

Wingbars



**BIRDS
GEORGIA**

A Quarterly Publication of Birds Georgia

AUGUST 2024

Coming September 2024: Fall Flyway Festival

Coming this September, Birds Georgia will launch the Fall Flyway Festival, a rebranded event focused on the connections between birds and native plants. The festival was formerly called Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month, which was a mouthful, so we decided a rebranding was in order. We'll be rolling out a full lineup of events designed to celebrate birds and native plants during the height of fall migration. The month-long celebration will feature both in-person and virtual programming to help create bird-friendly habitat in your own landscape.

Building off last year's successful Round Robin, we will host the 2024 Round Robin event on Saturday, September 14, from 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Birds Georgia office at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda TreeHouse. Join fellow plant and bird enthusiasts for a day full of conversations, immersive experiences, and learning opportunities. We're excited to welcome this year's keynote speaker, Jennifer Ceska, Conservation Coordinator in the Science & Conservation Program at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. We'll also have presentations from expert staff at Birds Georgia, the Georgia Native Plant Society, Trees Atlanta, and other wildlife focused organizations. A new addition will be a "Winged Encounters" activity where participants will get one-on-one time with skilled professionals who will be ready to answer your habitat and bird-related questions. The Round Robin will also feature exhibitors, tours of the Piedmont garden at Trees Atlanta, as well as optional early morning activities, including a bird walk and exotic/invasive plant field experience, prior to the event.

In addition to this signature event, Birds Georgia and partners will be hosting a number of virtual and in-person events to educate the public about the importance of native plants to birds.

Events

For more information or to register for the Fall Flyway Festival events, please visit <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/fall-flyway-festival.html>. Additional events will be added after *Wingbars* is finalized, so please check the website or the *Bird Buzz* e-newsletter for updates.

- Saturday, September 7, at 8:00 AM – **Bird and plant walk at Mistletoe State Park, with Birds Georgia and the Augusta chapter of Georgia Native Plant Society.** Location: 3725 Mistletoe Rd., Appling, GA 30802. Please note there is a \$5 entry fee to the park.



Tree swallow. Photo by Meryl Lorenzo.

INSIDE

Executive Director's Column.....	2
Youth Programs Registration.....	3
Welcome New Staff Member.....	3
Volunteer Spotlight.....	4
A Million Thanks.....	4-5
Connecting Habitat for Birds.....	6
Species Profile: Black Vulture.....	7
Fall Master Birder Program.....	9
Sharing Birds in Gwinnett Co.....	9
Upcoming Events.....	10-11
August Meeting.....	12



Wingbars is the official newsletter of Birds Georgia and is published four 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 Birds Georgia.

Common nighthawk. Photo by Mark Hainen.

(Continued on Page 5)

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From the Executive Director

Join Us for the Fall Flyway Festival



Jared Teutsch

It's been a scorchingly hot and dry summer, and I know you all join me in looking keenly toward some cooler fall temperatures. It's been a busy summer at Birds Georgia, with our conservation team busy building bird friendly habitat in the Chattahoochee RiverLands and beyond, our education team conducting Taking Wing Teacher Training for teachers, and the community engagement team continuing their great lineup of field trips and programs to excite and engage new and diverse birders. We've been busy, too, planning our new September event, the Fall Flyway Festival.

In the past, we've hosted Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month, but we found that name to be clunky, so we decided a rebrand was in order. We'll still be bringing you a host of programming about how to create habitat for birds using native plants, and we'll also be showcasing some of the many habitat restoration projects that Birds Georgia has going on around the state. Join us for an event or a volunteer workday, and help us create more bird-friendly habitat across Georgia.



American Goldfinch on cosmos. Photo by van Barrientos, Audubon Photography Awards.

As we did last year, we'll be partnering with Georgia Native Plant Society, Trees Atlanta, and other conservation organizations to bring you the Round Robin on Saturday, September 14, at our office at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda TreeHouse. We're excited to welcome keynote speaker, Jennifer Ceska, Conservation Coordinator in the Science & Conservation Program at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia plus we're working to bring together a great lineup of speakers on a variety of native plant related topics. From

volunteer workdays and tours of some of our habitat restoration sites to virtual and in-person events, we'll be bringing you a full lineup of educational events to help you improve your landscape for birds.

If you miss the old Sanctuary Tour and plant sale, we encourage you to check out the Georgia Native Plant Society's website at www.gnps.org. Most of their chapters are hosting plant sales this fall, and at least one chapter is hosting a garden tour of their certified habitats, which is very similar to our old sanctuary tour. As we've grown into a statewide organization, Birds Georgia has been moving away from localized events, like plant sales and the sanctuary tour, so that we can focus our efforts and resources on larger, more comprehensive events, like the Round Robin and Georgia Bird Fest Summit, which attract larger audiences and allow us to showcase the great work taking place across the state.

Now more than ever, we are bringing more people back into nature, enhancing their health, well-being, and community impact while increasing representation and access for all communities to appreciate and enjoy nature.

We hope to see you at one of the many in-person and virtual events this September as we celebrate the connection between people and birds.

