

Wingbars



**GEORGIA
AUDUBON**

A Quarterly Publication of Georgia Audubon

NOVEMBER 2023

Georgia Audubon Launches Morgens Environmental Education Gateway

By Dottie Head, Director of Communications

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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.

Dark-eyed Junco, photo by Dennis Derby.

Georgia Audubon recently launched the Morgens Environmental Education Gateway. Named in honor of the founding grant from Jim and Sally Morgens, with the Morgens West Foundation, this new virtual education platform is revolutionizing the way the organization delivers content to members and program participants.

“The Morgens Environmental Education Gateway is a digital space that fosters engaged learning with current educational resources, future program offerings, and other resources to support a thriving birder community and connect people across Georgia,” says Jared Teutsch, Georgia Audubon executive director. “The spark behind the creation of this Gateway was to enable Georgia Audubon to reach our education program participants virtually, while maintaining the ability to offer place-based programs in some locations, as needed.”

As a statewide organization, Georgia Audubon strives to offer content that is accessible to all birders, no matter where in Georgia they reside. During the pandemic, the need for an online platform to deliver this content was brought into vivid focus as traditional in-person classes were neither safe nor practical. Georgia Audubon was a leader in Georgia and the nation in rolling out virtual content during the pandemic, including webinars, workshops, virtual field trips, and other programs using Zoom to reach our constituents who were isolated at home. Georgia Audubon’s online content was wildly successful, and it sparked this thought process about building a more robust platform where people could view, on-demand and ad-free, a variety of bird-related educational programs from the comfort of their own homes.

“Jim and Sally Morgens have been generous supporters of Georgia Audubon’s education programs, providing seed funding for our in-person Connecting Students with STEM through Birds program and other education programs, so we were excited to present this Gateway proposal to them as a way to foster interest and education in birds and their habitats, especially in the next generation,” says Teutsch.

“We found in Georgia Audubon’s gateway proposal an ideal way to reach children and teens by assisting science teachers and creating material for school projects relating to birds and birding. Expanding the availability of Master Birder, which serves already-committed birders, is just icing on the cake.” Jim explained.

One of the first programs that will be offered via the Morgens Environmental Education Gateway will be our popular Georgia Audubon Master Birder Program

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From the Executive Director

Giving Thanks for our Volunteers

This time of year, we all like to give thanks for the friends and family that keep us grounded, the organizations that keep us inspired, and the birds that keep us connected. As we look ahead to 2024, it is important to reflect on the many accomplishments of 2023, and the many people, including members, donors, program participants, and volunteers, who have helped us spread the wonder and joy of birding with more people across Georgia.

Thanks to the generous support of our members and donors, Georgia Audubon's has hired several new staff in recent years. With a total of 19 full- and part-time staff positions, Georgia Audubon is launching new initiatives and expanding our work across the state. But much of our work still relies heavily on volunteers. We don't say it often enough, but a million thanks to our hundreds of volunteers who donate so many hours to our organization each year and help us do more work across Georgia.

We have a small but mighty team of Avian Advocates who are helping certify Georgia Audubon Wildlife Sanctuaries across the state and sharing their knowledge of native plants and birds with potential sanctuary properties. We have Project Safe Flight volunteers in Atlanta, Savannah, and Brunswick who are patrolling routes during migration, picking up dead birds, transporting injured birds to rehabilitators, and adding valuable data to our research on how many and which species of birds are colliding with buildings (see Adam's article in this issue about what we're finding.) One of the longest-running volunteer opportunities with Georgia Audubon is field trip leaders, and we have a fantastic and ever-expanding group of field trip volunteers leading more than 150 free field trips each year.

Our habitat restoration volunteers are an integral part of Georgia Audubon's extensive habitat restoration work and expand the impact of our habitat restoration team at places like Jekyll Island, Buzzard Roost and the Camp and Paddle Trail of the Chattahoochee Riverlands, Panola Mountain State Park, Island Ford Unit of the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area, Deepdene, Campbellton Park, and other locations. We'll soon begin restoring bird-friendly habitat at Lyon Farm in the South River Watershed, in DeKalb County, through a generous grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, so keep your eyes peeled for volunteer opportunities in this spot.

