



# Wingbars

A Quarterly Publication of Birds Georgia

FEBRUARY 2025



**BIRDS  
GEORGIA**

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*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.

*Great Horned Owl. Photo by April Stampe, Audubon Photography Awards.*

## Georgia Birding Trail Takes Flight in 2025

*By Heather Levy, Stewardship Coordinator,*

Growing up in Florida, the brown road sign with the Swallow-tailed Kite was ubiquitous – if you passed it, you knew you were near a Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail site. I recognized these signs even before I started birding. Many states have state-wide or regional birding trails, coordinated by state agencies or non-profit organizations, and often in partnership among several entities. The term “trail” describes a collection of key birding sites. These sites are often subdivided geographically into groups, sometimes made into driving routes or day trip loops.



*Photo by Dottie Head.*

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR), our state fish and wildlife agency, currently has two regional trails: the Colonial Coast Trail consisting of 17 sites within a single trail and the Southern Rivers Trail consisting of 29 sites grouped into four trails. However, with many other important priorities, GA DNR does not have current plans to grow its trail network across the state as the lead coordinating agency.

The year 2026 marks 100 years of Birds Georgia. To celebrate our centennial, staff, board members, and supporters of the organization brainstormed legacy projects that would have state-wide reach and leave a lasting impact for birds, their habitats, and the organization. The idea of revamping and expanding Georgia’s Birding Trail was proposed and gained lots of excitement quickly. The number of birders in the United States has grown rapidly since the COVID-19 pandemic, and about three in ten Americans engage in birdwatching. A state-wide trail could serve as an important ecotourism opportunity, especially for some of our state’s smaller, rural towns, as well as an important recreational resource for Georgia residents. Additionally, it is a project that would benefit all nature lovers, from total novices to expert naturalists.

Over the last few months, staff, board members, and committee volunteers had many conversations with GA DNR, trail coordinators from other states, and potential partners and stakeholders. We have been hard at work planning and organizing the logistics and funding sources for the trail. The first batch of sites on the Georgia Birding Trail are

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From the Executive Director

# Soaring Into the Future

## Happy New Year!

2025 is off to a great start, and we're excited for a tremendous and productive new year building places where birds and people thrive across Georgia.

Next year, in 2026, Birds Georgia will celebrate our 100-year anniversary, making us Georgia's longest-running, bird-focused conservation organization. We've organized a Centennial Planning Committee consisting of board members, staff, and Birds Georgia members, and this group is already hard at work planning for a year-long celebration in 2026. Check out the article in this issue about the Georgia Birding Trail, which will be one of the keystones of our Centennial year and will create a legacy for bird-lovers all across Georgia. We'll be sharing additional information about the Centennial celebration soon.

But while we're looking ahead to 2026, we're also focused on our work in 2025, including planning for our 10th Annual Georgia Bird Fest. Who knew this event would become so big, so popular, and such a critical fundraiser for our organization? We're excited to host our second Georgia Bird Fest Summit on Jekyll Island this year at the Villas by the Sea. Janisse Ray, a Georgia-based author and naturalist, will be giving the keynote address and offering a writing workshop as part of this year's Georgia Bird Fest Summit. In addition, there will be a variety of trips, workshops, and breakout sessions as part of this event. Look for more information in an upcoming issue of our *Bird Buzz* e-newsletter. Registration will open in early March, but we encourage you to book a hotel room soon if you plan to take part in this wonderful event.

From monitoring Piping Plovers on the Georgia coast, to certifying habitats through our Wildlife Sanctuary and Habitat Stewardship Programs, to restoring bird-friendly habitat across the state, and to offering educational opportunities through our popular Master Birder Program, membership events, and webinars, we're busy sharing the love and joy of birds with an ever-expanding group of Georgians. We're so glad to have you in the flock!

Sending you best wishes for a birdy new year, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Georgia Bird Fest Summit on Jekyll Island in April.

Cheers,  
- Jared



Jared Teutsch



Janisse Ray will be the keynote speaker at our Georgia Bird Fest Summit on Jekyll Island in April.

