

Wingbars

A Quarterly Publication of Georgia Audubon

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GEORGIA
AUDUBON

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Wingbars is the official newsletter of Georgia Audubon 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 Georgia Audubon.

*Sandhill Cranes and Northern Pintails.
Photo by Tom Barnwell.*

Georgia Audubon to Join Three Other Nonprofits at New Trees Atlanta Kendeda Tree House

Georgia Audubon will be moving into some new “digs” around the first of the year, and we’ll be sharing the space with friends!

Construction on the new Trees Atlanta Kendeda Tree House is wrapping up, and Georgia Audubon and other partners are on schedule to move into the new building at 825 Warner Street SW by the end of the year.

Located on 2.9 acres of a former industrial lot, the new facility includes 1.5 acres of restored greenspace and two large buildings. The main building faces Warner Street and the Westside Trail of the Atlanta BeltLine. This building houses staff offices and conference rooms, classrooms, and spaces with catering facilities for events and community gatherings. A second structure is an operations and logistics center for trucks and equipment. The buildings are surrounded by open and forested outdoor learning spaces with nearly 200 new trees that will be planted on the property.

Georgia Audubon will have use of five shared workstations and one private office, as well as access to meeting rooms, event space, storage for tools and other equipment, and a secure place to park the truck used by our habitat restoration team.

“If we learned anything from COVID, it was that we can all work very efficiently at home but that we also need a flexible work space for in-person meetings and events,” says Executive Director Jared Teutsch. “Our new space at the new Trees Atlanta Kendeda Tree House will allow us to work collaboratively when needed, while maintaining the flexibility that remote work provides. We’ll also have access to a fantastic event space that we can use for educational programs and large events, like our Georgia Bird Fest Closing Celebration.”

The Kendeda Tree House offers excellent access to the West Side Atlanta BeltLine and is within easy walking distance of one of Georgia Audubon’s Chimney Swift Towers.

Four Nonprofits Under One Roof

With 23,000 square feet of interior space, the new facility will accommodate Trees Atlanta, as well as three other environmental nonprofit organizations:

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Rendering of the new Trees Atlanta building façade. Photo by Lord Aeck Sargent for Trees Atlanta.

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From the Executive Director

The Natural Ecosystem of Partnerships

There is a natural system of connectedness. For thousands of years, we've evolved by connecting to our environment and leveraging the resources necessary to grow and sustain our communities. As small communities became towns, and then cities, we still found ways to work closely with our neighbors. In fact, that's how we get things done. When two or more people combine their resources to accomplish a common goal, a partnership is formed. Partners need not agree on politics, the weather, or sports, but they are bound by a shared interest and a common outcome: a shared investment in the future of conservation.

Our shared interest is conservation of birds, and our common outcome is building places where people and birds thrive. And while Georgia Audubon is strong, we need other partnerships to leverage the resources necessary to achieve our goals, as well as the goals of others. An investment in shared space brings new opportunities to work more collaboratively with Trees Atlanta, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy in Georgia.

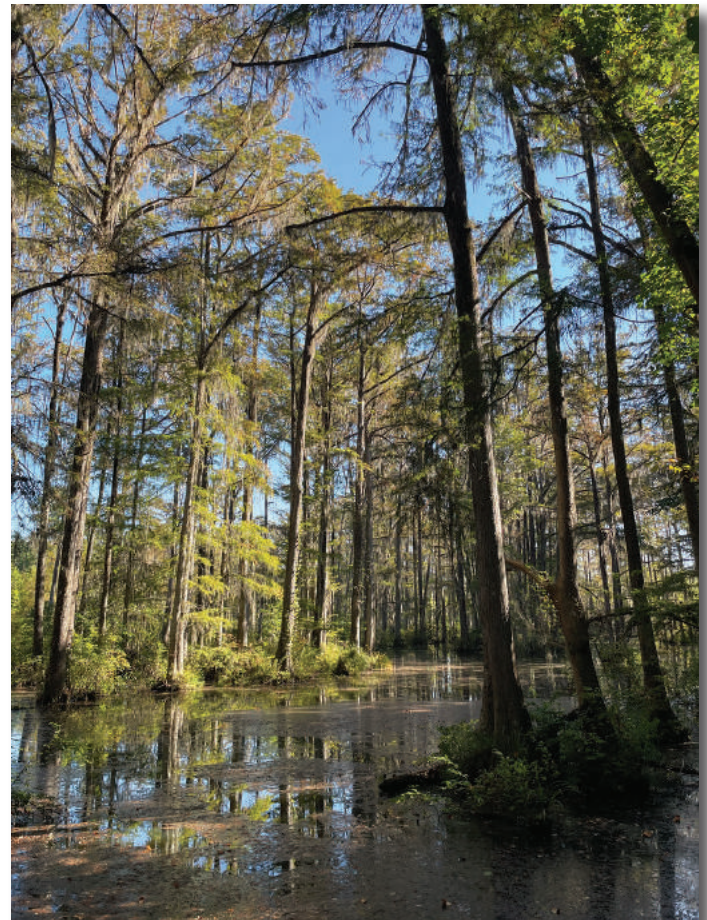
During Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month, we announced a new partnership with the Georgia Forestry Foundation, and a new program. We are excited about the launch of our new Habitat Stewardship Program, a self-reporting stewardship certificate that will serve large properties of all kinds, from 10-acre, privately-owned homesteads and farms to multi-thousand-acre, publicly-owned Wildlife Management Areas. This new program becomes even more impactful with the exciting work of the Georgia Forestry Foundation's new Birding Access Permit Program, which is designed to connect Georgia's birders to private lands across the state for recreational birdwatching.