Our tabling and events volunteers represent Georgia Audubon at nature festivals and events all across Georgia, spreading the word about our work and introducing people to the joy of birds and birding. And then there are the behind-the-scenes volunteers, who write and edit articles for our newsletters and blog, assist with the development of our Learning About Birds curriculum, and show up to help set up and break down for events and programs.

And we certainly cannot thank volunteers without mentioning our Board of Directors and Advisors, who donate many hours of time and expertise to help keep the organization running smoothly and effectively.

We are so thankful for each and every one of our volunteers, and we're always on the lookout for new volunteers who are interested in sharing their time and talents with the organization. So if any of these volunteer slots sounds appealing, please reach out to us. We'd be glad to welcome you to the flock!

We'll be thanking our volunteers in person at the Holiday Party and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 3, at Manuel's Tavern. We hope to see you there so that we can thank you in person.

As always, we give thanks to you all during this time, and wish you a safe and happy holiday season. Keep birding!



Jared Teutsch



Georgia Audubon volunteer Beccaa Dill leading a group of students on a bird walk at Hairston Park.

Cheers, Jared

What's In a Name: An Update on Our Organization and the "Audubon" Name

By Amy Beth Sparks. Board Member and Name Task Force Representative

Over the last few years, troublesome revelations about our namesake, John James Audubon, have been brought to light. These revelations have sparked a nation-wide conversation which has resulted in some local chapters' decision to move away from the Audubon name. Here in Georgia, in late spring our Board empaneled a committee to explore what the "Audubon" name means to our work and mission and whether it is the best name to represent our constituency.

Our Process

As part of this exploration, this August we hosted a webinar and discussion with Gregory Nobles, biographer of John James Audubon and a member of Georgia Audubon, to gain a better understanding of our namesake and his legacy. Together, we learned about the man who sparked a national passion for birding and his important contributions to ornithology, as well as some of his practices and beliefs as a slaveowner.

We also sent a survey to more than 10,000 members, donors, partners, and constituents to gather input on how they feel about the Audubon name. Additionally, leadership and staff have been holding conversations with members and stakeholders to better understand the relevance of our name and how well it relates to our work, mission, and constituency. And in October we held two listening sessions to hear more from the public about this issue.

Here are some common themes that have emerged:

In Favor of a Name Change:

- Georgia Audubon is first and foremost a BIRD organization. Therefore, it makes sense to have Bird in our name instead of Audubon.
- Names do matter, and given what we know about the man and the controversies surrounding him, it makes the most sense to revisit the name of the organization.
- Many young people do not know who Audubon was, and the name means nothing to them. Others

may find the name offensive. If you want to be an inclusive, forward looking organization, then a name change is in order. When you know better, do better!

Opposed to a Name Change:

- The name Audubon is one of the organization's most recognized features and having all chapters share a name gives the organization better brand recognition.
- Evaluating John Audubon's slave ownership in the context of today rather than the 1800s is not appropriate. He was a man of his times and should not be judged by today's standards.
- Audubon is a name for a movement not a man. John James Audubon died before the Audubon Society was founded. The name was chosen because of its association with beautiful images of birds and the work of Audubon and others in spreading knowledge about and advocating for birds.

Food for Thought

Both sides of the argument make a compelling case, and we very much appreciate those who have taken time to share their thoughts with us. As we continue evaluating the input we have received, we are working organizationally to understand the fullness of who Audubon was and how our name might or might not alienate members and/or potential future members.

But there is more to consider as we evaluate our name than just understanding our namesake.

What is clear is that our members are passionate and thoughtful about this issue. We appreciate the engagement over this exploration, and we are carefully considering all points of view.

What's Next

The committee will review and discuss all the data we've gathered over the last few months and provide a report and recommendation to the Board of Directors. Watch your email for updates on this issue.