## Protect Birds with a Gift to the 2025 Annual Fund

Birds are facing unprecedented challenges. Habitat loss, pollution, and other human-driven threats are putting their survival at risk. But you can help. By supporting Birds Georgia's 2025 Annual Fund, you're empowering essential education, conservation, and community programs that are making a difference state wide. Your gift, of any size, makes an immediate impact. Donate today at [www.birdsgeorgia.org/donate](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/donate). Thank you for being part of this critical mission to protect Georgia's incredible birdlife.



# Seeking Participants for Georgia Private Landowners Story Map

By Heather Levy, Stewardship Coordinator

With funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Birds Georgia is creating a Story Map that features private working lands around the state that are implementing pollinator and bird-friendly habitat management practices. Story Maps are interactive narratives that use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to combine maps, multimedia, and text to create an engaging and user-friendly website. The goal of this Story Map is to serve as an educational tool to showcase the breadth of the wonderful stewardship efforts of our private landowners around the state. If you are a working landowner that manages habitat for pollinators and birds and are interested in being featured, we are collecting the following information:

- General property location (county level is fine if you prefer additional privacy)
- A description of management efforts
- A description of how these management efforts have improved wildlife habitat
- Photos of your bird and pollinator habitat
- Optional: longer personal anecdotes about your property, its wildlife, and the improvements you have made since acquiring or managing it



*A recently burned longleaf pine forest on private lands in southwest Georgia. Prescribed fire is one of many examples of management activities that can be featured on the Story Map.*

If you would like to be featured or have any questions about the Story Map, please contact [Heather.Levy@birdsgorgia.org](mailto:Heather.Levy@birdsgorgia.org).

## Birds Georgia Receives Three Grants for Conservation and Engagement Work

Birds Georgia was recently awarded three grants to fund conservation and engagement work across the state. The first is a grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation that focuses on invasive plant species removal; the second is a grant from the Turner Foundation to provide operational support for Birds Georgia's conservation initiatives; and the third is an Audubon in Action grant to fund Birds for All programming.



*Chinese Privet is a highly invasive plant. Photo by Birds Georgia.*

"Birds Georgia was thrilled to receive these three grants to support our conservation and engagement work," says Jared Teutsch, executive director of Birds Georgia. "This funding will help us fulfill our mission of building places where birds and people thrive by expanding our conservation capacity across the state and enabling us to reach additional audiences with information and programming about birds and native plants."

The R.K. Mellon Foundation Grant is being termed the "Fearsome Five" as it targets five non-native invasive plant species, Chinese Privet, Nandina (sometimes called heavenly bamboo), English Ivy, bahia grass, and autumn fern, that negatively impact migratory bird species. Invasive plant species are another stressor affecting migratory birds during their strenuous journeys each spring and fall. Using a map of migratory bird stopover hotspots, Birds Georgia has identified high-priority areas and will be hosting bio-blitzes in these areas to detect these invasive species. Birds Georgia will partner with the Georgia Native Plant Society and local Audubon chapters to develop outreach materials, produce educational videos, and host workshops, field trips, and webinars on how to identify and treat the Fearsome Five.

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# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## On Sebastian Hagan

By Steve Phenicie

*(This is the 65th in a series on Birds Georgia volunteers, board members, and staff.)*

Having some know-how with a machete won't get you much if you're a lion tamer, funeral director, snake charmer, hula dancer, or practically anything else, but it comes in handy for Sebastian Hagan in Birds Georgia's habitat restoration work.

"It has become kind of a staple for me because it is really good at getting through thick brush and getting through Bradford pears. We deal with so many vines that I have started to carry a machete frequently," he says. Technically, a machete is designed for use on more succulent plants than those normally encountered on Birds Georgia's restoration

projects, but Sebastian finds it better than axes or hatchets because the cutting surface is much wider.