These investments in partnerships help us build more places where birds and people thrive throughout Georgia. As always, we give thanks for your support this year. Please share the joy of birds and birding with your loved ones, friends, and neighbors this holiday season. You may even form new partnerships.

Cheers,
Jared



Jared Teutsch



The Bremby property was showcased as part of the Habitat Stewardship Program launch. Photo by Alex LoCastro.

Georgia Audubon Launches Habitat Stewardship Program for Large Properties

By Alex LoCastro, Conservation Program Coordinator

Recent research has shown that the biggest drivers of native bird population decline in North America are habitat loss and habitat degradation. These dual forces have been responsible for staggering losses among many of our native bird species, and today our landscapes are home to nearly three billion fewer breeding birds than they were back in 1970. To help combat these losses, Georgia Audubon's conservation team is focused on building and restoring as much native habitat as possible for the benefit of birds and other wildlife.

Georgia Audubon's Wildlife Sanctuary Program has been extremely successful, and we're well on our way to building a network of certified native landscapes across the state, with the goal of re-establishing habitat connectivity in and around our increasingly urbanized and developed cities. In order to be certified, applicants must meet a series of environmental requirements and pass an assessment of the property carried out by our Avian Advocate volunteers. To date, the program has certified nearly 800 properties consisting of more than 29,000 acres, and we hope to continue growing the program across the state in years to come.

One limitation of the Wildlife Sanctuary Program that has in some ways contributed to the success of the program is the in-depth, rigorous process required for certification. While it is entirely feasible for our volunteers to walk the entirety of a two-acre property in metro Atlanta and make detailed recommendations about how best to improve it, it would be nearly impossible, logistically-speaking, to do the same for a 200- or 2,000-acre property somewhere in rural Georgia. It's true that even a small plot of native plants can make a huge

difference to the wildlife in your local area, but, on a larger scale, it's critically important to help protect and rehabilitate as much habitat as possible. We've determined that the best way to do that is by creating a new conservation program designed specifically for these larger properties.

That program is the brand-new Georgia Audubon Habitat Stewardship Program. Unlike the Wildlife Sanctuary Program, this program is self-reporting in nature and will serve large properties of all kinds, from 10-acre, privately-owned homesteads and farms to multi-thousand-acre, publicly-owned Wildlife Management Areas and more. The goal is to enable property owners and managers to make improvements to their land for the benefit of native wildlife while also connecting them to educational resources, technical assistance programs, cost-sharing and revenue-generating programs, engagement and research opportunities, perks associated with Georgia Audubon membership, recognition as an official Habitat Steward in our program, and more. Our hope is that the program will further

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The Habitat Stewardship Program aims to certify properties of 10+ acres. Photo by Dottie Head.

Introducing Georgia Audubon's New Coastal Conservation Coordinator

Georgia Audubon is delighted to welcome Lauren Bowman Clontz as our new Coastal Conservation Coordinator.

Lauren is a recent graduate of Colorado State University with a MS degree in Conservation Leadership. She has worked in the conservation field since completing her BS degree in Wildlife Conservation from Virginia Tech in 2016.

Some of her past work includes working as a research assistant studying Song Sparrows in the Appalachian mountains, conducting camera-trapping surveys in tropical ecosystems, and assisting with forest ecology studies in Shenandoah National Park. She has also worked in various roles to engage communities with conservation efforts through outreach and educational programs.

Lauren is looking forward to continuing the work in expanding Georgia Audubon's coastal programs. She is most looking forward to building community science programs along the coast and increasing public engagement in conservation efforts.



Lauren Bowman Clontz joins Georgia Audubon as the new Coastal Conservation Coordinator.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT On Phillip Prichard

By Steve Phenicie

(This is the 55th in a series on Georgia Audubon volunteers, board members, and staff.)

If you've approached a Georgia Audubon table at an event lately, chances are good that you've run into a white-haired fellow named Phillip Prichard. With months left to go in 2022, Phillip had already staffed Audubon tables at Wild Birds Unlimited, the Chattahoochee River Alliance, the Chattahoochee Nature Center (twice), the garden tour at Woodland Gardens, the Oxford Organic Farm, Ponce City Market, Bouckaert Farm, Frick's Bat Cave, and the closing ceremony of Georgia Bird Fest and Georgia Grows Native for Birds month. He's worked numerous other events in previous years.

