies for Teens" at Hog Island in Maine from June 9 to 14, 2019. During this intensive camp session, the scholarship recipient will work with some of the country's best-known birders and ornithologists on field identification, bird ecology, and conservation. The program provides participants with the opportunity to observe Audubon's seabird conservation field research in action, and it is the only Hog Island program that lands participants on Eastern Egg Rock during the puffin breeding season.

Eligibility requirements and more information about the camp are available at <http://hogisland.audubon.org/bird-studies-teens>.

## HOW TO APPLY:

The Atlanta Audubon scholarship application is available on our website at <http://www.atlantaudubon.org/scholarships>. The completed application should be submitted via e-mail to [melanie@atlantaudubon.org](mailto:melanie@atlantaudubon.org). **The application must be submitted by 5:00 PM on Friday, February 22.** Winners will be notified no later than March 1. For additional information, contact Melanie Furr at [melanie@atlantaudubon.org](mailto:melanie@atlantaudubon.org) or call 678.973.2437.

# FIELD TRIPS

are open to the public and free (unless otherwise noted). We welcome everyone from beginners to advanced birders. No registration is necessary except where indicated below. The only fees that apply are parking fees at some venues such as state and national parks. Any applicable fees will be listed in the field trip description on the website.

## **Saturday, February 2, 2019** **Piedmont Park (Fulton County)** **8:00 AM**

Leader: Jason Ward  
Cell contact morning of the walk: 404.759.7770  
GPS: 33.783750, -84.379111

## **Saturday, February 2, 2019** **Lullwater Park at Emory (DeKalb County)** **8:00 AM**

Leaders: Gus Kaufman and Jamie Vidich  
Cell contacts morning of the walk:  
404.483.7457 (Gus); 843.605.2959 (Jamie)  
GPS: 33.79541, -84.31011

## **Sunday, February 3, 2019** **Noonday Creek Trail (Cobb County)** **8:00 AM**

Leader: Angelia Jenkins  
Cell contact morning of the walk: 678.570.4891  
GPS: 34.00125, -84.59163

## **Wednesday, February 13, 2019** **Cochran Shoals (Cobb County)** **8:00 AM**

Leader: Roseanne Guerra  
Cell contact morning of the walk: 678.358.4916  
**GPS: 33° 55' 18.17" N, 84° 26' 20.84" W**

## **Wednesday, February 13, 2019** **Reynolds Nature Preserve (Clayton County)** **8:00 AM**

Leader: Anne McCallum  
Cell contact morning of the walk: 678.642.7148  
GPS: 33.601464, -84.346874

## **Thursday, February 14, 2019** **Murphey Candler Park (DeKalb County)** **8:00 AM**

Leader: Mary Kimberly  
Cell contact morning of the walk: 404.308.6279  
GPS: 33.909397, -84.322476

## **Saturday, February 16, 2019** **Atlanta History Center (Fulton County)** **9:00 AM**

Leader: Robert McDonough  
Cell contact morning of the walk: 404.754.8159  
GPS: 33.8418 N, 84.3863 W

## **Saturday, February 16, 2019** **Fernbank Forest (DeKalb County)** **9:00 AM**

Leader: Tom Painting  
Cell contact morning of the walk: 585.465.0034  
GPS: 33.77540, -84.32936  
Advance reservations are required at 404.929.6400.

## **Wednesday, February 20, 2019** **Vaughter's Farm Meadow Loop** **Panola Mountain State Park** **(Rockdale County)** **8:00 AM**

Leaders: Erica Bettross (Interpretive Ranger, Panola Mountain State Park) and Mary Kimberly  
Cell contacts morning of the walk:  
770.389.7801 (Park Office); 404.308.6279 (Mary)  
GPS: 33.6841894, -84.114098

*Details about trips, including driving directions, can be found on our website: [www.atlantaudubon.org/field-trips](http://www.atlantaudubon.org/field-trips). As always, we encourage field trip participants to check the Atlanta Audubon Field Trips web page before any of these trips to check for updates, changes, typo corrections, etc., and for the most up-to-date information. Also, frequently trips are added after the newsletter deadline has passed.*

*If you would like to lead a field trip, contribute ideas for places to go, or give feedback about leaders, trips, or the field trip directions, please e-mail Teresa Lyle, field trip director at [teresalyle0@gmail.com](mailto:teresalyle0@gmail.com).*