Cheers,
Jared

Register Today for Youth Programs

With another school year ahead of us, Birds Georgia's education team has been busy coordinating partners and program calendars for our keystone teen programs, Georgia Urban Ecologists and our soon-to-launch BEAK program (Bird Education for All Kids).

Georgia Urban Ecologists (GUE) is a monthly program that engages teenagers in hands-on outdoor learning while providing valuable exposure to careers in conservation. The Atlanta program launched in 2016 and now has two cohorts with many students returning for multiple years. We launched the program in Athens and Brunswick in 2022 and 2023, respectively. One Saturday each month, Birds Georgia partner organizations host a session that highlights their valuable environmental work, exposing students to



local ecology in a fun setting with their peers. Students explore a wide range of topics related to wildlife, native plants, geology, watersheds, and more, as well as the ways that humans impact the landscape. Whether it be planting trees on the Beltline with Trees Atlanta, touring the Athens-Clarke County landfill, or catching sea critters and exploring tidewater ecology with the UGA Marine Extension, students tell us that they can't wait for GUE each month.

Our newest education program, Bird Education for All Kids (BEAK,) also targeted to middle and high school students, will debut on our Morgens Environmental Education Gateway later this month. This virtual series of bird-themed lessons and activities will enable students from anywhere in Georgia to learn about their local birds, engage in independent outdoor learning, and connect with like-minded teens. The Fall 2024 series, Birding Basics, will run from August to December. This series will introduce students to essential knowledge and skills needed to become a birder and will teach students how to improve observation skills to feel confident in the field. Each month the series will focus on a specific topic with weekly, self-paced lessons and activities and monthly group meetings via Zoom to support the learning and give students a chance to interact with their peers. Participants may register for one month or the entire series. The registration fee includes access to the Morgens Environmental Education Gateway (including additional free content), virtual lessons and handouts, and a one-year student membership to Birds Georgia. Participants who successfully complete the entire series will be issued a certificate of completion.

Registration for Georgia Urban Ecologists and BEAK is now open on our website.



Birds Georgia Welcomes New Finance Manager

Please join us in welcoming Labeedah Thompson to the Birds Georgia team. Labeedah joins the staff as our new finance manager.

Labeedah Thompson has more than 20 years' experience working for non-profit organizations in the roles of accounting and finance. She recently was the Finance Director at Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance and held the position of Vice President of Administration/Finance at Scottdale Early Learning. Labeedah works alongside C-suite and executive teams specializing in finance, accounting, budget management, financial forecasting, AR, AP, grant management, A133 audits, compliance, internal control management, risk management, and HR management. She is responsible for revenue and expense education to other employees on using progressive systems and applications, including accounting software, budget management, and streamlining process for ease in communicating procedures and organizational effectiveness.

Labeedah uses her positive attitude and tireless energy to encourage others to work hard and succeed. She is inspired daily by her two children. She holds a bachelor's degree in business management and a master's in business administration (MBA). In her free time, Labeedah likes to work out, do weekend getaways, and connect with her friends and family.



Labeedah Thompson joins Birds Georgia as the new finance manager.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT On Lory Conte Hill

By Steve Phenicie

(This is the 62nd in a series on Birds Georgia volunteers, board members, and staff.)

Chaucer and Shakespeare, Bird Fest patrons and Chinese Privet, water polo and rescue dogs. That sums up Lory Conte Hill, Birds Georgia's director of development, because her life has touched all of these disparate elements.

Lory, a native of Miami, earned a degree in English literature from Florida State University, where she enjoyed being on the water polo team but admits "I wasn't headed to the Olympics." Rather than use the knowledge she gained in her major, she decided on a career "where I could give back." This meant pursuing jobs raising money in the nonprofit sector. For about seven years she worked for BBYO, a Jewish youth group in Florida and then for the Community Foundation of Atlanta, an organization that seeks the equitable distribution of philanthropic dollars.

She's been with Birds Georgia since April 2023, working to raise funds for the organization's many programs. In the last year the group has secured about 40 grants. Lory wrote the majority of them, with a contract writer and Quetcy Betancourt, Lory's right-hand lady, whom she praises highly, doing the rest. This involves working with other key members of Birds Georgia's team – Adam Betuel, Melanie Furr, Sheridan Alford, and Dottie Head. She also secured patrons for Bird Fest and Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month. This year she was able to land around 80 patrons for Bird Fest, up from about 65 the year before. So how's the fundraising

going? When Lory's predecessor, Bird Fest spark plug Michelle Hamner, started about nine years ago, the organization's income was only about \$300,000 annually. By 2019, that had swelled to nearly \$1 million, and the budget for this year is around \$2 million.

As for birding, Lory is still a newbie but subscribes to what she says Jared Teutsch, the executive director, tells her: "Everyone is a birder." She



Lory Conte Hill and her husband, Ted, with their two dogs, Aska and Ivy.

plans to take the Master Birder class in the fall and has gotten her husband, Ted Hill, somewhat interested in birds, too. Ted works for a wellness company, Mindbody Online. They like to sit on the deck of their home in Decatur and try to identify birds. She has also enjoyed looking for birds near a family cabin in Blue Ridge.