Support Georgia Audubon on Georgia Gives Day

Thanks to a generous anonymous donor, all gifts on Giving Tuesday will be matched, doubling your impact. Look for the Georgia Audubon Wish List, a collection of the most-needed items identified by our Conservation, Education, and Community Engagement teams. Thank you for your help on November 28 supporting our most urgent programmatic needs. Support Georgia Audubon:
www.georgiaaudubon.org/wishlist



GEORGIA GIVES DAY
NOVEMBER 28, 2023

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

On Lou Clymore

By Steve Phenicie

(This is the 59th in a series on Georgia Audubon volunteers, board members, and staff.)

Romeo loved Juliet. King Midas loved gold. And Lou Clymore says she “absolutely loves” being an Avian Advocate for Georgia Audubon. Advocates are the folks who give property owners advice on how to attain Wildlife Sanctuary status for their land.

Lou looks forward to seeing other people’s yards, making new acquaintances, learning things, visiting other parts of the state now that Georgia Audubon has expanded its geographic reach, and teaming with another volunteer to travel as a pair. After

she gives people advice on making their property more friendly for birds and plants, she passes the baton to Audubon’s conservation program coordinator, who provides follow-up.

Lou’s involvement in improving native habitat doesn’t stop with Avian Advocates. She has also helped with plant sales and been a mover and shaker in Atlanta’s Ormewood Park neighborhood. She was one of the people who formed the Tapestry Community HOA, a neighborhood block association that held ownership of the seven acres of common passive green space behind the houses on her street. They’ve added a shuffleboard court, a tree house, benches and a woodland path and planted trees on several occasions. Their goal for the greenspace is to remove invasive and nonnative plants and trees while propagating native plants.

When the neighborhood group this year reached an agreement with the Southeastern Trust for Parks and Land for a perpetual conservation easement on the property, Lou said,

“Tapestry Greenspace is a magnet, drawing our neighbors out of their homes and into nature.” Tapestry, by the way, is a name the neighbors came up with because they come from a variety of backgrounds.



Lou Clymore. Photo by Melinda Langston.

In 2021 Lou was honored by Park Pride, Atlanta’s parks advocacy group, with an Inspiration Award for inspiring others to improve public parks and greenspaces.

Lou says she knew nothing about birds until she retired from her job as a nurse at a clinic serving the uninsured in

Grant Park. She began sitting on her porch and became fascinated with the feathered beings nearby. Then she bought a native plant guide book, took Audubon classes, and became a Master Birder and a Master Gardener. She has belonged to Audubon for perhaps 10 years and has been an Advocate for six or seven. She has confined her birding mostly to the Atlanta area, although she went to Costa Rica to study Spanish and did some informal birding while there.

Lou was born in Washington state, then lived in Needles, Calif., which is in the Mohave Desert. She’s been in Atlanta for around 40 years. She and her husband, Leon, have been married for “60-some years.” (She admits that he is better at numbers than she is.) They have three children: Lewis, who lives in the Canton area; Mark, who lives in Walton County; and Patricia, of DeKalb County. There are six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to Project Safe Flight Georgia volunteers **Randy Tate, Paul Miller, Adrienne Miller, Kelly Bryan, Maureen Carroll, Cherly Hensley, Mary Kimberly, Gavin MacDonald, Ashley Boone, Nancy Kennell, Amy Cottell, Amanda Janusz, Shivani Potdar, Susan Cannella, Sage Pasquale, Karen Osborne, Mike Ayling, Larry Klink, Lisa Rose, David Stasek, Jay Davis, and Noah Frtizhand** ... to Island Ford and Campbellton Park volunteers **Cynthia Patterson, Michelle Huang, Jane St. Clair, Winkler Weinberg, Susan Hanson, Ammber Hoang, Edward Salzberg, Nancy A. Downs, Pat Prosser, Barbara Powell-Schager, Lorie Bonham, Natalie Spitzer, Laura Breyfogle, Sam Breyfogle, Diane Hawkins-Cox, John E. Mayes, Diana Tsoy, Ben McKeeby, Sarah Wiswall, Cathy Pugh, Christine Williams, Brooke Johnson, Jack Barbas, Charles Milsted, Beth St. Jean, Marc Suarez, Cynthia Fleck, Loretta Simon, Bryan Shelby, Jacqueline Harmon, Mike Harmon, Matthew Harmon, Sally De Lange, Adam George, Wendy Hoback, David Paddock, Nancy F. McCall, Helga Hunter, Dee Bonellim, Clark Meyer, Price Gardner, Lynne D. Merrick, Al E. Tousek, Krupa Loke, Gayle F. McAllister, Nicole Carolan, Glenn Coie, Robert Gisness, Larry Klink, and Braden Beaudreau** ... to **Jill Patel** for her stellar, innovative, and dynamic leadership setting Georgia Audubon up for present and future success ... to **Mim Eisenberg** and **Mary Nevil** for their help with final edits for Georgia Audubon’s “Learning About Birds” curriculum ... to **Gregory Nobles** for his webinar on John James Audubon ... to **Alex LoCastro, Richard Hall, and Roseanne Guerra** for presenting webinars as part of Georgia Native Plants Month ... to **Patrick Maurice** for presenting at our September Meeting at Manuel’s ... to **Jared Tuetsch, Nikki Belmonte, Greg Levine, Carol Hight, Alex LoCastro, Madison Cummiskey,**

