

Building Resilience and Adapting on the Fly

By Jared Teutsch, Executive Director



Eastern Bluebird, by Steve Rushing.



Jared Teutsch

Like nearly everyone else, the COVID-19 outbreak caught Atlanta Audubon by surprise. One minute we were all gearing up for spring migration, and the next we were sheltering in place. By now everyone is familiar with what their television and various streaming services can provide. But have you been catching up on the drama, mystery, and sheer entertainment happening right outside your window? Wondering what happened to the pair of Eastern Phoebes? Listening to the comical chattering of the Carolina Chickadees? Or watching for that Red-headed Woodpecker? Yes, birds are back, along with the full cast of characters. And just like the birds, our work at Atlanta Audubon continues, but it has evolved: Our staff are working from home, field trips are canceled, festivals and speaking engagements are being rescheduled, and everyone is practicing the new art of social distancing.

Like everyone else, we've been forced to adapt, but we are resilient. Change can be hard and daunting, but even in the midst of this crisis, our work continues and good things are happening! Atlanta Audubon is embracing technology and finding new ways to bring the joy of birds to you at home while we continue building the places where birds and people thrive.

Here is a status update on some of our programs:

- Our conservation work is continuing, with **habitat restoration projects** moving forward at Cascade Springs, the Big Creek Greenway, and along the Atlanta BeltLine.
- The **Wildlife Sanctuary Program** is still open for business, with Gabe Andriele doing property assessments by appointment only, while keeping our distance.
- **Atlanta Bird Fest** has been rescheduled for Fall 2020. See the update on page two about the rescheduled events and how this will impact those who have already registered.
- We are working to reschedule the **March Monthly Meeting** with Chris Mowry of the Atlanta Coyote Project. Our **April Monthly Meeting** featuring Malcolm Hodges, with The Nature Conservancy, talking on **Feathers and Flames: Relationships Between Birds and Fire** was presented via webinar. And Adam Betuel's update on the recent **Atlanta Audubon trip to Costa Rica** was also re-presented as a webinar. If you missed any of these events, you can watch them on our new Digital Resources page (see link below.) We don't meet in May due to the Memorial Day holiday, but we hope things have returned to normal by June.
- Speaking of **Digital Resources**, we've developed a host of new content and an updated web page that houses all of the new videos, webinars, educational resources, and other items we're creating to help you continue learning about and enjoying birds. We're adding more every day. Check it out at www.atlantaaudubon.org/digital-resources.
- After this issue of **Wingbars**, we're going to take a short break and look at ways to improve this long-running publication. To stay abreast of the times, we're considering reducing the frequency of **Wingbars** to quarterly and making it a more issues-based publication with in-depth articles on our conservation, education, and community engagement programs. Events and news updates will be moved to online distribution, which is a far more timely delivery method. The April issue of **Wingbars** went to press in early March, before COVID-19 erupted onto the scene. By the time it hit mailboxes in late April, most of the content was irrelevant.

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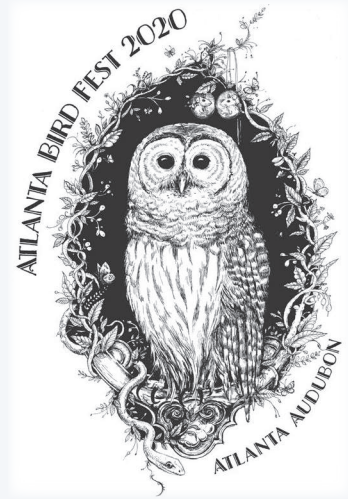
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Wingbars is the official newsletter of Atlanta Audubon Society and is published 10 times a year. We feature news, upcoming events, meetings, field trips, and projects. We hope you will join us. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not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

Atlanta Bird Fest Rescheduled for Fall 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and out of an abundance of caution for the health of our event leaders, volunteers, participants, supporters, and staff, we have rescheduled Atlanta Bird Fest for Fall 2020. We are currently working with our event leaders and partners to reschedule events. Events will run between September 19 and October 18, 2020. Save the date for our Closing Celebration on Sunday, October 18, from 3:00 to 6:00 PM at SweetWater Brewery. We'll welcome Pulitzer Prize-finalist author and ornithologist Scott Weidensaul as our keynote speaker.