He also has a deep passion for nature photography, particularly birds, but likes landscapes, elk,igators and flowers, too. He tries to take pictures every day and often shares his work with the various chapters of the Georgia Nature Photographers Association. He's available to give presentations to other organizations if asked. His yard is well-equipped for possible subjects — he has 22 feeders, three bird baths, and numerous native plants on just one-third of an acre. His other favorite spots to shoot are the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, St. Augustine Alligator Farm, Harris Neck Wildlife Refuge, and Jekyll Island. Phillip also volunteers at Smith-Gilbert Gardens in Kennesaw, serving as the ambassador in the Butterfly House.

In addition to Georgia Audubon and the GNPA, Phillip holds memberships in numerous related organizations: Georgia Ornithological Society, National Audubon Society, American Birding Association, North American Nature

Photographers Association, Carolina Nature Photographers Association, Ducks Unlimited, and National Wildlife Federation. Lately he's been taking the Master Naturalist class

through the UGA Extension Service.

Phillip is a native of Westminster, S.C., which is just across the state line, not far from Clemson, but he has spent much of his life in metro Atlanta. He earned a degree in fire service

administration from Brenau University in 1984 and took numerous courses at Georgia Tech related to requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. He worked for 30 years as a firefighter, served in the Air Force, was a photographer/writer for *Motorsport America*, and worked for Bruce Construction Machinery (John Deere) Co. and the U.S. Forest Service. Eventually he drew upon his expertise in safety and emergency preparedness to open his own business, Prichard Safety. "If OSHA required it, we offered it," he says. Many of his clients were in the poultry, auto, and cold storage industries, which kept him on the road much of the time. He's now retired.

He got interested in birds after moving to Dallas, west of Atlanta, and began to notice the ones that came to visit the plants on his deck. He and his wife, now deceased, put up a feeder, and that led to more, and well, you know how that goes. Phillip has two children, son Jeremy, who lives in Villa Rica, and a daughter, Carley, with whom he makes his home in a three-generation household in Dallas. There are four grandchildren ranging in age from age five to 22.



Phillip Prichard is a prolific volunteer for Georgia Audubon.

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to Climate Watch volunteers **Valerie McMullian, Jacqueline Miller, Pixie Lanham, Sandra Murray, Lisbet Phillips, Mark Pellegrini, Janet Wright, Timothy Guida, Brian Campbell, Roseanne Guerra, Adam Betuel, Judi Sawyer, Max Brown, Hefan Zhang, Maria Fernandez, Pete Followill, Catherine Cornelius, Wendy Hoback, Angela Lewis, Jay Davis, Kenneth Groue, Carroll Campbell, Eugene Keferl, Michael McMahan, Kathryn Barrow, and Mary Nevil** ... to Project Safe Flight Georgia volunteers **Nancy Kennell, Kelly Bryan, Mary Kimberly, Gavin MacDonald, Maureen Carroll, Cheryl Hensley, Sarah Carline, Paul Miller, Adrienne Miller, Jay Davis, Erin Feichtner, Brian Campbell, and Jae Lieberman** ... to Georgia Forestry Foundation Event volunteers **Kim Savides and Ben Thompson** ... to **Max Brown, Carolyn Brown, Laura Breyfogle, Sam Breyfogle, Lisbet Ann Phillips, Nancy Downs, Barbara Powell-Schager, Teresa Mayes, John Mayes, and Esther Stokes** for helping to spread bales of broomsedge throughout the restoration meadows bordering the Lower Alexander Lakes at Panola Mountain State Park ... to **Nicole Carolan, Glenn Cole, Gayle F. McAllister, Price Gardner, Pat Prosser, Lynne D. Merrick, Al E. Tousek, Irina Alperovich, Christine Brackenrich, Judy Parsons Fielder, Betsy Michaud, Phyllis Miller, Susan Oglesby, Susan Patterson, Anne Sturtevant, Christine Williams, Hilary Wilson, Adam George, and Robert Gisness** for work on the Georgia Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary-certified Pollinator Garden at the Island Ford unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area ... to **Gavin Allvine, Nancy Downs, Oxford-Emory students, and OLPA volunteers** for restoration work with the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance at Deepdene Park ... to **Phillip Prichard, Larry Klink, Jack Bruce, Jensy Shell, Nannette Dooley, Michelle Page, Amanda Woomer, Joy Carter, Roxann Drew, Mary Kimberly, Clark Meyer, Margaret Stephen, Jeffery Kerlagon, Stella Wissner, and Cynthia Fleck** for

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A Million Thanks...