A machete is, of course, only one tool in the work arsenal. Another is fire, and Sebastian and his colleagues have undergone training for its use in prescribed burns. Participants watched 30-40 hours of videos, then spent several days at Hard Labor Creek State Park putting what they learned into action. The habitat crew has projects at numerous sites, including Cochran Shoals, Laverlea Preserve in Evans, Ga., the Chattahoochee Riverlands, Panola Mountain State Park, Island Ford, Jekyll Island, and Wilburn Farm and Lyon Farm, both at Arabia Mountain. Sebastian, who holds the title of habitat program coordinator, says he averages one day a week at his computer, with the rest of his time in the field.

The paid staff can't do all of the work itself, of course, and Sebastian – by including everyone he can think of – has amassed an email list of well over 400 people that he turns to for volunteers. He's been getting results,

too, and often turns in A Million Thanks list (listed elsewhere in this publication) of as many as 100 people who have participated in recent projects. "I try to make sure I have a pretty good running relationship with a lot of these people," he says.

In his spare time, Sebastian enjoys nature photography, including birds, rare plants, and deer. "Deer are just really fun to

photograph because they have a lot of personality to them, especially the young ones because they seem to not have an instinctual fear of people, and the adults do." The powers-that-be enlisted Sebastian to take a few photos at Birds Georgia's 2024 holiday party, and he was up to the task, snapping around 2,000. That may seem like a lot but pales in comparison to the 8,000 he used to take as a wedding photographer while in college.

Sebastian has two dogs: Julia, a German Shepherd-Lab mix, and Nola, whom he found in the woods one day near Panola Mountain while with colleague Logan Jones, who suggested the name. Sebastian has resided his entire life in the Marietta/Kennesaw area and is a graduate of Kennesaw State University. He has been on Birds Georgia's staff since April 2023.



*Sebastian planting tree stakes at Buzzard Roost after a heavy rain.  
Photo by Gabe Andrie.*

# THANK YOU!

## A Million Thanks...

to **Steve Phenicie** for COMPILING A Million Thanks ... to **Lisa Slotznick** for helping to format A Million Thanks ... to **Susan Berthelot, Jay Davis, Lelia Ginn, Pedro Pavon, and Jeff Potocsnak** for helping with Master Birder field trips ... to our Climate Watch volunteers: **Michelle Hamner, Wayne Powell, Nikki Belmonte, Jay Davis, Megan Wyatt, Beth Giddens, Sandy Murray, Toni Bowen, Vicki and Victor Williams, Abby Back, Mary Nevil, Laura Hunt, Jim Eggensperger, Robyn and Steve Newman, Amanda Woomer, Jim and Valerie McMullian, Max Brown, Susan Loeb, Lisbet Phillips, Mark and Phyllis Seaman, Deadra Moore, Therese Murphey, Laura Hunt, Julia Weil, Peter Followill, James Feeley, Roseanne Guerra, Mark Pellergi, Jackie Miller, Mary Ann Teal, Patrick Brisse, Julie Jacobson, Brian Campbell, Anne Sturtevant, Angie Lewis, Maribel Fernandez, Jency Shell, Laura Breyfogle, Dianna Smeal, Karen Osborne, Bryan Shelby, Cathy Cortright, Carol Hassell, Cathy Knight, Alisha Rao, Steven Seligsohn, Evelyn Taylor, Jeff Potocsnak, Sam Breyfogle, Kayleigh Hall, Barbara Mahon, Nicole Winkler, Andrea Lewis, Carey Titus, Paul Miller, Wendy Hoback, Drew Whitelegg, Chris Lambrecht, Maegan Donnell, Barbara Powell-Schager, Kelly Plasket, Pedro Pavon, Kelly Burke, Dallas Ingram, and Joseph Roberts**