If you are currently registered for an Atlanta Bird Fest event, at this time there is nothing you need to do regarding your registration. Once we have the new dates set for each event, we will contact you to ensure the new date works with your schedule. If not, you will have first dibs on registering for other events, or you may choose to receive a refund at that time.



Volunteers Needed for May-June Climate Watch Surveys

Each year, Atlanta Audubon works with National Audubon on the Climate Watch Survey. Volunteers are asked to survey for two species—Eastern Bluebirds and nuthatches (including Brown-headed, White-breasted, and Red-breasted) during the survey period. The ability to distinguish these species by sound is extremely helpful, but not required.

This is a fun community science activity that the whole family can get involved with. Volunteers are asked to select a specific area and conduct 12 five-minute point counts to record all bluebird and nuthatch species that are seen or heard.

This survey is important because it provides sound data that will guide future projections about bird populations and how climate may affect them. For more information on the program and what is involved, please visit www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-watch. If you are interested in helping, contact Adam Betuel at adam@atlantaudubon.org or 678.973.2437.



Eastern Bluebird on redbud tree,
by Esther Little.

Building Resilience and Adapting on the Fly

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- Speaking of **e-mail**, if you're not receiving our weekly e-mail updates, you can be added or re-added to the list by sending an e-mail request to dottie@atlantaudubon.org.
- By September, we hope COVID-19 will be in the rear-view mirror, and we'll be resuming our programming with a fall version of **Atlanta Bird Fest** overlapping with **Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month**. Mark your calendars now for **Saturday, September 12**, for the annual **Wildlife Sanctuary Tour**, and for **Thursday, September 17**, for a **special evening with Doug Tallamy**.

By the time this article reaches you, I hope that things will be beginning to return to normal, but only time will tell. In the meantime, be safe, and let us know how your backyard birding drama, mystery, and entertainment unfolds.



Tree Swallows, by Kameko Walker. Audubon Photography Awards.

No Birds in My Hotel Room...Yet

By Steve Phenicie

I've never found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in my hotel room. Or a Carolina Wren. Or a Northern Cardinal. Or a bird of any kind. But considering my track record of the creatures I have found in rooms over the years, sharing quarters with a bird doesn't seem so far-fetched. Here's a list I can think of, by location:

Zambia: My wife and I once stayed in a hut with lions, elephants, and hippos roaring, honking, snorting, etc., outside. The hut was wrapped around a giant tree, which served as part of the hut's wall. On the tree/wall was a lizard. (I call anything a lizard if it looks like that critter in the GEICO commercials.) He wasn't bothering me, so live and let live.

St. Kitts: Another lizard hopped into my suitcase. Luckily we saw him before he set up full-fledged housekeeping. I didn't ask whether he knew the guy from Zambia.

Cambodia: Still another lizard. He skedaddled under the bed, and I didn't pursue him. But when I got home from this trip, I had a dead lizard on my bathroom floor.

Zimbabwe: We stayed in an A-frame that had a thatched roof, and nudged against it, at about waist level, was a shelf that was handy for storing my toiletries kit. When we checked into our next accommodations, beetles from the thatched roof scrambled out of my kit. The ingrates didn't thank me for giving them a ride.

Belize: Our cottage again had a thatched roof, but there was a wide space between the top of the wall and the roof. We could lie in bed and watch the fireflies and bats fly around the rafters of our room. The effect was a combo of Halloween and the Fourth of July.

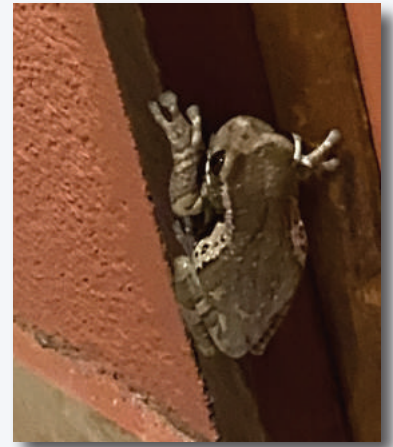
Peru: We stayed at a down-at-the-heels seaside collection of cottages. To make the room habitable, I swatted a couple dozen spiders that inhabited every nook and cranny. It didn't make me popular with Arachnids Are Us.

