

VOLUME XLIV, ISSUE 4, ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Limited Space Remains in Select Atlanta Bird Fest Events

April showers bring... May field trips, workshops, and more for Atlanta Bird Fest, which wraps up on Sunday, May 20, but there's still time to participate. Limited space remains in several events. Check out the complete schedule of events at www.atlantaudubon.org/atlanta-bird-fest and secure your spot today.



American Goldfinch on coneflower, by Dan Vickers

Atlanta Audubon Unveils Best Management Practices for Healthy Environments at Park Pride Conference

By Dottie Head

Atlanta Audubon Society Executive Director Nikki Belmonte unveiled a document titled *Recommendations for Best Management Practices for Healthy Environments for People, Birds, and Wildlife in Metro Atlanta* at the Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference hosted by Park Pride in March 2018.

The document includes recommendations for land use, trees and plantings, connectivity, and care of land and wildlife. These best management practices are applicable to regional planning, municipal planning, parks planning, neighborhood planning, and individual homeowners. The purpose is to provide basic tenets to guide people in managing and maintaining lands for both people and wildlife.

"The way we manage our land has important implications for birds and wildlife," says Nikki. "When making decisions about parks and their maintenance, it is critical that we take into consideration the many species of birds and wildlife that rely on these greenspaces. From the land that we identify for parks, to the trees and

shrubs we plant, and to the way the land and plants are maintained, it is critical that we are good stewards so that people and wildlife may thrive."

The largest parks conference in the Southeast, this year's Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference explored the theme of urban resilience, or the capacity of individuals, communities, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of acute shock they experience. Nikki introduced the *Recommendations* in a panel session on "Biodiversity: Nature's Answer to Resilience."

"With our population growing rapidly in the Atlanta metro area, every jurisdiction can benefit from these best practices," says Esther Stokes, chair of the Atlanta Audubon Society Board of Directors. "They can help each county, city, or town become a better place for people and wildlife. We would like to see them used extensively all across the region."

To view or download a copy of the *Best Management Practices*, please visit our website at www.atlantaudubon.org/best-management-practices.

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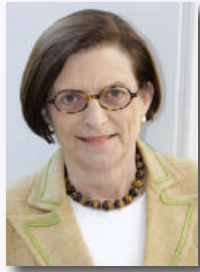
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Wingbars is the official newsletter of Atlanta Audubon Society and is published 10 times a year. We feature news, upcoming events, meetings, field trips, and projects. We hope you will join us. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not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



Esther Stokes

Challenge from the Chair

By Esther Stokes

Greetings, Atlanta Audubon members. I want to share with you all some of the ways our organization is making progress on behalf of birds in Atlanta and in the state of Georgia. I am so proud of the role Atlanta Audubon is playing in efforts to conserve and/or restore natural habitats in our metro area and in the state as a whole on behalf of birds and wildlife.

Consider this: Recently, our Executive Director, Nikki Belmonte, represented Atlanta Audubon at a fundraiser to help push the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act (GOSA)



Esther and another participant inspect a salamander collected by Crystal Mandica with The Amphibian Foundation. Photo by Park Pride.

over the finish line at the state legislature and on to the governor. She made an impressive plea about the importance of conserved areas for our birds and wildlife. (By the time you read this, it is hoped that GOSA will have been signed by the governor.) GOSA will provide a dedicated source of state funding for parks and greenspace, if

signed by the governor and approved by the electorate in November 2018.

And this: As part of this year's Park Pride Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference, Nikki was one of the lead guides on a pre-conference tour at Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve in DeKalb County. The tour was unique because trip leaders included a tree person (Kathryn Kolb from Eco-Addendum), an amphibian person (Mark Mandica from The Amphibian Foundation), and a bird

person (Nikki). This trio led a 3-D tour that greatly expanded the educational experience for participants, and attendees were able to observe the nesting Barred Owls, a special treat.