... to our volunteers who assisted with the Jekyll Island Muhly Planting and planted out our four-acre restoration area: **Angela Holliman, Stephanie Hooks, Nancy Pfaffenbach, Maggie Van Cantfort, Mary Mellow, Robert Mellow, Marlee Price, Curt Hofer, Carol Wong, Susan Muller, Heather Brasell, Cathy Dillon, Alexa Hawkins, Lauren Buie, Claire Davis, Nancy Kring-Rowan, George Alread, Gavin Bennett, Allison Leotis, Jamie Gamby, Mary Gallagher, Craig Sullivan, Kimberly Hayes, Kula Awokande, Teri Patrick, Ben and Henry Carswell, Emma Baker,**

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## A Million Thanks *(Continued from Page 4)*

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## In Loving Memory: Leslie Edwards

The conservation community lost a true champion with the passing of Leslie Edwards on December 27, 2024. A scholar, an ecologist, a botanist, and a wonderful human, Leslie will be long-remembered for her work as lead author of *The Natural Communities of Georgia* and author of "The Land, Climate, and Vegetation" chapter of the *Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas*. But Leslie was also an avid birder and served on the Board of Directors of Atlanta Audubon Society (which became Georgia Audubon and later Birds Georgia), where she chaired the organization's education committee and was instrumental in helping modernize the organization's wildlife sanctuary program.

"Leslie was an outstanding advocate for native plants and birds and her loss is keenly felt by Birds Georgia as well as so many other conservation organizations in Georgia. She was a well-known, highly-revered, and well-loved figure in the state environmental community," says Esther Stokes, vice chair of the Birds Georgia Board of Directors and a long-time friend of Leslie.

"Leslie was a committed volunteer, who helped steer Birds Georgia on the path toward native plant restoration, which ultimately led us to the habitat restoration work that has become an integral part of Birds Georgia's efforts to build places where birds and people thrive. *The Natural Communities of Georgia*, of which Leslie was lead author, is widely regarded as THE comprehensive overview of the natural heritage of Georgia," says Jared Teutsch, Birds Georgia's executive director. "She championed our work, and helped guide our education strategies,

*(Continued on page 6)*



*Leslie Edwards on a trip to the Adirondacks. Photo by Jay Pakchar.*

# Georgia Bird Fest 2025

## April 11 to May 16

Birds, y'all! It's almost time for Georgia Bird Fest, Georgia's largest bird and nature festival. The 2025 event is scheduled for April 11 to May 16, and we're assembling a great lineup of trips, events, and webinars. There's something for everyone at Georgia Bird Fest 2025!

As Georgia's largest bird and nature festival, Georgia Bird Fest features a month of activities, including guided field trips to Georgia's best birding hotspots, nature-based workshops, and guest speakers. We are also hosting our second Bird Fest Summit on April 25 and 26, with bird watching field trips, breakout sessions, and keynote speakers, hosted in Jekyll Island, Georgia, at the Villas by the Sea Resort.

We're working on a great lineup events for 2025 so please check back soon for updates!

Your participation in Georgia Bird Fest supports the conservation, education, and community engagement work being done by Birds Georgia [Georgia Audubon], where birds and people thrive.

### Join Us for the Georgia Bird Fest Summit

April 25 and 26, 2025

Villas by the Sea

Jekyll Island, GA

**Wings of the Coast: Bridging Borders, Tides and Trails**

**Keynote Address by Janisse Ray, author and naturalist**

The Georgia Bird Fest Summit is headed to the coast! We'll convene at Villas by the Sea on Jekyll Island on April 25 and 26 for the second annual Georgia Bird Fest Summit. We have reserved a block of rooms for guests at the Villas by the Sea. To see room types and pricing, please visit [www.birdsgeorgia.org/birdfest](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/birdfest).

Birds Georgia is thrilled to welcome author and naturalist Janisse Ray as our 2025 Georgia Bird Fest keynote speaker. Janisse is an acclaimed writer, naturalist, and environmental activist whose work blends personal narrative with ecological



themes. She was born in Baxley, Georgia, and has a deep connection to the southern Georgia landscape, which profoundly shapes her writing. In addition to her memoirs, Ray has authored poetry and essays featured in more than 40 anthologies, with her works translated into multiple languages. She lives on a family farm in southern Georgia, practicing organic farming and seed saving, aligning her lifestyle with her environmental values. An inductee of the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame and recipient of a Pushcart Prize, Ray inspires through her writing and teaching, championing stories as tools for ecological and social change.