Lory sometimes does work for Birds

Georgia that isn't part of her job, joining the Habitat Restoration Team of Gabe Andrle, Sebastian Hagan, and Logan Jones on their projects. She recently worked with them on Buzzard Roost Island, which is on the Chattahoochee River west of Atlanta, as they removed Chinese Privet to make way for native plants. She says she has learned much from Gabe's "quizzes" about birds and plants as they work.

Lory also volunteers with Homeward Bound Pet Rescue, which is based in Ellijay. She walked dogs during the pandemic and helps on the phone lines. She has two rescue dogs of her own, Aska, a hound mix, and Ivy, a Golden Retriever.

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to our new cohort of Savannahians who joined the ranks of Project Safe Flight Volunteers this spring and who will continue our research this upcoming fall season: **Rachel Green, Jennifer Wilner, Jennifer and Brett Highland, Katie Higgins, and Josephine Johnson** ... and all those who attended our spring Project Safe Flight Webinar ... to **Dr. David Stasek** at College of Coastal Georgia for sharing Project Safe Flight with his students and initiating bird-friendly changes on campus ... to **Amanda Carroll** for beginning Project Safe Flight monitoring in Camden County ... to **Jeff Potocsnak** for volunteering his time and expertise to help complete breeding bird point-counts at Ceylon Wildlife Management Area, certifying yet another Wildlife Sanctuary on the coast, and for sharing the mission of Birds Georgia far and wide ... to **Josiah Patrick** for leading a spirited and engaging presentation at Manuel's Tavern ... to **LaTresse Snead, Esther Stokes, and Sally Sears** for dreaming big with the launch of centennial celebrations planning ... to **Kevin Hayes** and **Susan Berthelot** for offering sound advice and genius ideas on corporate engagement strategies ... to **Adam Betuel** for quickly planning a fast trip to LSSI to see American flamingos in the wild! ... to Project Safe Flight Georgia spring volunteers **Kelly Bryan, Mary Kimberly, Gavin MacDonald, Karen Osbourne, Larry Klink, Sharon Harp, Courtenay Dusenbury, Nancy Downs, Cheryl Hensley, Mike Ayling, Mike Brune, Nancy Kennell, Ashley Boone, Marc Goncher, Jon Philipsborn, and Angus Pritchard** ... to Climate Watch monitors **Sandy Murray, Mary Nevil, Jim McMullian, Valerie McMullian, Max Brown, Lisbet Phillips, Peter Followill, Roseanne Guerra, Mark Pellergi, Jackie Miller, Brian Campbell, Anne Sturtevant, Angie Lewis, Bryan Shelby, Steven Seligsohn, Evelyn Taylor, Wendy Hoback, Barbara Powell-Schager, Kelly Plasket, and Pedro Pavon** ... to Avian Advocates for the Wildlife Sanctuary Program volunteers

(Continued on Page 5)

A Million Thanks...

(Continued from Page 4)

Melinda Langston, Leslie Edwards, Maggie Stephens, and Lou Clymore ... to volunteers who helped with projects at Island Ford, RiverLands Gateway Park, Lyon Farm, Campbellton Park, Panola Mountain, McIntosh Reserve, and the Heather Ivy Society: **Cynthia Fleck, Jane Branscomb, AC Coquillas, Christy Cannon, Elna Reese, Price Gardner, Alyson Stober, Carol Hight, Lindy Lucas, Suzanne Blackwell, Charlene and James Wooten, Eden Pearl Mills, Derek Thompson, Sy Thompson, Bess Blyler, Derek Blyler, John Shepherd, Lori Shepherd, Karen Lindauer, Sandra Wiseman, Susan Gregory, Leslie Edwards, Robin Ortale, Amy Henning, Lauren Monroe, Ilene Kreaflle, Chmaine Dowdle, Nicole Allen, Megan Arena, Theresa Wicker, Renee Tveraas, Bryan Luffman, James Martin, Jennifer Cummings, Kathryn Thompson, Ray Roberts, Alexis Prince, Beverly Pannell, Laura Breyfogle, Esther Stokes, Nancy A. Downs, Catherine Day, Sally de Lange, John Mayes, Iris Montgomery, Cynthia Patterson, Barbara Marston, Morning Washburn, Christina Rogers, Rick Thomas, John Schlarb, Kevin O'Toole, Kyle Champeau, Jennifer Vaught, Brent Wenson, Ramkumar Krishnan, Kathy Vance, Cheryl Pullins, Heather Brown, Joseph Naughton, Shawn Davis, Suresh Rimmalapudi, Siva Vipparthi, Navin Nair, Muhammad Raza, Felicia Blue, John Lewis, Joseph Ferro, Pasha Shaik, Lily Thompson, Jennifer Weil, Christi C. Wiltse, Carol Wong, James Stratton, Leena Shah, Veronica Thompson, Tarpley Adams, Yvonne Single, Will Hill, Pat Prosser, Laura Binford, Jeffrey Taylor, Bailey Reed, Laura-Gayle McCord, Carly Landa, Michael Southard, Parag Gattani, Christine T. Williams, Hilda Estrella Lev, Lucia Lev, Lory Conte Hill, Steve Cook, Hilary Wilson, Mittie Grayson, Bobby Byrd, Preston Chappell, Gavin Allvine, and Clark Meyer ... to field trip leaders **Becca Dill, Ella Siefert, Alex Stach, Gus Kaufman, Jamie Vidich, Kevin O'Toole, Josh Jackson, Jay Davis, Dottie Head, Rob McDonough, Casey Chaviano, Lindsey Mangham, Abby Back, Alicia Thompson, Terry Miller, Shannon Fair, Anne McCallum.****