And this: The next day, Nikki participated in one of the sessions at the Park Pride Conference entitled "Biodiversity: Nature's Answer to Resilience," in which attendees could come to grasp "the importance of parks and greenspaces and even our backyards in preserving and restoring biodiversity." At this session, Nikki unveiled Atlanta Audubon's new *Recommendations for Best Management Practices for Healthy Environments for People, Birds, and Wildlife in Metro Atlanta*. This easy-to-understand and easy-to-embrace document can be helpful in urban ecology planning all across metro Atlanta. Please check it out at www.atlantaaudubon.org/best-management-practices.

And this: On March 13, I spoke on behalf of Atlanta Audubon in opposition to offshore oil drilling off the Georgia coast at a hearing before the Georgia House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee. As has been reported previously, Advocacy Chair Amanda Woomeer and Nikki led a group of Atlanta Audubon folks at the information session hosted by the Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to oppose such drilling. The amazing ecological richness of the Georgia coast should be valued for its importance to birdlife of the East Coast and even of the western hemisphere. In opposing the offshore oil drilling proposal, Atlanta Audubon worked in partnership with One Hundred Miles Georgia, the nonprofit whose focus is protecting the Georgia coast.

(Continued on Page 4)



Mark Mandica, Nikki Belmonte, and Kathryn Kolb teamed up for a Bird, Tree, and Amphibian Walk as part of the Park Pride annual Parks and Greenspace Conference. Photo by Park Pride.

Protect Georgia's Birds with a Gift to the 2018 Annual Fund

Atlanta Audubon's largest source of funding is **YOU!** Our spring Annual Fund complements your yearly membership dues, and both are integral to our success. When you receive your Annual Fund letter, please consider a donation to support our many local education and conservation programs. Birds need our help more than ever right now, and every gift makes a difference.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Project Safe Flight Volunteers Always Needed



This Golden-crowned Kinglet was found by one of our Project Safe Flight volunteers one morning this spring. Photo by Dottie Head.

Atlanta Audubon is always in need of Project Safe Flight Atlanta volunteers. The more volunteers, the more information we can collect on which bird species are colliding with buildings. Since the program began in fall 2015, more than 900 birds, representing 90 different species, have been collected.

Patrols will run through May 2018 and then kick off again in the fall. Volunteers and Atlanta Audubon staff patrol three routes (Buckhead, Downtown, and Georgia Tech) plus two other buildings in the early morning several days a week.

If you are interested in helping, please e-mail Adam at Adam@atlantaaudubon.org or call him at 678.973.2437.

Wood Thrush Watch

Help us learn more about the Wood Thrush by participating in Wood Thrush Watch. Your participation will help Atlanta Audubon gain a better understanding of Wood Thrush distribution and breeding success in our region. We are encouraging people to go birding during Wood Thrush migration and breeding season, from April to October. Your birding efforts should target under-birded Wood Thrush habitat in addition to well-known hotspots. Our goal is to see 100 checklists submitted during Wood Thrush Watch 2018. We hope to use these findings to help guide future habitat restoration projects and shape our conservation programs going forward. To learn more, submit a checklist, or to take our fun Wood Thrush ID quiz, visit www.atlantaaudubon.org/wood-thrush-watch.



Sign up for Wood Thrush Watch for 2018. Photo by Mary Kimberly.

ASK CHIPPY

Q: *Do you have a suggestion on how to prevent House Sparrows from nesting on my porch without harming the birds? We live in a downstairs condo, and there is a pair that is attracted to a space atop the light fixture, in between the light and the ceiling. We have tried both chicken wire and a hawk decoy unsuccessfully. Any effective suggestions you might have would be greatly appreciated.*

A: Thanks for contacting Atlanta Audubon Society.

Here are some other things that you can try to prevent the House Sparrows from nesting on top of your porch light that will not harm the birds: They are attracted to this site not only because it is protected (and probably warm) but also because it is level. If you can add a block, board or other material to create a slope of more than 45 degrees, the birds will not be able to nest. Another suggestion is to fasten a loose spring with at least an inch between each coil to the area, which would make the area unsuitable for nesting. You may also try to attaching Mylar strips or pieces of aluminum foil to the area to discourage the birds.