Costa Rica: We stayed in seaside accommodations there, too, and my room's welcoming chairman was a crab. He was probably more crabby after I scooted him out the door.

Costa Rica (another trip, many years later): A frog the size of my thumb inhabited my shower. He had easy access—one side of the bathroom was open to the outdoors and included a garden surrounded by a wall. There were iguanas and monkeys in the area, and I feared running into one of them in the middle of the night, but that never happened. Another frog the size of my fist clung to the door of my room, waiting to be admitted much as a dog or cat would. Luckily I was able to swat him away.

Illinois: I stayed at a camp during ladybug season. When I arrived, there were piles of ladybugs—both living and dead—around the door to my balcony. The room had a handy broom and dustpan, so I used them more than once to scoop up my "roommates."

At my own house, my wife, my son, my mother-in-law, and I once chased a squirrel with brooms after it fell through the fireplace early one Sunday morning. It would have made a great video if someone had been there to film us. Also, both of the houses I have owned had problems with termites around an exterior door frame. Until we got things under control, thousands would suddenly emerge in a room on a warm spring day. It happened one year when a baby sitter was home instead of us. She thought the Apocalypse had arrived. Considering all of this, would finding a bird in my room seem so strange?



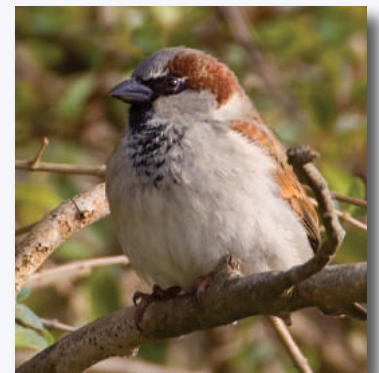
Hotel room frog, by Steve Phenicie.

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. 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 attaching Mylar strips or pieces of aluminum foil to the area to discourage the birds.

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.



House Sparrow, by Dan Vickers.

—Chippy

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT On Toni Bowen

(This is the 45th in a series on Atlanta Audubon volunteers, board members and staff.)

By Steve Phenicie

When it comes to volunteering, Toni Bowen tends to be a jacqueline-of-all trades, but among her favorites is interacting with the public when she has represented Atlanta Audubon at large festivals. Using Cornell University's Merlin ID app, she says that "it's really great to see people who want to see what a bird looks like." Many also want to know about native plants and what they can do to attract birds. And, of course, she also tells them what Atlanta Audubon is all about and gives them a pitch to sign up.

Toni is a self-described "Army brat" who was born in Colorado and lived in various places while her father was on active duty. After he retired, she spent her formative years in Indiana. She moved to metro Atlanta in 1999, lives in Johns Creek and works in corporate strategy at AT&T, where her job is to improve the customer experience. Her undergraduate degree is from Indiana State University, and she holds an M.B.A. from Kennesaw State. She has two children—son Sean, who is about to complete a four-year hitch in the military in Korea, and daughter Sarah, a recent graduate of Georgia State University, who is still at home.

Toni dates her interest in birding to a class she took at Indiana State. "After the first week of class, I was hooked," she says. But then marriage, children, and a job took precedence until her daughter entered high school in 2012 and she felt an attack of empty nest syndrome coming on. Her now former but still friendly ex-husband suggested that she resume birding, and she took him up on it. She went on an Atlanta

Audubon walk conducted by Angie Jenkins and enjoyed it immensely because people were so friendly. Other walks conducted by Jason Ward and Nathan Farnau followed. She took some of the Audubon workshops on such things as shorebirds and sparrows, and eventually enrolled in the Master Birder class.