(Continued from Page 4)

helping at the Wildlife Sanctuary Tour ... to **Sandy Kruger** and the **Olmsted Linear Park Alliance**, **Art and Susan Hanson** and the **Friends of Mary Scott Nature Park**, **Dr. Annie Price**, **Gary McElmore**, and **Linda Robinson** for allowing us to feature their sanctuaries on the 2022 Wildlife Sanctuary Tour ... to **Cindy Wolfe**, **Roxann Drew**, **Barbara Powell-Schager**, **Amanda Woomer** and **Phillip Prichard** for helping with the Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month Closing Celebration ... to **Nathan Farnau** and **Jay Davis** for co-leading our field trips with **Kenn Kaufman** ... to **Jim Ferrari**, **Alex LoCastro**, and **Gabe Andrle** for presenting workshops for Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month ... to **Kenn Kaufman** for a fabulous closing weekend for Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month ... to **Melanie Furr** and **Adam Betuel** for presenting at the October Meeting at Manuel's ... to our community engagement volunteers, including trip leaders: **John and Teresa Mayes**, **Kim Kenley**, **Max Brown**, **Rebecca Dill**, **Janet Brooks**, **Mary Kimberly**, **Shannon Fair**, **Jay Davis**, **Rob McDonough**, **Josh Jackson**, **Stephen Ramsden**, **Giff Beaton**, and **Anne McCallum** ... to **Linda Johns**, **Cynthia Fleck**, **Lisbet Phillips**, **Leena Shah** and **Jim Stratton** for helping with the Fall Native Plant Sale ... to the **Avian Advocates** who have helped with the Wildlife Sanctuary Program ... to **Dottie Head** for her extra effort to publicize the Meridian Herald's Confluence 2022 event, celebrating the environment, the arts and activism. As a result of her assistance, Georgia Audubon was featured at the opening night concert premiering an oratorio of Sidney Lanier's "The Marshes of Glynn." We got wonderful publicity.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Travel with Georgia Audubon

2023-2024

www.georgiaaudubon.org/travel



Birding Access on Private Lands Now Open for Georgia Birders

This September, at an event to celebrate the importance of working lands conservation for birds, the Georgia Forestry Foundation launched its Birding Access Permit Program to connect Georgia's birders to private lands across the state for recreational birdwatching. The new program allows private landowners to offer recreational birdwatching leases via the Orbis My Outdoor Agent online platform. Birders who are interested in exploring these private lands can search the site for enrolled properties. For each enrolled site, birders will be able to view when permits are available, associated costs, access information, property photographs, and more.



The Birding Access Permit Program will connect birders to private lands. Photo by Gabe Andrle.

The Georgia Forestry Foundation was founded in 1989 to support the long-term sustainability of the state's working forests, which cover nearly two-thirds of the land area in the state. Their mission is to connect every Georgian to the state's forests by sharing facts and experiences and fostering connections to the stewards of Georgia's forestland.

For more information about the new Birding Access Permit Program, please visit the Georgia Forestry Foundation website at <https://gffgrow.org/>.

Travel with Georgia Audubon in 2023 and 2024

It's not too late to register for one of our upcoming birding trips. The Georgia Audubon Travel Program strengthens our current goals to protect Georgia's birds by instilling a love of nature that will impact conservation, education, and community engagement on a local level. Space is limited, so please reserve your spot soon. For complete itineraries and registration information on each of these trips, please visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/travel.

- **Birding Central Florida** – January 13 to 16, 2023 (full – waitlist open)
- **St. Marks NWR and Wakulla Springs** – January 27 to 29, 2023
- **Southern California: Condors to Gnatcatchers** – January 4 to 11, 2024 (limited space remains)
- **Big Bend and Hill Country, TX** – April 27 to May 6, 2024 (limited space remains)

In addition, there are still up to two spots available on our December 2022 trip to New Jersey, as well as a few remaining spots on our 2023 trips to Northern Minnesota, Utah, and Madagascar.

Explore the full itineraries and registration information at www.georgiaaudubon.org/travel.

The Transformational Leadership of Esther Stokes

By Dottie Head, Director of Communications

Esther Stokes has been interested in birds for a very long time. She's also an ace at native plant identification. If you're lucky enough to be on a field trip with her, you'll get a crash course in native plants and the birds that use them and, perhaps, some suggestions on how to incorporate these plants into your landscape. And though she's humble about her skills, her passion for native plants and birds and helping others understand the connection between the two has made her a transformational part of Georgia Audubon.

"Georgia Audubon is held in esteem with other statewide conservation organizations in large part because of Esther Stokes," says Jared Teutsch, executive director. "As a board member and former board chair, Esther really understands Georgia Audubon's core mission of building places where birds and people thrive. She's passionate about greenspaces, natural habitats, and parks that provide so much conservation value for birds and for people, and she's been transformational in connecting people and birds through greenspaces across metro Atlanta. Her vision was one of the key catalysts that inspired the expansion of Georgia Audubon's habitat restoration efforts."