House Sparrows are not native to the U.S. Photo by Dan Vickers.

Did you know that House Sparrows are not native to the United States? The first House Sparrows were introduced to the U.S. when eight pairs were released in Brooklyn, New York, in 1850 or 1851. They were introduced in other parts of the country over the next few decades, and their populations quickly spread. They were soon considered a nuisance, since they did not eat insects and they drove away native songbirds. Some states even established bounty programs, paying a cent or two per bird.

House Sparrows have been known to destroy nests and eggs of other species, and they may also kill nestlings and adults of other species in an effort to take over their nest sites. Because House Sparrows are not native, they are not protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Therefore, it is legal to remove the nest and any contents if you so desire. House Sparrows are not easily discouraged though, so you may have to do it repeatedly.

Ironically, House Sparrows are declining in their native Europe. Their numbers have fallen significantly there, especially in urban areas, likely due to pollution.

Thanks for your concern for the birds.

—Chippy

Vote “Yes” For Birds on Nov. 6

By Steve Phenicie

Are you as blue as a Blue Jay or as red as a Northern Cardinal? Or maybe purple like a Purple Finch? No matter. Whatever your political leanings, this fall you'll get a chance to vote on a bird-friendly proposal.

The legislature, by overwhelming majorities in both houses, has passed the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act. If voters give the OK in November, up to 80 percent of sales tax collections on outdoor sporting equipment could be used for

- Acquiring land to protect clean water, game, wildlife, or fisheries, or natural-resource-based outdoor recreation.
- Aiding local governments in buying and improving parks and trails.
- Providing for the stewardship of conservation lands.

At first, 40 percent of the revenue, or \$20 million to \$22 million annually, would be dedicated. The legislature would be able to boost that amount up to the 80 percent cap as the economy allows. The measure sunsets after 10 years, but there's a renewal option. Best of all, taxes would not rise.

As it now stands, Georgia lacks dedicated funding for the conservation of priority lands, the stewardship of state parks and wildlife management areas, and the support of local parks and preserves. Instead, funding is subject to the whims of the legislature in any particular year. The Atlanta Audubon Society supports this measure, as does the Georgia Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Georgia Wildlife Federation, The Conservation Fund, Park Pride, and Trees Atlanta.

Backers of the proposal cite economic as well as conservation benefits: that healthy lands and waters attract birders, hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts who drive our tourism and recreation economy. Access to outdoor space also promotes a healthier population. Economic competitors such as Texas, Virginia, Alabama, and Florida already have programs in place to ensure conservation funding.

Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon's executive director, points out that more than 300 species of birds breed, winter, migrate through, or live year round in Georgia. Of those, about 30 are state listed as rare, threatened, or endangered, and 50 are designated by the National Audubon Society as climate-endangered. Declines in bird populations are directly tied to habitat loss. She believes that birders alone account for perhaps one-quarter of the spending on outdoor recreation in Georgia. It just makes sense for part of those dollars to go toward land acquisition to improve life for birds, people, and everything in between.

“And birds aren't just ‘out there’ in Longleaf pine tracts or the Altamaha river delta. They are here in Atlanta. In fact, state funds have purchased and protected more than a dozen parks like Morningside Nature Preserve and the Emma Lane property at Blue Heron Nature Preserve, both of which host more than 100 species of birds per year. Preserving and improving urban habitat is just as important as protecting large swaths of forest and grasslands. Securing quality habitat, accessible to people so that we can interact with nature as we are hardwired to do, is key to thriving. And that's what GOSA will do for the birds, for people, and all of the creatures in between. Georgia can thrive,” Nikki says.

Atlanta Audubon urges a “yes” vote for birds on Nov. 6.



The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act would help Georgia acquire and maintain additional lands for birding and wildlife recreation without increasing taxes. Photo by Adam Betuel.