(Continued on Page 5)

A Million Thanks...

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Brennan Wall, and **Gabe Andrlé** for presenting at the Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month Round Robin ... to Georgia Native Plants Month patrons **Bill Bell** and **Sarah Catherine Tunkle**, **Bonsai Leadership Group**, **Linda DiSantis** and **Bob Kerr**, **Betty Goldstein**, **Brynne** and **Marc Goncher**, **Nancy Hamilton**, **Scott Porter** and **Scott Hayes**, **Melinda Langston**, **Ellen Miller**, **Tom Mills** and **Mount Vernon Printing**, **Paige Martin** and **Arjun Srinivasan**, **Esther** and **Jim Stokes**, and **Diana Worthington-White** ... **Alex LoCastro** parted ways with Georgia Audubon on Oct. 15 and would like to thank all of the volunteers who have helped her in her journey at the organization. She would especially like to thank all of the Avian Advocates for their continued hard work and dedication to the Wildlife Sanctuary Program, as well as the volunteers who assisted with plant sales and other Georgia Audubon events ... to **Abby Cox**, **Kim Kenley**, **Logan Jones**. **Gus Kaufman**. **Jack Bruce**. **Quetcy Betancourt**. **Jay Davis**, **Mary Kimberly**, **Becca Dill**, **Ella Siefert**, **Rob McDonough**, **Kevin Hayes**, **Cynthia Fleck**, **Dottie Head**, **Donna Shapiro**, **Paul Campbell**, **Marlene Koslowsky**, **Lori O'Bar**, **Angie Bevevino**, **Robin Sowton**, **Anne McCallum**, **Terry Miller**, **Josh Jackson**, **Larry Klink**, **Phillip Prichard**, and **Leenah Shah** for leading field trips and volunteering for festivals and other tabling events during fall 2023.



**GEORGIA
AUDUBON**

Georgia Audubon Welcomes Three New Staff

Please join us in welcoming three new staff members to the Georgia Audubon flock. **Quetcy Betancourt** joins the team as the new full-time development coordinator. We're also thrilled to welcome two familiar faces: **Adam George** will be working part time as the new systems coordinator, and **Roseanne Guerra** is coming on board as a part-time education program coordinator. These three team members will help us expand our work across Georgia to fulfill our mission of building places where birds and people thrive.

Quetcy Betancourt is passionate about building relationships and environmental protection. Before joining Georgia Audubon, she worked with local nonprofits spearheading diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) initiatives and building community. She is a New Yorker raised within a Puerto Rican family and is driven by her commitment to advocate for inclusivity, education, and sustainability. She earned a dual bachelor of arts in Africana and Latino Studies and Political Science from SUNY Oneonta, where she deepened her passion for both the outdoors and social justice. She enjoys volunteering at local community gardens and going on long walks with her loved ones and her pup, Lucy.