Fall Flyway Festival *(Continued from Page 1)*

- Saturday, September 7, at 9:00 AM – **Birds, Bees, and Botany at the Earth Day Nature Trail (Brunswick), with Birds Georgia and Coastal WildScapes.**
Location: Earth Day Nature Trail, DNR Coastal Resources Division/Susan Shipman Building, One Conservation Way, Brunswick, GA 31520
- Tuesday, September 10, at 7:00 PM – **Webinar: Rewilding Your Landscape for Birds and Other Wildlife,** with Gabe Andrle
- Saturday, September 14, at 7:30 AM – **Birds Georgia Round Robin** at Birds Georgia Headquarters at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda TreeHouse, 825 Warner Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30310
- Tuesday, September 17, at 9:00 AM - **Oak Woodlands Workshop at Private Landowner for NRCS, GFC, and county extension agents**
- Wednesday, September 18, at 5:00 PM – **Birds and Tree Hike at Lionel Hampton-Beecher Hills Park, with Gabe Andrle.** Location: Lionel Hampton-Beecher Hills Park, 366 Willis Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30310
- Thursday, September 19, at 6:00 PM – **Beginner Plant ID Walk at Henderson Park, with Gabe Andrle**

Habitat Restoration Workdays (visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/volunteer to learn more or register.

- Saturday, September 7, at 9:00 AM – **Lyon Farm Workday**
- Monday, September 9, at 9:00 AM – **Island Ford Pollinator Garden Workday**
- Tuesday, September 17, at 9:00 AM – **RiverLands Gateway Park Workday, with Trust for Public Land**
- Saturday, September 21, at 9:00 AM – **Cochran Shoals Workday**
- Wednesday, September 25, at 9:00 AM – **Campbellton Park Workday, with Trust for Public Land**

More information and registration for all events is now available at <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/fall-flyway-festival.html>.

Our partners at Georgia Native Plant Society and Coastal WildScapes will be hosting Fall Native Plant Sales throughout the fall. For a complete listing, visit <https://gnps.org/calendar-events/category/plant-sale/> or <https://www.coastalwildscapes.org/EVENTS/>.

Patron Opportunity: Fall Flyway Festival

PATRON BENEFITS

Thank you for your Patron support of the Fall Flyway Festival. Gifts support Birds Georgia's mission to build places where birds and people thrive through conservation, education, and community engagement.



	\$500 PATRON LEVEL	\$250 PATRON LEVEL
TICKETS TO THE ROUND ROBIN	TWO TICKETS	TWO TICKETS
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ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL	☑	☑
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PATRON EVENT WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER, JENNIFER CESKA	☑	☒

Connecting Habitat for Birds Along the Chattahoochee River

By Dottie Head, Director of Communications

From its humble beginnings as a small stream in North Georgia all the way to the Florida border where it joins with the Flint River and ultimately drains in the Florida's Apalachicola Bay, the Chattahoochee River, or 'Hooch, is a popular place with outdoor enthusiasts, from birders and paddlers to hikers, anglers and more. In the metro area, the Chattahoochee River National Recreation area spans a 48-mile stretch of the river, with 15 separate units where residents can relax, recreate, and recharge.

Along its 430-mile meandering path through Georgia, the Chattahoochee provides critical resources for millions of birds, including species that live in Georgia year-round and those that migrate through the state. Each spring and fall, billions of birds use the Chattahoochee River as a place to rest and feed during their epic migratory journeys. It's critical for people, too, providing more than 70 percent of metro Atlanta's drinking water to approximately five million people.

In recent years, Birds Georgia has been partnering with the Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy (CNPC), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to build bird-friendly habitat throughout the river corridor. The work is part of the greater vision of the Chattahoochee RiverLands, which strives to reunite the Chattahoochee River with the metro Atlanta region and link suburban, urban, and rural communities into a continuous 100-mile public realm. Once complete, the Chattahoochee RiverLands will be a linear network of greenways, blueways, and parks that bring people to the water's edge, promote stewardship and conservation, and reveal the subtle magic of the Chattahoochee River to all who visit.

Birds Georgia has been working along the Chattahoochee, from the Island Ford Unit in Sandy Springs downriver to McIntosh Reserve in Carroll County, to restore bird-friendly habitat by removing invasive plant species and replacing them with native plants that are good for birds and for pollinators. The habitat team has also assisted the Georgia Department of Natural Resources with prescribed burns at Chattahoochee Bend State Park. Let's take a kayak trip down the river and look at some of this work.