Challenge from the Chair *(Continued from Page 2)*

And finally this: Atlanta Audubon is participating in the Trees Atlanta-founded Canopy Alliance with Trees Atlanta, The Conservation Fund, the Georgia Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Park Pride, and The Trust for Public Land. Concerted efforts among the partners can help preserve and protect our tree canopy and plan for future forestation, benefiting birds and wildlife.

These are just the actions I have observed personally!

There is lots of work to be done, but we can be more effective if we all help out. Please sign up to be an Atlanta Audubon Ambassador at www.atlantaaudubon.org/advocacy.

Happy Birding,
Esther Stokes

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to our bird walk leaders for April: **Joel McNeal, Mary Kimberly, Stan Chapman, Roseanne Guerra, Jeff Sewell, Jason Ward, Anne McCallum, Chris O'Neal,** and **Angie Jenkins** ... to **Susan Loeb** for designing our new Hummingbird plant tags ... to **Ellery Smith** for his help assembling plant tags ... to **Reba Dover** for her years of dedicated accounting work for Atlanta Audubon and sage professional advice ... to Project Safe Flight Atlanta volunteers **Mary Kimberly, Gavin MacDonald, Barbara Kipreos, Vin Gleespen, Ken Boff, Joel Owen, Elaine DeSimone, Michelle Styring, Waverley Eubanks, Laura Northrop, Maureen Carroll, Cathy Cornelius, Erin Feichtner, Chrishanna Desrosiers, Kate Shirley, Shawn Taylor, Jason Ward,** and **Nerina Mann** ... to Earth Day volunteers **Steve Dupont** (University of North Georgia) and **Cynthia Wolfe** (Oldcastle - Marcus Autism Center) ... to **Mary Nevil** for reorganizing our library after construction was completed ... to **Sandy Miller, Marcia Jenkins, Anita Chilcutt, Larry Stephens, Jack and Martha Fasse,** and **Stella Wissner** for their help with March Peel & Stick ... to **Steve Phenicie** for writing 29 Volunteer Spotlight columns for *Wingbars* and agreeing to write an advocacy column every other month that will now rotate space with the Volunteer Spotlight ... to **Tim Keyes, Abby Sterling,** and **Brad Winn** for presenting at our March monthly meeting and drawing the largest crowd EVER to attend a monthly meeting, and to the **staff at Manuel's**, who worked tirelessly to be sure everyone had food and beverages, all while bobbing and weaving between the stuffed-to-capacity room ... to **Scottie Johnson**, who has stepped down from her role as “Chippy” for the past several years, and to **Cheryl Beshke** who will now be singing the Chippy solo until we can find her some help ... to **Sandy Miller, Mary Nevil,** and **Laura Waddick** for assisting with the flower arrangements for our Julie Zickefoose program ... to **BJ Glick, Larry Stevens, Steve and Rona Cook,** and **Dave Kuechenmeister** for their help with festival outreach ... to **Kimberly Johnson, Libby Hedaya,** and **Stella Wissner** for volunteering at the Julie Zickefoose program ... to **Margaret Stephen** for attending the Georgia Power Earth Day Event on behalf of Atlanta Audubon.

EYES on EDUCATION

Birds Are All Around Us

by Melanie Furr

Whether I am leading a bird walk along a wooded trail at a state park in the mountains or along a concrete path in a local park in metro Atlanta, birds are somewhere nearby. Even rare birds can show up in the unlikeliest of places, like the Lark Bunting that many of us braved traffic and parking hassles to see at Centennial Olympic Park this winter or the Varied Thrush that “camped out” behind the bathrooms at the Stone Mountain campground last winter, attracting birders from across the state. If you’re paying attention, even the birds you see every day will never fail to show you something new and interesting. One of the things that makes birding so rewarding (and my job so easy) is that birds are everywhere, even in the midst of our bustling cities.