Quetcy Betancourt

Adam George is a naturalist and information technology professional. He has spent the past seven years designing digital experiences, systems,



Adam George

and software for businesses and companies of all sizes. After completing the Georgia Audubon Master Birder Program in spring of 2022, he quickly realized the crucial role technology can play in helping protect birds and the natural world. Adam will be supporting Georgia Audubon's information technology, administration, and HR platforms, as well as the Morgens Environmental Education Gateway. In his free time, Adam enjoys hiking, relaxing by the water, reading, and of course birding. He currently lives in Thomasville, Georgia with his wife, Ashley, and their two cats, Brutus and Eddie.

A native of New Orleans, **Roseanne Guerra** moved to Atlanta after earning a Computer Science degree from Tulane University. After a decade or so in the computer industry, and another decade or so as a stay-at-home mom, Roseanne's life as a naturalist began with Georgia Audubon's Master Birder class in 2012. She currently works as an environmental educator at several metro Atlanta organizations and does private speaking engagements for many organizations. With a passion for learning about all things nature, Roseanne is a liaison for the Georgia Bat Working Group and a certified master herpetologist, wild mushroom forager, and Trees Atlanta Treekeeper. When not in the field trying to ID a new bug, plant, track, or poop, Roseanne dabbles in painting, mosaics, and building lanterns and costumes. She has worked as a contract educator for Georgia Audubon since 2015 and is very excited to do more to help spread Georgia Audubon's message.



Roseanne Guerra

Georgia Audubon Launches Morgens Environmental Education Gateway

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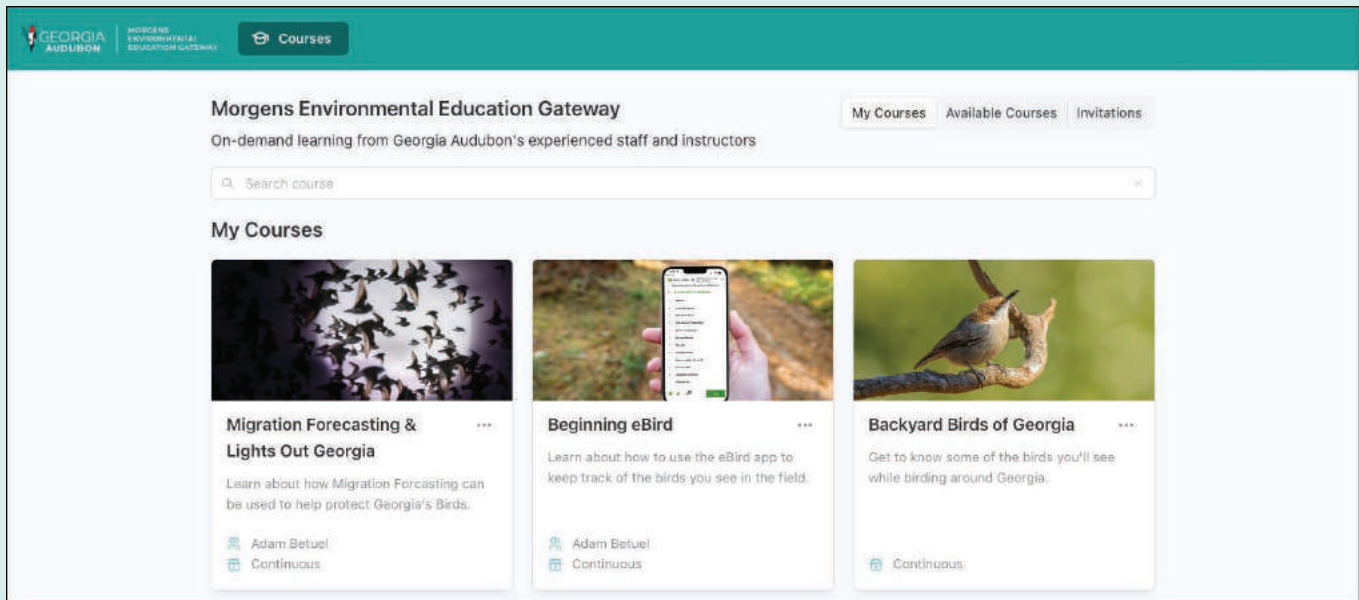
that began in October. This six-week program features course content taught virtually via the Gateway, followed by in-person weekend field trips in different geographic areas of the state to allow program participants to get hands-on experience with the bird ID and ecology lessons being presented via the virtual sessions. For the fall 2023 course, participants will use the Gateway to access weekly lessons, chat with other learners, and receive field trip information and other updates. In the future, Georgia Audubon anticipates offering the Master Birder Program fully on demand, where participants can learn on their own schedule.