Esther grew up in Virginia, and her mother shared her love of birds with her daughter from a very young age. Esther recalls discovering the ethereal song of the Wood Thrush at nature camp as a child and becoming a devotee of that species that relies so heavily on native plants. "There was a bird walk each morning at the nature camp in Virginia, and I remember seeing and hearing so many birds. There are not as many birds around today, and I find it alarming how bird populations have declined," says Esther.

Esther attended Duke University for undergraduate work and completed a master's degree at the University of Maryland. Along the way, Esther met her husband Jim, a Florida native, and Atlanta was their "geographic compromise." A landscape designer by training, Esther did residential landscape design in the Atlanta area for many years and is now "hopefully" retired.

Esther and Jim have been long-time members of Georgia Audubon, too, with a membership streak that dates back to 1973. When they first joined the organization, Esther went on occasional field trips but was mostly a self-proclaimed, non-participatory member while working and raising her family. As time progressed, Esther became more involved with the organization so that she could spend more time going birding and learning to identify the birds all around her.

In 2015, she was recruited into service on the Board of Directors of Atlanta Audubon by Linda DiSantis, and she immediately signed up for the Master Birder class. "Getting involved in a more official way was great for me because it let me do the birding that I had always wanted



Esther (center) with Michelle Hamner and Dottie Head birding on the beach at St. Marks NWR. Photo by Michelle Hamner.

to do but hadn't been doing," says Esther. "But for the fact that I can neither see nor hear, I would be a great birder," she jokes.

In 2018, she stepped up as chair of the board of directors following in Linda DiSantis' able footsteps, and oversaw the evolution of Atlanta Audubon Society into Georgia Audubon ... in the middle of a global pandemic, no less. She served as board chair through 2021 and now serves as past chair.

"When I joined the board and went to the first meeting, I was really struck by the organization's strategic plan. It was really well thought out, and I was impressed," says Esther. "I think that everything we have tried to do, we have done well. I look back at all of the changes, the growth, the new programming, and it's fitting that we became a statewide organization. We've moved into a whole new realm!"

Esther's passion for parks and greenspaces and birds is visible on her résumé. She's served on an array of boards, ranging from Georgia Audubon and the Piedmont Park Conservancy to Park Pride and the Trust for Public Land. Her husband, Jim, shares her passion and has spent a career advocating for sustainability, good urban design, public transportation, and renewable energy.

"Jim and I truly love parks, greenspaces, and the natural world, and you serve on boards of causes that you believe in. We really try to make a difference," she says. "My hope for tomorrow is that we can continue to build an understanding of the important relationship between native plants and birds. If you don't plant native plants, you won't have birds. Georgia Audubon's move into habitat work, along with partnerships with groups like Georgia Native Plant Society, can really make a huge difference. This work is so important! The more we can spread this message across the state, the more collective

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Georgia Audubon Installs Bird-friendly Window Treatments at Camp Jekyll

Visitors to the Sandra Deal Learning Center at Camp Jekyll may notice some new, tiny dots adorning the glass on the building. These dots are special window treatments designed to prevent birds from flying into the glass. The project was made possible thanks to a partnership between Georgia Audubon, the University of Georgia, and the Jekyll Island Authority, through a grant from the Disney Conservation Fund.

The dots are a special Feather Friendly film that reduces the transparency of the glass and breaks up reflection, preventing birds from flying into them. Feather Friendly film has been applied to approximately 1,342 square feet of the exterior windows. Spaced two inches apart, the dots break up the reflection and alert birds that the space is not a clear flyway, causing them to stall and fly in a different, safer direction. Current research estimates that between 365 million and 1 billion birds perish each year from colliding with buildings in the United States.

The Sandra Deal Learning Center at Camp Jekyll, named for former Georgia First Lady Sandra Dunagan Deal upon opening in 2016, includes a 300-seat auditorium, aquatic and reptile labs, and classrooms. The wife of former Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, Mrs. Deal was a retired school teacher and advocate for childhood literacy until her recent passing in August 2022.



Bird-friendly film has been installed at Camp Jekyll thanks to a grant from the Disney Conservation Fund. Photo by Gabe Andrle.

Make Your Year-End Gift to Georgia Audubon Species of Concern: Nightjar Edition

Year-end giving from Georgia Audubon's members and friends is crucial to supporting all of Georgia Audubon's programs...from our schoolyard garden installations to habitat restoration...and from supporting field trip leaders to monitoring bird populations across the state. This year, as you make your year-end gift, please help us choose our 2023-2024 Species of Concern. Learn more about the nightjar species we're considering below, and make your gift and cast your vote at www.georgiaaudubon.org/donate.

Eastern Whip-poor-will

Antrastomus vociferus
IUCN Red List Assessment:
Near Threatened

You'll almost never see me, but I am the infamous bird you've accused of singing all night long. I am listed as "Near Threatened" because my populations are in decline. We depend on Georgia for breeding grounds in the Piedmont and mountains, and you can also find us in the coastal plains and the coast at various times of year. Voting for me will ensure that you continue to hear my charming call throughout the state on those hot summer nights.