Working with the schools in our Connecting Students to STEM through Birds project (which provides bird-friendly gardens, binoculars, field guides, and other classroom resources, as well teacher training and programming for students), I have several opportunities every year to take students birding right in the heart of Atlanta. You might be surprised at the variety of birds at these urban Atlanta schools, located primarily in the southwest part of the city, near warehouses, rail tracks, and the airport. While leading short bird walks during a STEM-themed event at one of the schools this spring, students were delighted by the pair of Eastern Bluebirds perched on the playground fence and by recognizing the call notes of chickadees and towhees. One class spotted a Red-bellied Woodpecker and noted the woodpecker holes in a tree by the ball field, while another was amazed by the sight of a bright red Northern Cardinal and a soaring Turkey Vulture. Unfortunately, none of the classes caught a glimpse of the Common Yellowthroat which was singing from dense shrubs just outside the fence, but everyone was wowed by the photos I showed them, and a couple of teachers immediately downloaded Cornell’s Merlin Bird ID app to their phones. At the end of the day, my checklist had 26 species counted from one small corner of the school playground. But more than making my job easy, having birds so accessible is an important way to connect students with the natural world around them, especially in urban environments where children often have limited exposure to the natural world, not only from lack of access, but because of safety concerns.



A pre-kindergarten student at Boyd Elementary tries to spot one last bird before returning to class.
Photo by Melanie Furr.

Many other great birds turn up in the unlikeliest of places around our city. While leading students on birds walks at Westminster School, not far from the bustling heart of Buckhead, students and teachers were amazed by the Great Blue Heron rookery behind the school’s gymnasium. Seeing these large, prehistoric looking birds landing among the tall pine canopy with nesting material in their beaks was a thrill for everyone, including me! After finishing another school program recently, I stopped by the nearby Howell Mill Water Treatment Plant, which is actually an eBird “hotspot.” Right in the middle of the city, I



Great Blue Heron at Westminster School.
Photo by Melanie Furr.

had Ring-billed Gulls flying overhead, a flock of Ring-necked Ducks and a Pied-billed Grebe on one of the ponds, and Eastern Bluebirds perched on the fence. A little farther outside the city, I’ve had good bird sightings at the DeKalb County reservoirs, where I’ve spotted a wide variety of ducks as well as rarer sightings like Red-breasted Mergansers and Common Loons, and during a recent Christmas Bird Count, my team turned up the count’s only Vesper Sparrows at the DeKalb Farmers Market. Just ask Atlanta Audubon member and former board president Joy Carter about rare bird sightings in the city. She’s had a Rufous Hummingbird return to her small yard near Grant Park for the past five years.

For spring break this year, my family toured Washington, D.C., where I had to get my birding in where I could between touring museums, monuments, and colleges with my two teenagers and our visiting German exchange student. Of course, we saw our share of starlings, pigeons, and House Sparrows, but there were plenty of nice surprises, too. While waiting in line for entry to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, I was surprised to see a small flock of Dark-eyed Juncos feeding on the lawn, but I was stunned to see a Hermit Thrush there feeding in the open. We spotted a Horned Grebe at the Tidal Basin near the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, and during a quick walk through a waterfront park in Georgetown, I was especially excited to point out an Osprey and a flock of gorgeous Cedar Waxwings to our German visitor. While leaving our hotel in Alexandria for dinner one evening, we witnessed roughly 800 Fish Crows coming in to roost nearby, circling and making their raucous calls—an incredible sight. On our last day in the D.C. area, while my husband finished up at a conference and the teenagers slept in, I drove out to Theodore Roosevelt Island, a memorial to our 26th president located in the middle of the Potomac River. A quiet stroll around the island over the course of a couple of hours yielded 40 species, including some surprises like a Wilson’s Snipe and a Caspian Tern. Kinglets and Blue-grey Gnatcatchers were singing everywhere, and my count of 48 White-throated

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LIVE and LEARN

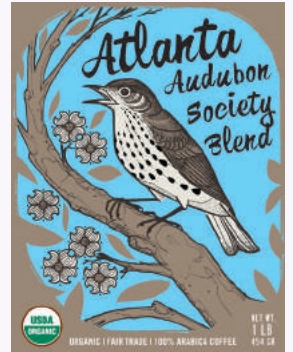
With These Atlanta Audubon Society Upcoming Events