More information on sponsorship and patron-level support will be available in upcoming issues of our *Birds Buzz* e-newsletter and on the website in early February.

## In Loving Memory: Leslie Edwards *(Continued from Page 5)*

working closely with Melanie Furr, our director of education. She was a great resource to our organization and a mentor to me personally, and she will be sorely missed."

A native of northern Virginia who came to Atlanta in the late 1970s, Leslie held a Ph.D. in geography from the University of Georgia and was on the faculty of the Department of Geosciences at Georgia State University (GSU). Upon her retirement from GSU, Leslie focused her energy on many local nature organizations, including Atlanta Audubon (now Birds Georgia), the Georgia Botanical Society, Georgia Native Plant Society, and other organizations. She was in high demand as an eloquent speaker and leader of countless field trips through the state.

An avid gardener, Leslie also served as a certifier in the Wildlife Sanctuary Program. She told Steve Phenicie in a 2019

interview for the Volunteer Spotlight column that she was inspired by the people seeking to improve their habitat for birds. In the past decade, Leslie was devoted to transforming her in-town Atlanta (Virginia Highlands) home garden into a native plant garden for birds and other wildlife. Nothing made her happier than working in her garden, according to her husband, Jay Pakchar.

Leslie is survived by her husband, Jay Pakchar, who was the love of her life; her two stepsons, Matthew Pakchar of Atlanta and Ethan Pakchar of New York City; and her brother, Bruce Croskery of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

In keeping with Leslie's wishes, no memorial is planned. In lieu of flowers, her husband Jay suggested a donation to Birds Georgia in her memory, or Georgia Native Plant Society, Trees Atlanta, or the American Cancer Society.

# Creating Bird-friendly Habitat at Laverlea Preserve

By Heather Levy, Stewardship Coordinator

Our project at Laverlea Preserve, funded by the Cornell Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, is officially six months underway! Laverlea Preserve comprises 345 acres of forests, fields, and riparian buffer nestled among an urbanized area in Evans. The property was donated to the Central Savannah River Land Trust (CSRLT) in December of 2022, after its sole living owner, Ms. Laverne Dorn, passed away. Ms. Dorn wanted the preserve to remain undeveloped, providing wildlife habitat and a resource for the community to enjoy.

Approximately 20% of the preserve consists of remnant fields that were used for cows and hay production. Since these fields are no longer being used for agriculture, Birds Georgia and the CSRLT decided to restore the fields to native grassland habitat that would benefit wildlife and also serve as a place where the community can learn more about native habitat and local flora and fauna. We selected a 14-acre field that is visible and easily accessible from the long driveway and parking lot near the home where Ms. Dorn previously lived.



*The restoration field two months after herbicide application. The planned prescribed fire will clear the remaining duff layer and leave a clean bed for native seeds to be planted.*

During the first few weeks, we surveyed the fields with the help from our partners at Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Augusta's River Region Chapter of the Georgia Native Plant Society, Augusta-Aiken Audubon Society, and the Butterfly Monarchy Club. We documented what species of birds, plants, and butterflies were present in order to compare species lists after treatment. We also conducted these surveys to ensure that there were not any species of conservation concern present that may be adversely affected by our efforts. We found that the majority of grasses were non-native species used for livestock, and that the few native species present would quickly return after treatment. We did not find any butterflies during our surveys, and the bird species we found were all common to the area and habitat and would benefit from the restoration efforts.

In September, we applied herbicide to the field to kill the non-native grasses and prepare it for planting. To further remove the duff layer left over by the herbicide application, we are planning a prescribed burn for sometime in January. The prescribed burn, being conducted by a local contractor, will be open to the public as an educational demonstration of the importance of prescribed fire both for restoration and for management of native southeastern habitats.