Whip-poor-will. Photo by Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren.

Chuck-will's-widow

Antrastomus carolinensis
IUCN Red List Assessment: Near Threatened

I'm the biggest of all the nightjars in Georgia, and you have also heard me singing into the night. I'm "Near

Threatened," and sadly my numbers are in steep decline. You can find us across the state of Georgia in the mixed hardwood and pine forests during the breeding season. We help keep the insect population in check with our voracious appetite, and we've also been known to eat small birds and bats. Georgia Audubon has already begun work on radio-tracking us, and your vote will help to do more through increased research efforts.



Chuck-will's-widow. Photo by Dan Vickers.

Common Nighthawk

Chordeiles minor
IUCN Red List:
Least Concern

I'm not as well-known as my chatty cousins, but I do have the biggest range of all the Georgia nightjars, covering the entire state during breeding season. For now, I am a species of "Least Concern," but I am in steep decline due to pesticides and habitat loss. A vote for me is a vote for the most well-traveled nightjar that eats many pesky insects while not keeping you up late at night.



Common Nighthawk. Photo by Soo Gah Baus.

Your donation by December 31 will help us move this project forward to help better understand Nightjars holistically. www.georgiaaudubon.org/donate

Species Profile: The Hooded Merganser

By Steve Phenicie

Probably no Pilgrim ever said to a Native American: "Would you like to come over for Thanksgiving dinner? We're having Hooded Merganser." The Pilgrims are known to have eaten "waterfowl" at their famous feast, but Hooded Merganser might not have been a top choice. Mergansers are the only ducks that specialize in eating fish, and because of that, their flesh is said to have a fishy taste that many people find unpalatable.

But, anyway, most people are more interested in looking at these handsome birds than eating them. Both sexes have crests that give them a punk-rocker appearance. They have thin, serrated bills, with males having a black head with a large white patch that varies in size when the crest is raised or lowered but is always prominent. The breast is white and the back, a rich chestnut. Females and immatures are gray and brown, with tawny-cinnamon tones on the head.

For habitat, Hooded Mergansers like shallow ponds, especially those where they can tuck in around the edge and find some cover. They may be in more open marsh habitats if artificial nest sites, such as those offered to Wood Ducks, are available. The nest site is typically in a tree cavity near the water, usually 10 to 50 feet above ground, but rarely up to 80 feet or more.

In addition to fish, mergansers like crayfish and other crustaceans, aquatic insects, tadpoles, mollusks, and small amounts of plant material. Young ducklings eat mostly insects.

This bird is especially common around the Great Lakes, although it is also widespread elsewhere. Year-round populations occur in two ranges: One extends from Nova Scotia to eastern Oklahoma and northern Louisiana. A second includes parts of southern British Columbia,



A male Hooded Merganser. Photo by Stephen Ramsden.

Washington state, and patches of Oregon and western Montana. The Hooded Merganser is a short-distance migrant, with the majority wintering along the Mississippi Flyway in the south-central U.S.

Some places in metro Atlanta you might see them are E.L. Huie and other Clayton County sites, such as Lakes Blaylock and Shamrock. Other areas in the state they can be found are Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Dooly County Road Farm Pond, Carter's Lake, and Altamaha

Wildlife Management Area.

Some cool facts about Hooded Mergansers:

- Taking a cue from Brown-headed Cowbirds, they often lay up to 13 eggs in the nests of other ducks, both their own species and others.
- Hooded Mergansers find their prey underwater by sight. They can actually change the refractive properties of their eyes to improve their underwater vision. In addition, they have an extra eyelid, called a "nictitating membrane," which is transparent and helps protect the eye during swimming, like a pair of goggles.
- Ducklings leave their nest cavity within 24 hours of hatching. The mother calls from the ground below the nest, and the little ones hop out, which involves a plunge of 50 feet or more. In some cases they walk half a mile or more with their mother to the nearest body of water.
- They aren't quackers, preferring to utter hoarse grunts and chatters.

Almost any small retention pond could hold a couple of mergansers if there is decent habitat and food, says Adam Betuel, Georgia Audubon's conservation director.

The Transformational Leadership of Esther Stokes

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impact we can have for native plants, the insects that rely on them, and the birds."

In short, Esther has influenced Georgia Audubon in the best of ways. "Her leadership, and passion, along with her influence and vision, have inspired Georgia Audubon's growth in both scale and scope," says Paige Martin, current chair of the Georgia Audubon board of directors. "She appreciates the need for natural spaces for birds and for people. She's thoughtful, strategic, and consistently asking, 'How can we do better?'" Esther is deeply connected to Georgia Audubon's mission and can not only speak to our institutional history, but can also look ahead and envision intentional growth and innovative

approaches to engaging the next generation of birders and conservation stewards."