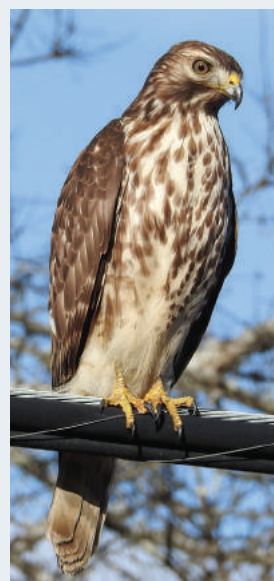
# LIVE and LEARN

## **Birding by Ear** **March 17, 1:00-3:00 PM**

Cost: Atlanta Audubon Member fee \$35  
Non-members \$45

This fun, two-hour program with ornithologist Georgann Schmalz is for anyone who is interested in learning to identify birds by songs and call notes. Participants will learn the characteristics of bird songs and techniques of birding by ear. Information will include examples of components of bird songs, such as tempo, rhythm, pitch, and quality. Handouts will include a list of mnemonics and phonetics for use in the field. We will not play dozens of songs and show dozens of bird photos. Instead, the course emphasizes how to listen and what to listen for so that even new songs from birds you have not encountered before can be learned and memorized.

Class will be held in the Atlanta Audubon Society classroom at Blue Heron Nature Preserve. Space is limited, so secure your spot now by registering online at <http://www.atlantaudubon.org/adult-workshops>.



*Cooper's Hawk, by Melanie Furr.*

## **Raptor Identification** **March 17, 3:30-5:30 PM**

Cost: Atlanta Audubon Member fee \$35  
Non-members \$45

From their hunting prowess to their majestic soaring, raptors captivate our attention with their gracefulness and power—be it from the trail or from the highway. More than a dozen species of raptors rule the skies over Georgia, but they can be difficult to distinguish at a distance. Learn the basics and the secrets to making raptor identification easy with ornithologist Georgann Schmalz. She will focus on behaviors, habitats, and enough general information that will make recognizing these birds in the field a “no-brainer.”

The workshop will be held in the Atlanta Audubon classroom at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve. Space is limited, so secure your spot by registering online at [www.atlantaudubon.org/adult-workshops](http://www.atlantaudubon.org/adult-workshops).



## ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

4055 Roswell Road ♦ Atlanta, GA 30342  
678.973.2437

*Atlanta Audubon Society is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.*



*Wingbars is printed on recycled paper.*

[www.AtlantaAudubon.org](http://www.AtlantaAudubon.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

Atlanta, GA  
Permit #917

# February Monthly Meeting

## Breeding Biology of Songbirds in the Mountains of North Carolina

Sunday, February 24, 2019 • 3:30 to 5:30 PM  
Manuel's Tavern

**M**any species of northern-breeding birds reach the trailing-edge of their range in the high-elevation forests of the southern Appalachian Mountains; however, in recent decades these populations have been steeply declining and abandoning lower-elevation habitats. Since 2002, researchers at the University of Georgia have been studying the breeding biology of songbirds in the mountains of North Carolina to better understand the causes of these declines. Long-term monitoring of Black-throated Blue Warblers indicates that food abundance and nestling mass has been declining over time in the area, especially at lower elevations, which may be a possible cause of the population declines. In 2014 a newer project focused on Canada Warblers began to look into their declines, taking both a observational and experimental approach to answering this question. We present both long-term data on Black-throated Blue Warblers and recent occupancy states of Canada Warblers and share some results from our experiments including the infamous warbler attack video.

### About the Speakers:

**Sam Merker** is a PhD student working with Dr. Richard Chandler. He has been with the Canada Warbler project from the very beginning and defended his MS thesis in 2017. Sam has been studying birds professionally since 2009 but has always loved them because of his parents. Sam's work has taken him all over the country and to different parts of the world, including Ecuador and Jamaica.

**Will Lewis** is a PhD student working with Dr. Bob Cooper. His research focuses on the post-fledging behavior of songbirds breeding in the southern Appalachian Mountains. He has been investigating how birds balance the conflicting demands of food and safety by experimentally elevating food levels with supplemental feeding trays and elevating perceived predation with speakers playing predator calls. He then tracks post-fledging birds to determine how the experimental manipulations influence their movements, behavior, and habitat use.



*Black-throated Blue Warbler, by Dan Vickers.*

Manuel's Tavern is located at 602 N. Highland Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307. Our monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Free parking is readily available to the south of the building. Food and drink are available for purchase.