Following the prescribed fire, we will apply any additional herbicide as needed and prepare to plant warm-season native grass and wildflower seeds in the spring and early summer of 2025. We are currently working on securing additional funding to continue to plant additional native plants and maintain the grassland with fire, as well as tackling restoring additional acreage.

If you live in the Evans/Augusta area and are interested in getting on our list of volunteers to learn more about upcoming workdays, events, and bird walks, please contact Heather Levy at [heather.levy@birdsgeorgia.org](mailto:heather.levy@birdsgeorgia.org).



*Volunteers from Augusta's River Region Chapter of the Georgia Native Plant Society and the local community helped identify plant species in the restoration field prior to treatment.*

## Georgia Birding Trail Takes Flight in 2025

*(Continued from Page 1)*

planned to roll out in late 2025, setting the stage for our centennial. The state will be divided into six physiographic regions, each containing several trails consisting of the key birding sites in that region. We are strategically also selecting sites that are welcoming to new and novice birders of all ages by focusing on parks, refuges, wildlife management areas, and greenways that contain ample amenities and educational opportunities through programs and interpretive trails.

Through the development of the trail, we are excited to honor the diversity of birds, habitats, and birders across the state. To celebrate the launch, we will host bird walks, paddles, and other events at select sites throughout the state. We will post important updates about the trail and events in *Bird Buzz* and *Wingbars*, and will be developing a standalone website soon. To keep informed, subscribe to our newsletters and social media channels.

Happy birding, and we hope to see you on a trail soon!



*Photo by Adam Betuel.*

## Birds Georgia Receives Three Grants

*(Continued from Page 3)*

The Turner Foundation Grant will provide operational support to Birds Georgia's conservation initiatives, including tackling habitat degradation and loss, a leading threat to bird populations in Georgia and across the nation. Birds Georgia will work to create robust, native ecosystems through habitat restoration projects and engaging communities in conservation. Key current projects include riparian restoration along the South and Chattahoochee Rivers and native maritime vegetation work on Jekyll Island.



*English Ivy is a highly invasive species, strangling trees and smothering native plants.*

*Photo by Melanie Furr.*

These projects involve removing non-native invasive species, planting native flora, and creating opportunities for community engagement through volunteer events and educational programs. Such initiatives serve as educational touchpoints for the public while also addressing ecological challenges like habitat fragmentation and the decline of pollinators and native wildlife. A priority for Birds Georgia is the protection of grassland birds, which are particularly vulnerable due to urbanization and habitat loss/conversion. In Georgia, nearly a quarter of all grassland bird species, including the American Kestrel, Northern Bobwhite, and Eastern Meadowlark, are now of serious conservation concern. Metro Atlanta's rapid development and population growth, along with the connected land use changes, have exacerbated this issue, threatening critical open spaces around the metro area. Habitat restoration initiatives address this need by expanding and enhancing grassland habitats while educating communities about the importance of conserving these spaces.

Finally, the Audubon in Action Grant will support the work of Birds Georgia's Birds For All programming. Birds Georgia will work to grow a diverse community of bird lovers, and individuals working together to improve the world for birds and people. Our efforts include collaborating with both existing and new organizations to share and lead mindful birding practices, bilingual birding activities, field trips specifically designed for individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities, and community-led field walks to foster local engagement with nature that is inclusive and welcoming. Additionally, we aim to expand our Teens and Feathers program to include more teen leaders and active participants, empowering young people to take an active role in conservation.



# Species Profile: The Tennessee Warbler

By Steve Phenicie

One might assume that the Tennessee Warbler is as much a part of the Volunteer State as Davy Crockett, Andrew Jackson, Graceland, the Grand Ole Opry, and the Great Smokies. Actually, it's more like a Florida-bound motorist on I-75 – just passing through.

This songbird doesn't breed in Tennessee (or anywhere else in the South), but you might spot one soon during spring migration in such places as Kennesaw Mountain and the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. In spring migration they stay mostly high in trees, but in the fall they're often lower – in saplings, brush, and weedy fields.