Esther sees a bright future for Georgia Audubon as we approach our Centennial celebration in 2026. (Georgia Audubon evolved from Atlanta Audubon Society, originally known as the Atlanta Bird Club, which was founded in 1926.)

Recently, Esther was volunteering at one of Georgia Audubon's habitat restoration workdays at Panola Mountain State Park spreading broomsedge bales. "On my way to the workday, I was driving through these fields full of broomsedge that Georgia Audubon has already planted, and it occurred to me that it's really fitting that we changed our name because we've moved into a whole new realm. This work is so important!"

Georgia Audubon to Join Three Other Nonprofits at New Trees Atlanta Kendeda Tree House

(Continued from Page 1)

Georgia Audubon, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy in Georgia.

“The mission of each of these organizations is closely aligned with Georgia Audubon’s mission to build places where birds and people thrive, and we look forward to working collaboratively with these organizations,” says Teutsch.

The property at 825 Warner Street required brownfield remediation and had only 3% tree canopy on the lot, which includes a mature Southern red oak that stands in the western boundary of the lot. After the construction and landscape installation is completed, half of the land will be restored greenspace. With newly planted native plants and trees growing alongside the oak tree, the canopy cover will increase to more than 60% in about 15 years. Plans are underway to certify a portion of this landscape as a Georgia Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary.

Trees Atlanta Co-Executive Director Greg Levine shared his thoughts, “We want to be an example of how a new development can also bring ecological improvements. We hope to be a good neighbor and be a useful resource for education and employment opportunities for the neighborhoods nearest us while we work with communities across metro Atlanta.”

Bringing Others Along

The decision to share the office space was a confluence of timing and chemistry, says Trees Atlanta.

The Conservation Fund has offices across the country, and the choice to locate its Georgia staff at the TreeHouse is a strategic decision that will open up fresh opportunities for its current employees, as well as potentially attract new employees. “We want a vibrant and exciting workplace that will allow us to retain and attract talented staff,” according to Andrew Schock, Georgia and Alabama State Director of The Conservation Fund. “Working alongside other conservation colleagues will allow for more sharing of conservation ideas that will benefit the people of Atlanta.”

In March 2020, The Nature Conservancy in Georgia closed their offices as a health precaution because of COVID-19. As the months of the pandemic went on, they came to the conclusion that they worked just as effectively virtually as they did in a room together. By sharing space at the TreeHouse, they see the potential to use less office space and reduce their environmental footprint, while also having larger meeting spaces available as needed. “The last few years have presented us with many unique challenges. As much as we have all been able to do remotely, there are some things that are just better done sitting across the table from one another in a conference room,” explained Interim Executive Director Dan Ryan.

Georgia Audubon is excited to be moving into this wonderful new space with Trees Atlanta, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy. We all look forward to being good neighbors in our new home on Warner Street and to welcoming members and guests to our new facility.

Georgia Audubon Launches Habitat Stewardship Program for Large Properties

(Continued from Page 3)

advance our own conservation goals while also supporting various partner organizations and providing tangible benefits to its applicants.

If you own or manage a large property and wish to enter it into the Habitat Stewardship Program as a pilot property, we encourage you to fill out one of our preliminary applications located at www.georgiaaudubon.org/habitat-stewardship-program. Please fill out the short survey with basic information regarding your property and its use, and you will be entered into the pool of potential candidates. From there, additional information about the program and the next steps will be provided as they become available.

Properties for this program will be considered only if they are more than 10 acres. All property types above this size are encouraged to apply to the program. Smaller spaces should consider applying for certification through the Georgia Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Program. If you have any questions, please email Alex LoCastro, conservation program coordinator, at alex.locastro@georgiaaudubon.org.



Gabe Andrie, habitat program manager, talks with landowners at the Georgia Forestry Foundation kickoff. Photo by Alex LoCastro. Photo by Alex LoCastro.

UPCOMING EVENTS



NOVEMBER

Field Trip: Cochran Shoals CRNRA (Interstate North Entrance) | Leader: Adam George
Friday, November 4, at 8:00 AM

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

Field Trip: Allatoona Creek Park | Leader: Sherry Rosen
Saturday, November 5, at 8:00 AM

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

Field Trip: Dunwoody Nature Center | Leader: Shannon Fair
Saturday, November 5, at 8:00 AM

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

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, November 5, at 9:00 AM

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

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

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

Volunteer Workday: Pollinator Garden at Island Ford Unit of CRNRA
Monday, November 7, at 9:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/volunteer.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, November 9, at 8:00 AM

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

Georgia Audubon Virtual Homeschool Program: Avian Adaptations
Friday, November 11, times vary

To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/homeschool.

Accessible Field Trip: Clayton County Water Treatment Authority | Leader: Malcolm Hodges and Paul Miller
Saturday, November 12, at 8:00 AM

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

Birding by Bicycle Field Trip: Meet at South Peachtree Creek Trailhead | Leader: Jonah McDonald and Ken Boff
Saturday, November 19, at 8:00 AM

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

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, November 19, at 9:00 AM

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



Photo by Melanie Furr.