We'll start our journey at the Island Ford Unit, headquarters of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA), in Sandy Springs. As you approach the historic Hewlett Lodge Visitors Center, you can't miss the fantastic bird and pollinator garden just outside the entrance. For the past three years, Birds Georgia has been working to install this beautiful and productive garden, which welcomes visitors to the park. Chock full of native plants, like American beautyberry, ironweed, mountain mint, rattlesnake master, and other flowering grassland species, the garden is a bird and pollinator paradise. This work is being funded by the Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy (CNPC), and they have also provided a cadre of volunteers to assist with planting and maintaining this landscape.



Pollinator Garden at Hewlett Lodge at Island Ford. Photo by Logan Jones.

From Island Ford, we float by our friends at the Chattahoochee Nature Center and portage our way around Morgan Falls Dam on our way down to the Cochran Shoals Unit of the CRNRA. This is the most visited unit of the CRNRA, and Birds Georgia was thrilled to receive a grant from the Georgia Ornithological Society to restore the "Sparrow Field" at this site. Both CPNC and the National Park Service are providing support and volunteers for this project, which helps fulfill the vision of connecting people with the Chattahoochee River. Birds Georgia has begun working to restore early successional habitat in the Sparrow Field, a popular birdwatching area that has been known to host common sparrow species, like Song and Chipping Sparrows, as well as more uncommon species, like Grasshopper and LeConte's Sparrows.

Continuing down the 'Hooch a few more miles, we pass inside the Perimeter and make a stop at Standing Peachtree Creek. Standing Peachtree was an historic Native American village of the Muscogee tribe and is the closest Native American settlement to what is now known as Buckhead, in Atlanta. The village was located where Peachtree Creek flows into the Chattahoochee River in today's Paces neighborhood. According to Wikipedia, Standing Peachtree was located in the borderlands of the Cherokee and Muscogee nations and is referenced in documents dating back to 1782.

Today, Standing Peachtree Creek is the first stop on the Chattahoochee RiverLand's Camp + Paddle Trail. Once completed, paddlers will be able to use the newly installed launch for their kayaks/canoes and then camp and paddle their way down the river for 48 miles, ending at McIntosh

(Continued on Page 7)

Species Profile: The Black Vulture

By Steve Phenicie

When it comes to both looks and personality, the Black Vulture is no homecoming queen. But like the less-than-attractive girl who watches from the sidelines as her comely counterpart is crowned, this bird still has a life worth living.

Black Vultures feed mostly on carrion, getting a bit messy in the process. Their bare, grim-looking heads serve them well; without feathers it is easy to freshen up after thrusting their noggins into a rotting carcass. When on the prowl for the good stuff, they soar high in the sky, hoping to tag along with Turkey Vultures, whose sense of smell is better. The palsy-walsy may end as the meal begins, however. Black Vultures often gather en masse and then displace the slightly larger Turkey Vultures, which tend to be more solitary.

These birds are uniformly black except for white patches on the underside of their wingtips (this can be hard to see in strong light or from far away). In flight, they hold their broad, rounded wings flat and angled slightly forward. The tail is shorter and more rounded than a Turkey Vulture's. This bird is from 22 to 29 inches long, with a wingspan that can run more than 5 feet and a weight that can top 6½ pounds.

In the United States, the bird is found mainly in the Southeast but lives up the East Coast as far as southern New England. It also inhabits most of Mexico and Central and South America. Black Vultures typically roost and nest in large flocks close to water in forests of tall trees, but they forage in open habitats and along roads. Some live in suburbs. They aren't hard to find around Atlanta (except, of course, during Christmas Bird Counts when you need one to boost your species total).

They're monogamous, staying year-round with their mates for many years. Females lay one to three pale green

or sometimes bluish white eggs, usually with a few large brown blotches on the larger end. They feed their young for as much as eight months after fledging, and maintain strong social

bonds with their families throughout their lives.

Some cool facts about Black Vultures:

- In the U.S., they are outnumbered by Turkey Vultures, but because of their huge range they are the most numerous vulture in the Western Hemisphere.
- Black Vultures lack a voice box, so their vocal abilities are limited to making raspy hisses and grunts.
- Although Black Vultures and their relatives live only in the Americas, the oldest fossils from this group – at least 34 million years old – were found in Europe.
- The oldest Black Vulture on record in the wild was at least 25 years, 6 months old.
- In the 1800s, they were regarded as beneficial scavengers and sometimes tolerated around meat markets. In the early 20th century, this attitude changed when people became concerned about vultures spreading disease – despite no scientific evidence. They were trapped, poisoned, and shot by the thousands until the 1970s.



Black vultures on a deer carcass. Photo by Steve Phenicie.

Connecting Habitat *(Continued from Page 6)*

Reserve in Carroll County. The launch site for the Camp + Paddle Trail, at Standing Peachtree, will feature a fully accessible kayak launch, and Birds Georgia is working with TPL to remove invasive plant species, like English Ivy and Chinese privet, and replace them with bird-friendly native species.