Atlanta Bird Fest: Migratory Birds and Coffee Café Campesino Roastery Tour Saturday, May 12, 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Trip Leaders: Joy Carter and Bob Sargent

Difficulty: Moderate

What could be better than bird watching and coffee? Not much, in our opinion! Join us for a fun morning of birding, followed by lunch and coffee sampling at Café Campesino, the company that provides Atlanta Audubon with its tasty blend of shade-grown coffee. We'll meet at the Atlanta Audubon office at Blue Heron Nature Preserve and carpool to Ocmulgee National Monument just outside of Macon. There, we'll look for migrating warblers, vireos, tanagers, and more. From Macon, we'll continue to Americus, GA, home to Café Campesino Roastery, for lunch, coffee tastings, and a tour of their facilities. Each participant will receive a one-pound bag of Atlanta Audubon's shade-grown coffee blend to take home for your next perk-me-up. Cost: \$40. For more information or to register: www.atlantaaudubon.org/atlanta-bird-fest.



Canada Warbler, by Dan Vickers

Atlanta Bird Fest 2018: Birding a Picturesque Northeast Georgia Valley and Hike to Rabun Bald Sunday, May 13, 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Trip Leaders: Jay Davis and Laura Hardy

Difficulty: Strenuous, three miles round-trip with a steady 1,000-foot elevation gain

We will spend the morning and early afternoon birding and hiking in northeast Georgia, beginning the day in Dillard, Georgia, searching for birds in this picturesque valley. Then we will head up into the southern edge of North Carolina, where we drop back into Georgia to reach the northern trailhead to Rabun Bald. Rabun Bald, the second highest mountain in Georgia, is a reliable place to find nesting Canada Warblers. The hike is moderately strenuous at three miles round-trip (in and out), with a steady elevation gain of about 1,000 feet. You'll need to be in at least moderately good physical condition to accomplish the hike.

We will eat lunch on the summit (please bring a bag lunch), so you will need a backpack for your lunch and at least two bottles of water. Wear shoes that are comfortable for walking in rocky or muddy conditions.

If the weather cooperates, expect to see 65 to 80 species of birds, including Canada Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue-headed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, and Eastern Meadowlark.

We will meet at 7:30 AM in the Dillard House parking lot (Dillard, Georgia) and finish between 2 and 3 PM back down in the Dillard Valley. More information will be sent to registered participants.

Cost: \$30. For more information or to register, go to www.atlantaaudubon.org/abf-events.



Indigo Bunting, by Dan Vickers

Wildlife Sanctuary Certifier Training—Save the Date! Saturday, June 9, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Chattahoochee Nature Center, 8135 Willeo Road, Roswell, GA 30075

Atlanta Audubon is expanding its Wildlife Sanctuary Certification program and needs your expertise and passion. We will be hosting a certifier training for our Wildlife Sanctuary Certification program on Saturday, June 9, taught by Henning von Schmeling, senior director of operations at Chattahoochee Nature Center. The training will comprise a full-day event of learning. The morning session will include both a classroom portion and a hands-on outdoors portion, where we will learn about native plants and how landscaping can provide high-quality habitat for wildlife. We will break for lunch, and then move on to the afternoon session, where trainees will tour several nearby sanctuaries alongside current certifiers. Come learn how you can make a difference for Atlanta's bird as a sanctuary certifier.

The event is free to attend but registration is required at <https://www.atlantaaudubon.org/workshops.html>.



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.

Details about trips, including driving directions, can be found on our website: 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.