Conservation Director Adam Betuel got her involved in Climate Watch, a project in which participants assume responsibility for a "square" (Hers is in Johns Creek and Peachtree Corners) to check periodically for Eastern Bluebirds and White-breasted and Brown-headed Nuthatches. She's also led a couple of bird walks, including one by canoe "even though I hadn't been in a canoe since college." And when she felt that the Master Birder class materials could be organized a bit better, she helped with a reformatting.

She's also a very active eBirder. She decided to make 2015 her own big year and set a goal of 500 birds. She ended with 507. This year she hopes to submit an eBird list every day of the year. Despite having a full-time job, she thinks this is realistic because she either birds every day from her home office or birds around the corporate office

during her lunch hour.

One mildly interesting but obscure tidbit about Toni: At Indiana State, she once had an English class with basketball star Larry Bird, although she didn't see much of him. He showed up mainly for tests, she says.



Toni Bowen has set the goal to submit an eBird list every day of 2020.

Protect Georgia's Birds with a Gift to the 2020 Annual Fund

Atlanta Audubon's largest source of funding is YOU! At no time is that more true or more important during this time when many of our spring programs and events have had to be canceled or rescheduled due to COVID-19. Our spring Annual Fund complements your yearly membership dues, and both are integral to our success. Please consider a donation to support our many local education, conservation, and community engagement programs. Birds need our help more than ever right now, and every gift makes a difference. You may also make a gift online at www.atlantaudubon.org/donate. All donors to the 2020 Annual Fund will be recognized by name in the next issue of *Wingbars*. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

In Memory of JoAnn Hunsinger

On March 11, 2020, Atlanta Audubon lost a longtime member and great friend, JoAnn "Jo" Hunsinger, to cancer. Jo was an early Atlanta Audubon Master Birder who took pride in her beautiful Certified Wildlife Sanctuary created on her terraced hillside yard. Jo's good friend and fellow Atlanta Audubon member Marcia Klenbort shared her memories of Jo with us:

"Jo Hunsinger, Marilyn Harris, and I were in the very first Master Birder class in Fall 2002. It was a class that attracted very good birders—like Marilyn and Jo—and a couple of novices like me. It was a powerful experience—fabulous teaching, led by Georgann Schmalz, and hard work. We three were part of the group that took what we learned to teach birds to kids in inner city schools, and with Georgann's help, developed the "Learning About

Birds" materials, which Nikki [Belmonte] and then Melanie [Furr] turned into a really great program. Shortly after the Master Birder class ended, our oldest son died at 38. Jo and Marilyn put their wings around me that whole spring and carried me back to life. Jo was a petite person. Marilyn called us 'Small, Medium and Large.' We went to Dauphin Island together, and then to Cape May for migration, singing and birding our way together."

There will be a memorial service at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, date TBA.



Jo Hunsinger

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

...to **Lauren, Lindsay, and Hugh Head** for helping Dottie with Peel & Stick during social distancing and to all of our regular Peel & Stickers who were VERY MISSED during April *Wingbars* distribution to our hard-working **Atlanta Audubon staff**, who have scrambled to make adjustments during the extraordinary time the nation and the world are now enduring.

EYES ON EDUCATION

Atlanta Urban Ecologists: Building the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