Paddling downriver, past I-285, our next stop will be the Chattahoochee RiverLands Showcase Project. The nearly 3-mile linear park and greenway trail will extend from Riverview Landing downstream through the 140-acre Discover Park, across Nickajack Creek to RiverLands Gateway Park at Mableton Parkway. The entire project serves as a model for the Chattahoochee RiverLands and its work connecting people to the river. In partnership with TPL, Birds Georgia is restoring bird-friendly habitat along this stretch, including at the site for the much anticipated RiverLands Gateway Park that will provide a gateway to the river, complete with parking, restrooms, a kayak launch and boat ramp, and other recreation amenities. Birds Georgia and TPL are hosting habitat restoration workdays, bird walks, and

other events to showcase this new area. TPL recently received a Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Grant, which will support the development of the land into a regional park and trailhead. Birds Georgia is removing privet and other non-native invasive plant species and installing native plants, like elderberry, river birch, American sycamore, and buttonbush, along the southern one-mile stretch of the project.

As the north anchor to the RiverLands Showcase Project Riverview Park is a trailhead and provides access to the river with a dock and



Butterweed at RiverLands Park. Photo by Gabe Andrie.

(Continued on Page 8)

Connecting Habitat *(Continued from Page 7)*

floating kayak launch. Nearby there is a coffee shop, brewery, and barbecue restaurant that serve the river community. The Showcase Project will be complete by 2026.

Continue paddling downriver until you pass under I-20 and the river is divided by an island. A large sandy beach marks the north end of Buzzard Roost Island. Only accessible by boat, Buzzard Roost will be an optional stop along the Camp + Paddle Trail. Keep your eyes peeled for shorebird species, like Killdeer and yellowlegs, that forage on this sandy spit. The island houses some massive tulip poplar trees, black walnuts, and American sycamores, and is a quiet, peaceful stop for paddlers and other river travelers to have a picnic and is a great place to birdwatch. Birds Georgia has been working at Buzzard Roost, to remove privet and replace it with native rivercane, elderberry, black willow, buttonbush, and Eastern Cottonwood.

As you depart Buzzard Roost and travel downriver past Sweetwater Creek, you'll encounter a boat ramp on property owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. This is another good place to launch a boat if you want to access the southern section of the river. From the boat ramp, you can paddle north to Buzzard Roost or continue downriver to historic Campbellton. You'll find an additional public boat ramp at Campbellton Park, located in the City of Chattahoochee Hills, this is the third site of the Camp + Paddle Trail, which provides sites for primitive camping and a new restroom and shower pavilion.

The Trust for Public Land has been a tremendous partner to Birds Georgia, providing volunteers and other resources for our work restoring a native wet meadow for birds and pollinators in a field adjacent to the boat ramp. The meadow includes a variety of native grasses, including wildrye, deertongue, gamagrass, and big bluestem in addition to beautiful flowering perennials like pink milkweed, cardinal flower, ironweed, and common boneset. In 2023, an Olive-sided Flycatcher was also spending time in this meadow. Other birds you may see here include Indigo Buntings, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Common Yellowthroat, Sedge and Marsh Wrens, and, during migration, a host of migrating warblers.

New RiverLands Park is the next stop on our journey and fourth site for the Camp + Paddle Trail. Located in Chattahoochee Hills, this brand new park is not yet open to the public. Once opened this fall, visitors to this park can enjoy a stunning view of the river as well as primitive campsites and new restroom facilities for paddlers. Over the past year, Birds Georgia has been working with TPL to remove invasive plants, including an infestation of privet, multiflora rose, and *Elaeagnus* (or Autumn Olive). In their place, Birds Georgia is adding native plants, including ironwood, basswood, red mulberry, and American beautyberry. Gabe Andrle reports that this is an excellent birding location, having seen species such as Swainson's Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Kentucky Warbler on breeding territory at the site. He predicts that it will quickly become a new eBird hotspot.

Continuing downriver into Carroll County, you'll arrive at McIntosh Reserve. This is the final stop along the Camp +



Preparing for a Buzzard Roost Workday. Photo by Gabe Andrle.

Paddle Trail and is across the river from Chattahoochee Bend State Park. Managed by Carroll County, this beautiful park just tripled in size thanks to two new land acquisitions that TPL helped secure. The Birds Georgia team has been working to install a pollinator garden near the new restroom facility. Be on the lookout for Bald Eagles that have been known to nest across the river. This spot is also near Council Bluff, which boasts a beautiful, elevated view of the river and is a great place to have a picnic or just enjoy the scenic beauty of the Chattahoochee.

McIntosh Reserve marks the southern end of our work with TPL on the Chattahoochee RiverLands, but at this point of the journey it is less than 50 miles downstream to Columbus, Georgia where you can take on the rapids near downtown or stop and enjoy a meal or a beverage along the wonderful RiverWalk.

"It has been a great experience working with TPL, CNPC, and NPS to implement the vision for the Chattahoochee RiverLands by restoring high quality habitat along this river corridor for the birds and people, too," says Andrle. "The Chattahoochee River is such an amazing resource that runs across the state, and we look forward to continuing our work with these and other organizations to make the Chattahoochee River an even more important resource for birds and for the people who visit."