DECEMBER

Field Trip: Cochran Shoals CRNRA (Interstate North Entrance) | Leader: Adam George
Friday, December 2, at 8:00 AM

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

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, December 3, at 9:00 AM

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

Beginner-focused Field Trip: Legacy Park | Leader: Josh Jackson
Sunday, December 4, at 8:00 AM

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

Volunteer Workday: Pollinator Garden at Island Ford Unit of CRNRA
Monday, December 5, at 9:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/volunteer.



Yellow-rumped Warbler. Photo by Megumi Williamson.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER *(Continued from Page 10)*

Georgia Audubon Virtual Homeschool Program: All About Owls
Friday, December 9, times vary

To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/homeschool.

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

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

Volunteer Workday: Pollinator Garden at Island Ford Unit of CRNRA
Thursday, December 15, at 9:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/volunteer.

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, December 17, at 9:00 AM

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

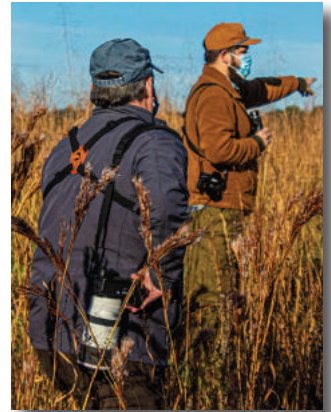


Photo by Phillip Prichard.

JANUARY

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

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

Georgia Audubon Virtual Homeschool Program:
Birds and Their Environment
Friday, January 13, times vary

To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/homeschool.

Field Trip: Morgan Falls Overlook Park | Leader: Roseanne Guerra
Saturday, January 14, at 8:00 AM

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

Sandhill Crane Sunset Kayak Tour
Saturday, January 14, 2023, from 1:30 to 4:30 PM
Price: \$85 for Georgia Audubon Members/ \$95 for non-members
Limited to 19 participants

Join Chattanooga Guided Adventures and Georgia Audubon for a guided kayak tour to see and hear the calls and dances of wintering Sandhill Cranes at Hiwassee Island National Wildlife Refuge. The shallow waters of the Tennessee River around Hiwassee Island provide excellent overwintering and feeding areas for these and other bird species. Bring your binoculars to enjoy the sights and sounds on this kayaking eco-tour.

This year's event will be offered on the same weekend as the Sandhill Crane Festival (January 14 to 15, 2023) so it's a great time to enjoy the kayak tour as well as the many free activities offered as part of the Sandhill Crane Festival.

Learn more or register at www.georgiaaudubon.org/in-person-events.



Sandhill Crane. Photo by Jean Hall.

Holiday Raffle: Two-Night Stay in The Lodge at Little St. Simons Island

Donated by Little St. Simons Island

Raffle Tickets: \$20/each or 6 for \$110

Little St. Simons Island has graciously donated a two-night stay for two at The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island for our 2022 Holiday Party Raffle. Stays are all-inclusive, and include accommodations, boat transfers to and from the island, three prepared meals daily, soft drinks, and all activities, including naturalist led excursions, and use of all recreational equipment. The winner will be selected at our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 4, at 3:00 PM, at Manuel's Tavern. You do not need to be present to win. The trip must be used by December 15, 2023.

To learn more or purchase raffle tickets, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/upcoming-events.

Wingbars

GEORGIA AUDUBON

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678.973.2437

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Atlanta, GA
Permit #917

Holiday Party and Annual Meeting

at Manuel's Tavern, 602 N. Highland Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307

Sunday, December 4 | 3:00 to 5:00 PM

FREE, but registration is required so that we know how much food to order

Join Georgia Audubon for our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 4, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at Manuel's Tavern and help us celebrate our many successes in 2022 building places where birds and people thrive. We'll also hold a short annual meeting where we will hear from Jared Teutsch, executive director, introduce our newly installed board of directors, welcome new staff, and bid a fond farewell to our outgoing board members.

We'll be giving away door prizes, and the event will culminate in our raffle drawing for a two-night stay for two at The Lodge at Little St. Simons Island. You do not have to be present to win. We'll also have our store set up, with a variety of T-shirts, ornaments, coffee, chocolate, and other items for the birder on your holiday shopping list.

Georgia Audubon will provide a variety of appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages, and additional food and alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase. Please join us as we celebrate another successful year for Georgia birds.

Sign up for the holiday party or purchase raffle tickets at www.georgiaaudubon.org/monthly-meetings.



YOU'RE INVITED

GEORGIA AUDUBON HOLIDAY PARTY AND ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, December 4, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM

More information and registration at
www.georgiaaudubon.org/georgia-audubon-at-manuels-tavern

MANUEL'S TAVERN
602 N. HIGHLAND AVE., NE
ATLANTA