This bird spends its winters in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and northern South America and breeds mostly in Canada except for a few spots in the Upper Midwest and northern New England. So where does the Tennessee part come in? It was named by the famous Scottish ornithologist Alexander Wilson after he spotted one during migration on the banks of Tennessee's Cumberland River in 1811.

This bird isn't exactly showy. Breeding males have a gray head, a white stripe over the eye, and a green back. Females and nonbreeders can look more generally yellowish. There's always white under the tail.

They run four-and-a-half to five inches long, with a wingspan of eight inches. The Tennessee is sometimes confused with the Orange-crowned Warbler in the fall or Warbling Vireos and Philadelphia Vireos in the spring.

Nesting in northern forests, bogs and swamps, the Tennessee Warbler goes through population cycles: It often

becomes very numerous during population explosions of the spruce budworm, a favored food. During summer, caterpillars sometimes form up to 90 percent of the food brought to young. They also eat beetles, spiders, bees, wasps, and flies. In fall and winter they consume fruit when they can find it. Their winter diet also includes nectar, which they take by piercing the bases of tube-shaped flowers with their sharp bills.

On their winter grounds the Tennessee likes open woods – habitat that is provided by shade-grown coffee plantations. It's so common in these habitats that tropical ornithologist Alexander Skutch suggested that a more apt name for it would be the "Coffee Warbler."

Nests are extremely well concealed near the ground, often in a hummock of sphagnum moss or in the roots of a fallen tree. They are cup-shaped and have two layers – an outer one of dead grass or weed stems, and an inner one lined with fine grasses and occasionally hair or mosses. The female typically lays five or six white eggs speckled with reddish brown and incubates them for 11 or 12 days.

Population levels of the Tennessee Warbler appear to have been stable or declined only slightly in the last half century, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Its long-term prospects for survival are considered of low concern. Their rather extensive wintering range and broad use of habitats may make the Tennessee less vulnerable to decline than species with narrower distributions and more specific habitat needs.



Tennessee Warbler. Photo by Ben Cvengros, Audubon Photography Awards.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Birds Georgia Master Birder Program

**February 25, 2025 through March 30, 2026**

**Cost: \$450 for current Birds Georgia members / \$500 for non-members (includes a one-year membership)**

Birds Georgia is excited to offer our popular Master Birder Program again for winter/spring 2025.

Orientation and class sessions will be held virtually via Zoom webinars. Invitations will be sent to the email address you provide at registration. Field trips will meet on Saturday mornings at 8:00 AM (unless otherwise noted) and should conclude by 11:00 AM. Field trips are subject to change due to inclement weather and/or other unforeseen circumstances.

Course content includes classification and identification of birds, using eBird, birding apps and equipment, bird songs and calls, anatomy and physiology, bird ecology, bird behavior, flight and migration, and bird conservation.

Upon graduation, Master Birders are encouraged to complete at least 10 hours of 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.

To view the full schedule or to register, visit [www.birdsgeorgia.org/master-birder-program](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/master-birder-program).



*Master Birder Coastal Cohort Graduates. Photo by Sarah Manning.*

## FEBRUARY

### **Volunteer Event: Habitat Restoration at Wilburn Farm**

**Saturday, February 8, at 9:00 AM**

To learn more or sign up, visit <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/volunteer.html>

### **Field Trip: Decatur Cemetery | Leader: Jay Davis**

**Sunday, February 9, at 8:30 AM**

To learn more or sign up, visit [www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips).

### **Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum**

**Wednesday, February 12, at 8:00 AM**

To learn more or sign up, visit [www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips)

### **Volunteer Event: Habitat Restoration Workday at Lyon Farm**

**Wednesday, February 12, at 9:00 AM**

To learn more or sign up, visit <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/volunteer.html>

### **Field Trip: Chattahoochee Nature Center | Leaders: Dottie Head and Alicia Thompson**

**Sunday, February 16, at 8:00 AM**

To learn more or sign up, visit [www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips).