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Birds Georgia Fall Master Birder Program

(See full schedule on website)

Cost: \$450

Registration is now open for our popular Master Birder Program. The fall session will run from October 15 to November 23, with virtual sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and field trips on Saturday or Sunday each week. Course content includes classification and identification of birds, birding equipment, bird songs and calls, attracting birds and backyard wildlife habitat, anatomy and physiology, bird ecology, bird behavior, flight and migration, and bird conservation. Upon graduation, Master Birders are encouraged to complete annual volunteer service for Birds Georgia or their local Audubon chapter to receive added membership benefits such as early registration opportunities and discounted event fees.

This Fall, Birds Georgia is delighted to offer the Master Birder Program in Camden County, Georgia, in partnership with Camden County Audubon Society. Camden County participants will participate in the online coursework with the Atlanta cohorts, but the weekend fieldtrips will be offered locally in Camden and surrounding counties.

The course will fill quickly, so please register soon. To learn more or register, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/master-birder-program.



The 2023 Coastal Cohort of Master Birder Graduates. Photo by Sarah Manning.

Sharing Birds with Gwinnett County First Graders

By Roseanne Guerra, Education Program Coordinator

This spring, the Birds Georgia education team noticed a spike in classroom program requests from Gwinnett County Public Schools. It turns out, Gwinnett County has adopted the EL (formerly Expeditionary Learning) Language Arts Curriculum entitled “Growing as Researchers: Birds’ Amazing Bodies.” As part of this curriculum, all Gwinnett County Public School first graders must complete a six- to eight-week module on BIRDS!

The education team, Melanie Furr, Melissa Paduani, and Roseanne Guerra, taught inside the classroom and outside – leading programs on bird adaptations, beaks, and feathers. The most meaningful times for me were teaching about common schoolyard birds and their songs, and then taking the students out on school grounds with loaner binoculars to



Birdwatching with students at Simpson Elementary School. Photo by Roseanne Guerra.



Rose was invited back to the Celebration of Learning by Amana Academy to see what the students had learned.

find some of the birds we talked about in the classroom. I was also honored to be invited back to participate with students and their parents in their “Celebration of Learning.” It was so exciting to see how far they had come!

A number of the Gwinnett County schools that requested programs were Title 1 schools, and thanks to the generosity of our members and donors, Birds Georgia was able to offer scholarships to these schools so that ALL first graders could participate. Birds are for everyone! Even for the newly-immigrated students who don’t speak much English yet, binoculars are still fun, and the beauty of birds is universal.

Now that word is out, I’m sure we will be even busier next spring! Bring it on.

To request a Birds Georgia School Program, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/school-programs. More details about the EL Education module can be found at <https://curriculum.eleducation.org/curriculum/ela/grade-1/module-3>

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST

Dragonflies 101

Webinar: Thursday, August 1, at 7:00 PM

Optional Field Trip (limited to 15 participants): Saturday, August 3, at 10:00 AM

What do bird watchers do during the slow days of high summer? Learn about dragonflies, of course. Join Birds Georgia's Education Program Coordinator Roseanne Guerra for a fun introduction to the world of dragonflies and Georgia dragonfly ID. Field guides and ID apps will be covered, as well as creating dragonfly habitat in your yard. This course will be offered as a one-hour webinar only, or webinar with included field trip to the Marsh Creek Rain Garden Park in Sandy Springs (Fulton County) where we will ID adult dragonflies as well as dipnet/release some dragonfly nymphs from the pond.



Widow skimmer. Photo by Roseanne Guerra.

Webinar: Birds and Nature in Gullah-Geechee Culture
Presented by Patty Kappemeyer, Hilton Head Audubon
Thursday, August 8, at 7:00 PM

Free to attend, but registration required

Join Patty Kappemeyer, with Hilton Head Audubon, for a fascinating look at the importance of birds and nature in Gullah-Geechee culture. In 2023, Hilton Head Audubon received an Audubon in Action Grant from National Audubon to participate in the Juneteenth Celebration at Mitchelville Park. Hilton Head Audubon worked closely with the leadership of Historic Mitchelville on the proposal. They partnered with students at the University of South Carolina-Beaufort to research the importance of Birds and Nature in Gullah-Geechee culture. The findings have been used in printed materials, educational signage, and more. Join us for this free webinar.



Field Trip: Beginner-focused Field Trip at Murphey Candler Park
Leader: Kevin O'Toole
Saturday, August 10, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Chattahoochee Nature Center | Leader: Abby Cox and Alicia Thompson
Sunday, August 11, at 8:00 AM

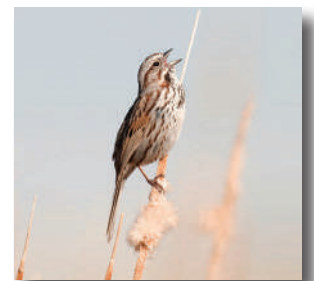
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Legacy Park – Beginner-focused Field Trip | Leader: Josh Jackson
Sunday, August 11, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, August 14, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips



Song Sparrow.
Photo by Vaughn Cottman

SEPTEMBER

See Full Lineup of September Fall Flyway Festival Events on page one of this newsletter.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, September 11, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips

Field Trip: Dunwoody Nature Center | Leader: Shannon Fair
Saturday, September 21, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips

Field Trip: Legacy Park – Beginner-focused Field Trip | Leader: Josh Jackson
Sunday, September 22, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.