By Melanie Furr, Director of Education

On the second Saturday of each month, a motley group of teenagers from across the Atlanta area forego sleeping late and Snapchat to come together to learn about conservation and ecology as part of Atlanta Audubon's Atlanta Urban Ecologists program. From viewing the sun through solar telescopes, to banding birds, to canoeing on the Chattahoochee River, the students learn alongside experts in the field in the outdoor places that make Atlanta the "City in a Forest." Founded in 2016 through a partnership with several local conservation nonprofit organizations, the program provides students in grades 8-12 meaningful hands-on field experiences, as well as exposure to careers in science and conservation. As a former high school (English) teacher, I especially enjoy managing and being involved with this program. In fact, it was conceived, in part, because of regrets I had about not having exposure to a wide variety of careers in science and conservation when I was a teenager. In addition, I missed having the opportunity to get to know students on a more personal level and establish an ongoing relationship with them. Having taken the Master Naturalist course at Chattahoochee Nature Center, I wondered if a similar program might interest Atlanta's youth, so I invited some colleagues at other conservation organizations to sit down with me and see what we could create. During our first year, Trees Atlanta, Chattahoochee Nature Center, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, Blue Heron Nature Preserve, Amphibian Foundation, and Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve (DeKalb County) all donated time and expertise to help launch the program. The second year, Zoo Atlanta joined the program, and now in our fourth year, at the request of students who wanted to continue with the program, we have added a second year of monthly programs with new partners including Atlanta Coyote Project, Atlanta Wild Animal Rescue Effort (AWARE), Cubihatcha Outdoor Center, Charlie Bates Solar Astronomy Project, and Finding the Flint, joined by American Rivers Council. No matter the weather, our Urban Ecologists are ready to get outside, learn, and have fun with their peers.

What draws the students together each month is their common interest in nature (especially animals), but aside from this commonality, the students come from diverse backgrounds and different parts of the city. Students from around the metropolitan area, from Suwanee down to Peachtree City, travel to different locations to attend sessions hosted by our partners each month, and in addition to ten spots for students to register, we offer ten need-based scholarships, allowing students that might otherwise not be able to participate to join us while still keeping the group small enough to provide meaningful experiences. During the first two years of the program, we were thrilled to partner with Inspire, an after-school program serving the refugee community in Clarkston, offering spots to several students. We have



A student looks through a solar spectroscope during a session with Charlie Bates Solar Astronomy Project. Photo by Melanie Furr.



Students sample persimmons, a favorite coyote food, on the Berry College campus during a session hosted by Atlanta Coyote Project. Photo by Melanie Furr.

also partnered with Gardens for Growing Community, a local organization that supports nature-based learning for grades K-12 that has supported and facilitated the participation of several students of color from parts of Gwinnett. Often with limited opportunities to get outside and explore, these students light up when they peer through binoculars at their first Eastern Bluebird or visit the zoo for the first time. In addition, several motivated students apply for the program after learning about it on our website or social media. Combined with students from the Buckhead/North Atlanta community where our office is located, our Atlanta Urban Ecologists represent a wide spectrum of backgrounds and perspectives, but they all graduate from the program with a greater awareness of the amazing biodiversity right outside their doors, as well as of the opportunities for them in the field of conservation.

Aside from the diversity of the students, another great aspect of this program is that it enables us to highlight Atlanta's rich ecology and incredible greenspaces, as well as the nonprofit organizations working to protect them. From hiking the granite slopes of Arabia Mountain with a park ranger and discovering its unique plant communities, to monitoring salamanders with the Amphibian Foundation at Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve, a remnant wetland in Decatur, to getting up close with AWARE's ambassador animals and learning how to protect wildlife in their own backyards, students get to explore a different location each month with instruction from experts in different conservation fields. During Atlanta Audubon's session, Adam Betuel, our conservation director, leads a bird banding demonstration at Emma Wetlands, a section of Blue Heron Nature Preserve that has been a focus of Atlanta Audubon's habitat restoration efforts. The students also get to investigate wildlife activity and devise ways to make the landscape safer for animals at Blue Heron Nature Preserve, under the direction of the Preserve's dedicated and enthusiastic staff. This year, students in our second-year cohort had the chance to explore two college campuses! Professor Chris Mowry of Berry College and director of the Atlanta Coyote Project took the students to look for signs of coyotes on campus, while Professor Roark Donnelly of Oglethorpe University helped me host a session teaching students how to prepare bird study skins. (I was so impressed with the teens that day! In spite of some initial revulsion, almost all of the students were willing to

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Spring Plant Sales Moving Online

Not to be deterred by the COVID-19 outbreak, Atlanta Audubon is moving its spring plant sale online. We are partnering with Beech Hollow Wildflower Farms to bring you a large selection of native plants to help you fill your garden with bird-friendly plants. Selections will include white false indigo, purple coneflower, crested iris, red columbine, milkweed, and many others.