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

**Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park
(Cobb County)**

7:30 AM

Leader: Joel McNeal

Cell contact morning of the walk: 617.259.0944

GPS: N 33 59.127, W 84 34.852

Saturday, May 5, 2018

Piedmont Park (Fulton County)

8:00 AM

Leader: Jason Ward

Cell contact morning of the walk: 404.759.7770

GPS: N 33 47.025, W 84 22.746

Saturday, May 5, 2018

Stone Mountain Park (DeKalb County)

8:00 AM

Leader: Chris Showalter, Ornithologist,

Fernbank Science Center

Cell contact morning of the walk: 404.625.7004

GPS: 33.7931, -84.1465

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

**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

Saturday, May 27, 2018

Fernbank Forest (DeKalb County)

8:00 AM

Leaders: Gus Kaufman and Vinod Babu

Cell contacts morning of the walk: 404.483.7457

(Gus), 413.230.6276 (Vinod)

GPS: 33.77540, -84.32936

Cost: Included with Museum admission, and free for Fernbank members and Atlanta Audubon Society members. Space is limited to 25 people, and advance reservations are required at 404.929.6400.

Thursday, May 24, 2018

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

Monday, May 28, 2018 – Memorial Day
Constitution Lakes (DeKalb County)

8:00 AM

Leaders: Joy Carter and Mary Kimberly

Cell contacts morning of the walk:

404.822.0030 (Joy); 404.308.6279 (Mary)

GPS: 33.68306, -84.34740

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.

Birds Are All Around Us

(Continued from Page 5)

Sparrows was undoubtedly low. As I was walking across the bridge leaving the park, a silhouette stood out among circling Turkey Vultures in the distance and soon enough, a Bald Eagle flew upstream directly over my path, with the high-rise buildings of Alexandria to one side and the city of D.C. to the other—a perfect finale to a morning of birding in our nation's capital.

All sorts of incredible birds pass over and through our cities regularly, especially during spring and fall migration. Sadly, while monitoring buildings around the city for bird collisions, Atlanta Audubon staff and Project Safe Flight Atlanta volunteers have discovered victims from ninety different species from diverse bird families, including waterfowl, shorebirds, nightjars, and songbirds. The most commonly discovered victim is the tiniest—the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. During my regular Tuesday volunteer shifts at AWARE, I frequently help with the care of birds ranging from woodcocks to warblers that have been rescued from the downtown area, most likely injured by window collisions.

Luckily, in spite of the numerous ways humans make the landscape less inviting for birds, they have continued to adapt and survive for nearly 170 million years, carving out their niches in every imaginable habitat, including our concrete jungles. We as individuals can take meaningful steps to ensure they continue to grace us with their presence. Simple actions like turning off our lights at night to reduce light pollution, maintaining a feeder or bird bath, and planting bird-friendly native plants in our gardens and community spaces can provide important, life-saving benefits for birds trying to make a home or navigate their way through our urban landscapes. So put out the welcome mat, and keep your binoculars handy. You never know who might show up at your doorstep.



Students at Westminster School enjoyed a close-up look at a Blue Heron Rookery behind their school. Photo by Melanie Furr.



ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Atlanta Bird Fest Closing Celebration Featuring Author Janisse Ray

Sunday, May 20, 2018, 3:30 to 5:30 PM at **SweetWater Brewing Company**

Join us on Sunday, May 20, at SweetWater Brewing Company as we conclude our month-long celebration of Atlanta's best birding destinations, educational workshops, and other events of Atlanta Bird Fest 2018. We will celebrate our Atlanta Bird Fest participants and volunteers, as well as award prizes to our Birdathon Challenge participants.

This year we are excited to welcome celebrated Georgia author and environmental activist **Janisse Ray** as the keynote speaker. Her address, *Our Life with Birds*, will be a lyrical and heartfelt look at the wild creatures that instill passion in us, especially those that inhabit the environs of our home state, why we follow them and name them, and what they teach us about the world. Join us to hear this clarion call for the protection of wild places and a defense of hope. Copies of her award-winning books will be available for purchase and signing.

Ticket inventory is low for the Closing Celebration, and we encourage purchasing tickets in advance. More information and tickets can be found at www.atlantaaudubon.org/closingcelebration.



Janisse Ray

**ATLANTA BIRD FEST CLOSING CELEBRATION LOCATION:
SWEETWATER BREWING COMPANY, 195 OTTLEY DRIVE, NE, ATLANTA, GA 30324.**

Tickets are required for this event.