Summer Tanager. Photo by Peter Hogan.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

Field Trip: Legacy Park – Beginner-focused Field Trip | Leader: Josh Jackson
Sunday, October 6, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, October 11, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips

Field Trip: Morgan Falls Overlook Park and Dam | Leader: Roseanne Guerra
Saturday, October 19, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips

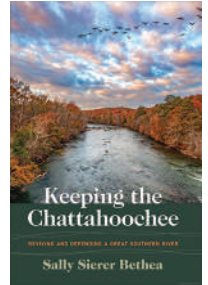
Birds Georgia at Manuel's Tavern
Saving the Chattahoochee, with Sally Bethea

Sunday, October 27, at 3:30 PM

Free to attend, but registration is requested at <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/birds-georgia-at-manuels-tavern.html>

Join Sally Bethea for a look inside her new book, *Keeping the Chattahoochee*. Sally is the retired founding director of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. She served as executive director and riverkeeper for two decades and continues to assist Chattahoochee Riverkeeper as a senior advisor. She also publishes a monthly column, *Above the Waterline*, in *Atlanta Intown*. She lives and writes in midtown Atlanta. Join us for an inspiring look into Sally's activism and learn what we can do to preserve one of Georgia's most precious jewels. Sally will be available to sign copies of her book after the meeting.

Books are available for purchase via Eagle Eye Book Shop at <https://eagleeyebooks.com/book/9780820364322>



Treat Your Tootsies with Birds Georgia Branded Socks

We're excited to introduce our new Birds Georgia crew socks for you or the bird lover on your shopping list. These socks feature our logo bird, the Red-headed Woodpecker, and are a great way to show your support for bird conservation.



CHECK OUT OUR BIRDS GEORGIA SOCKS IN OUR ONLINE STORE

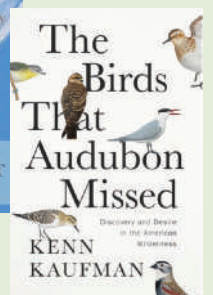
Early Birds Book Club Upcoming Meetings

The Early Birds is a drop-in book club that meets on the fourth Sunday of each month. The group meets in person at Manuel's Tavern, from 2:00 to 3:00 PM when Birds Georgia is hosting a meeting at Manuel's Tavern. The group meets virtually on Zoom when there is not a meeting. 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. If you wish to join the Early Bird's e-mail list for announcements and reminder notices, please email MBNevil@gmail.com.

In August, the Early Birds will discuss the new Benjamin Miles mystery, *Death of a Golden Bird*, by David Woolbright. We were introduced to Miles last August in *The Elvis Bird* as he investigated a murder in the Okefenokee while searching for the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker. In this sequel, we find Miles in California, summoned by his ornithological mentor, Baz, to help expose deep corruption around the environmental impact of windmills. Events turn deadly, and Miles must investigate. The August meeting will be in person at Manuel's Tavern, Sunday the 25th, at 2:00 PM.

Our September book is Kenn Kaufman's *The Birds Audubon Missed: Discovery and Desire in the American West*. The group will meet on Sunday, September 22, at 2:00 PM via Zoom.

On Sunday, October 27, at 2:00 PM, the Early Birds will meet in person with Sally Bethea for a book signing of *Keeping the Chattahoochee: Reviving and Defending a Great Southern River*. We'll have a brief Q & A before Sally presents in person at the Birds Georgia Meeting at Manuel's Tavern.



Wingbars

BIRDS GEORGIA

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Birds Georgia at Manuel's Tavern

Pit-stop ecology: Harnessing songbird banding data to learn more about frugivory and seed dispersal during migration

Presenters: Dr. Charles Kwit and Nick Smith, University of Tennessee

Sunday, June 23, 2024 | 3:30 PM

Free to attend, but registration is requested at www.birdsgeorgia.org/birds-georgia-at-manuels-tavern

Bird banding stations all over the world contribute to our understanding of the migratory phase in a songbird's annual cycle. The morphological data collected through the banding process are extremely valuable on their own, but by recapturing some "lost" data, we can connect songbird diet to the timing of migration (phenology). With the immense help of a banding station here in the Southeast, we are beginning to understand which plant species are important to frugivorous songbirds and learning more about frugivory and seed dispersal dynamics during songbird migration.

About the presenters: Nick Smith, a PhD student under Charles Kwit at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, merges his passions for ornithology and botany. His research in the Kwit Lab focuses on understanding how birds utilize fruiting resources and disperse seeds during migration. Smith innovatively incorporates under-utilized data sources to advance ecological studies, aiming to inspire fellow researchers and students toward more creative approaches in ecology research.

Charles Kwit, an Associate Professor at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, holds joint appointments in the School of Natural Resources and the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. His research interests span from examining the impacts of land-use and climate change on biodiversity across various environments to investigating animal-mediated seed dispersal systems, emphasizing the crucial roles animals play in these processes.

Manuel's Tavern is located at 602 N. Highland Ave. NE., Atlanta, GA 30307. Free parking is readily available to the south of the building. Food and drinks are available for purchase.



*Join us for the August Meeting at Manuel's.
Photo by Casper Audubon.*