Online sales began in April and will end Tuesday, May 6. You may pick up your plants on Friday or Saturday, May 8 or 9, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, at our office at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve. We'll set things up to maintain social distancing in the event that it is still required. Unfortunately, we will not be able to offer any onsite sales this year, so please order from the website. If you need assistance, please call the office at 678.973.2437 and leave a message. Someone will call you back and assist you over the phone.

Native plants not only provide the highest-quality resources for wildlife but have many benefits to people as well. Homeowners can save water by reducing lawn size, and the added plants can even help control flooding. Native plants are hardy and well-adapted, so they thrive without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, which hurt our pollinators, reduce prey availability, and can run off into streams. Finally, native plants and the wildlife they sustain provide color and beauty, right in your own backyard.

Order today at www.atlantaaudubon.org/plant-sales.



Purple coneflowers, by Dottie Head.

Atlanta Urban Ecologists: Building the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

(Continued from Page 5)

work with the specimens and did an excellent job preparing wings from a Red-shouldered Hawk and Barred Owl.) Paddling on the Chattahoochee River is always one of the highlights for students in the first-year program, ending with a pizza picnic at the Chattahoochee Nature Center, where we celebrate everyone's unique accomplishments. (Sadly, this year the canoe trip, as well as our bioblitz and campfire celebration for the second-year students, is canceled because of the current situation with the COVID-19 virus, but we hope to hold a celebration for all of the students when it is safe to do so.)



Students prepare a wing specimen from a Red-shouldered Hawk during Atlanta Audubon's session hosted at Oglethorpe University. Photo by Melanie Furr.

In addition to the opportunities to learn and explore along with the students, I enjoy participating every month and getting to know an amazing group of young conservationists. Some of the students come to the program with limited experiences in the outdoors, and watching them blossom into young naturalists is heartwarming. Ayub, who comes from a refugee family in Clarkston, struggles in academics but can identify every bird in his apartment complex by sight and sound. Riley, a student at Decatur High School, is an expert at catching and identifying salamanders, while Michael, a homeschooled student from Sharpsburg, teaches us something almost every session about the macroinvertebrate life around us. I've been tickled to regularly receive texts from my students in my second-year cohort noting interesting birds and other things they see when they are outside. Working with students that show up with a positive attitude and a willingness to work with others, as well as a genuine concern for the natural world, is extremely rewarding, and getting to work with an awesome group of colleagues is a bonus. In addition to the charismatic educators who lead the session, several fellow educators, inspired by the students and the program, have volunteered their time and expertise as mentors, for which I am extremely grateful. Special thanks to the Amphibian Foundation and Blue Heron Nature Preserve for their ongoing support of the program.

Inspiring the next generation of conservations is work worth investing in, and I take hope from the bright, optimistic voices of our youth. The words of one of our program graduates best illustrates why I love this program and hope it will continue to grow: "Participating in the Atlanta Audubon Urban Ecologists program gave me the opportunity to work with field experts from many professions. The program helped me to think more globally about career options and my future. In addition to making friends and having fun, my eyes were opened to the many ways that I can make a positive impact on the planet! The program was a life-changing experience for me, and I hope that others will get the chance to be an Urban Ecologist." Please share this opportunity with any teenagers you know who may be interested in joining us for the next program beginning in September 2020.

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.

Special COVID-19 Note: We are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak and hope to resume field trips as soon as it is safe to do so. Please check the website before heading out for any of these field trips, to ensure that they are still happening.

Wednesday, May 13

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

Friday, May 22

Murphey Candler Park (DeKalb County)

8:00 AM

Leader: Mary Kimberly

Cell contact morning of walk: 404-308-6279

GPS: 33.909449, -84.325794

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 Dottie Head, field trip coordinator, at dottie@atlantaudubon.org.

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.