*Habitat Restoration at Lyon Farm. Photo by Sebastian Hagan.*



*Great Horned Owl. Photo by Michael Hornemann.*

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## FEBRUARY *(Continued from Page 9)*

### Tech Tools for Wildlife, with Dr. Emily Weigel

Tuesday, February 18

6:30 to 8:00 PM

Georgia Institute of Technology, The Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design, 422 Ferst Dr. NW, Atlanta, GA 30313

Cost: Free for members / \$10 for non-members

Learn more about the innovative approaches that scientists use to study and conserve wildlife using technology. We'll cover how devices like drones, camera traps, and audio listening devices can be set up and leveraged to help the scientific community better understand and monitor wildlife. We will cover practical tips for setting up such tools and accessing/sharing the data with others, as well as ways to engage with ongoing projects locally and globally. Learn more or sign up at [www.birdsgeorgia.org/upcoming-events](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/upcoming-events).



### Early Birds Book Club: February Meeting

Sunday, February 23, at 2:00 PM

Virtually via Zoom Meeting

Free to Attend

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 holding an in-person meeting at Manuel's Tavern. The group meets virtually on Zoom when there is not an in-person 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 Mary Nevil.

The group has two book selections for this month:

- *Black-throated Blue*, by Jordan Spaulding.
- *The Nighthawk's Evening: Notes of a Field Biologist*, by Gretchen Newberry.

Read both or choose either to discuss at our Zoom meeting on February 23. Learn more at [www.birdsgeorgia.org/early-birds-book-club](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/early-birds-book-club).



### Volunteer Event: Habitat Restoration Workday at RiverLands Gateway Park, in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land Tuesday, February 26, at 9:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/volunteer.html>

### Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum

Wednesday, March 12, at 8:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit [www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips)

## MARCH

### Early Birds Book Club: February Meeting

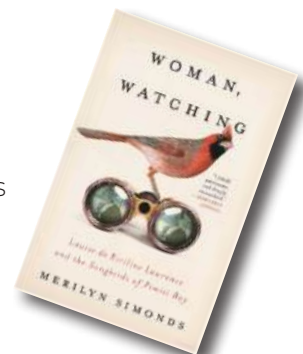
Sunday, March 23, at 2:00 PM

Virtually via Zoom Meeting

Free to Attend

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 holding an in-person meeting at Manuel's Tavern. The group meets virtually on Zoom when there is not an in-person 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 Mary Nevil.

The Early Birds will read *Woman, Watching*, by Merilyn Simond. Learn more at [www.birdsgeorgia.org/early-birds-book-club](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/early-birds-book-club).



# Wingbars

## BIRDS GEORGIA

825 Warner St. SW, Ste. B · Atlanta, GA 30310

678.973.2437

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## Webinar: Community Science Series: NestWatch

Presenter: Sarah Manning, Coastal Conservation Coordinator

Thursday, February 27, at 7:00 PM via Zoom Webinar

Cost: Free for Birds Georgia members / \$12 for non-members

Are you ready to dive into the world of community science and make a difference for nesting birds? Join Sarah Manning, Birds Georgia's coastal conservation coordinator, for Community Science Series: NestWatch. Whether you're new to NestWatch or looking to deepen your involvement, this webinar is perfect for anyone eager to support nesting birds and contribute to vital conservation efforts. No prior experience is necessary; just bring your enthusiasm for birds.

This workshop will cover:

- A brief history of NestWatch
- How to get started monitoring nests
- Tips on how to better your back yard, for the birds
- An exploration of the "Right Bird, Right House" tool by NestWatch

Learn more or register at [www.birdsgeorgia.org/upcoming-events](http://www.birdsgeorgia.org/upcoming-events).

WEBINAR

### Community Science Series: NestWatch

#### WEBINAR INCLUDES:

- A brief history of NestWatch
- How to get started monitoring nests
- Tips on how to better your back yard, for the birds
- An exploration of the "Right Bird, Right House" tool by NestWatch

CornellLab  NestWatch



February 27, at 7:00 PM | Zoom

Free for Birds Georgia members | \$12 for non-members