Travel with Atlanta Audubon to Sax-Zim Bog and Northeast Minnesota in Winter February 11 to February 15, 2021

Only to a birder does a trip away in the middle of winter to northern Minnesota seem like a good idea. But this is a classic “quality over quantity” birding experience, where species diversity may be low but the quality of birds is through the roof. The boreal forests in winter are home to mouth-watering birds like Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak, Boreal Chickadee, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Spruce Grouse. The northern woods at this time of year are a real winter wonderland—snow-covered, quiet, and peaceful, the silence occasionally punctuated by a noisy flock of crossbills or the tapping of a woodpecker on a tamarack.

This trip, led with local support by Red Hill Birding, is designed to take in the best birding that northeast Minnesota offers in winter. We will visit the world-famous Sax-Zim Bog, the forests of Superior National Forest, and the North Shore of Lake Superior. We will be based in a single Duluth lakefront hotel for the duration of the trip. Because of the short nature of this trip and the short day length of the northern winter, we will be eating early breakfasts and spending full days in the field to see as many of the specialty birds as possible. If we're lucky, we may even come across a Northwoods mammal like a wolf, moose, porcupine, or pine marten.

For more information or to register, visit www.atlantaudubon.org/minnesota.



Great Gray Owl by Josh Engel, Red Hill Birding.

Travel with Atlanta Audubon to Oaxaca: Mexico's Birding Capital Saturday, March 20, to Sunday, March 28, 2021

With more species than the United States and Canada combined, our neighbors to the south host a truly breathtaking diversity of bird life. In addition to the wealth of natural life, Mexico is a nation steeped in rich history, culture and diversity, and it is a known culinary destination. While worthy sites can be found throughout this nation, Oaxaca stands out as a location overflowing with the things that make Mexico so special. With a bird species list approaching 800, Oaxaca is Mexico's most avian-rich state. During this nine-day tour, we will split time between the Valley of Oaxaca, including Oaxaca City, as well as Huautuco and other coastal destinations. Eric Antonio Martinez of Mexico-Birding Tours is an Oaxaca native and one of the best bird guides in Mexico. He and Atlanta Audubon's Director of Conservation Adam Betuel will team up to locate an assortment of birds, including such targets as Orange-breasted Bunting, Dwarf Jay, Red Warbler, Red-headed Tanager, and other endemic species and tropical jaw-droppers. In addition to the breathtaking bird watching, we will visit a variety of habitats, traveling from sea level up to 10,000 feet, exploring the ruins at Monte Alban, spending time in the center of historic Oaxaca City, and taking a mini-pelagic boat trip. Come join us on a trip full of birds, mole, mezcal, and rich culture. For more information and a complete itinerary, please visit www.atlantaudubon.org/oaxaca-mexico-2021.



White-throated Magpie, by Shannon Fair.



ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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May Monthly Meeting

We will not be holding a Monthly Meeting in May, as it falls on
Memorial Day weekend.

We hope to see you all for our **June 28 Monthly Meeting** at Manuel's Tavern. Jonah McDonald will be joining us to talk about his new book, *Secret Atlanta: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure*. Please check our website as that date nears, to make sure the meeting will be held. We don't know right now how the COVID-19 virus will be affecting us then.

We recently offered our April Monthly Meeting on *Feathers and Flames: Relationships Between Birds and Fire* with Malcolm Hodges as a webinar. Adam Betuel also represented his Costa Rica Trip Report from the February Monthly Meeting as a webinar. You can view recordings of these presentations at www.atlantaaudubon.org/digital-resources.

Early Birds Book Club

The Early Birds will not meet in May, as there is no Monthly Meeting. For June, the group will be reading *Summer World: a Season of Bounty* by Bernd Heinrich. Please check our website as that date nears, to make sure the book club will be meeting. We don't know right now how the COVID-19 virus will be affecting us then.

The Early Birds is a drop-in book club that meets before the Atlanta Audubon Monthly Meeting at Manuel's Tavern from 2:00 to 3:30 PM. There is no commitment other than to enjoy reading and sharing books about birds and birding. Feel free to join us even if you have not read the book! The group will not meet on months when there is not an Atlanta Audubon Monthly Meeting. If you wish to join the Early Bird's e-mail list for announcements and reminder notices, please e-mail Mary Nevil at Mbnevil@gmail.com.



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.