The Gateway also features programming for Georgia Audubon members as a membership benefit, including Beginning eBird, Migration Forecasting and Lights Out Georgia, and Backyard Birds of Georgia. These courses are available on demand for members to view free of charge. Additional programs have already been added.

The Morgens Environmental Education Gateway integrates with Georgia Audubon existing membership and registration portal. Upon registering for a course, program participants are automatically uploaded to the Gateway and receive email confirmations of course participation, links to join the course, and reminders about upcoming coursework and deadlines for completion.

Georgia Audubon will also offer other courses, like our Birds Education for All Kids (BEAK) Homeschool Program for youth, Sparrow ID, Raptor ID, Birding by Ear, and other youth and adult courses via the Morgens Environmental Education Gateway.

We will be hosting a free webinar to introduce members to the Gateway and demonstrate how to use the platform on Thursday, November 9, at 7:00 PM. You can view the Gateway and register for the webinar at <https://www.georgiaaudubon.org/learn>.

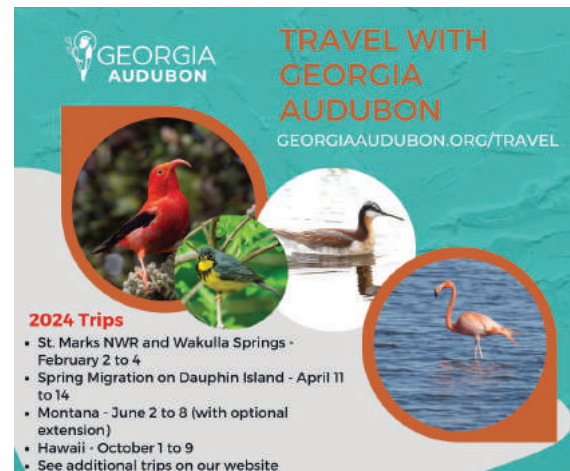


Travel with Georgia Audubon in 2024

Georgia Audubon's 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.

- Southern California: Condors to Gnatcatchers – January 4 to 11 (full; waitlist open)
- St. Marks NWR and Wakulla Springs – February 2 to 4
- Northern Costa Rica: Wetlands, Volcanos, and Rain Forests – February 19 to 29, with optional extension (full; waitlist open)
- Dauphin Island: Spring Migration on the Alabama Coast – April 11 to 14
- Big Bend and Hill Country, TX – April 27 to May 6, 2024 (full; waitlist open)
- Summer Birding in Colorado – July 8 to 13 (full; waitlist open)
- Harpy Eagles and the Best of Panama with the Canopy Family – May 29 to June 8 (full; waitlist open)
- Montana and Yellowstone: Where the Mountains Meet the Plains – June 2 to 8, with optional extension
- Northern Columbia: Endemics from the Mountain Tops to the Sea – July 24 to August 6 (full; waitlist open)
- Hawaii: Birding the Aloha Way – October 1 to 9

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



Bird Profile: The Sandhill Crane

By Steve Phenicie

Sandhill Cranes are like NBA basketball players and NFL linemen – they’re big guys, among the largest birds found in Georgia. They stand three and half to four feet tall, have a wingspan of six to seven feet, and weigh seven to 10 pounds. Although bulkier than a Great Blue Heron, they’re about the same size.

Within the last few decades, Sandhills have greatly expanded their nesting range and numbers in the upper Midwest, but they are still vulnerable to habitat loss. They reach their peak abundance at migratory stopover points on the Great Plains. The early spring gathering on the Platte River in Nebraska is among the greatest wildlife spectacles on the continent, with more than a quarter of a million birds present at once, emitting their loud, rolling, trumpeting sound.

This fall you may soon see them cruising around the Atlanta sky – if you haven’t already – on their way to wintering grounds in Florida. Depending on conditions, some don’t go that far. Thousands gather at the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge on the Tennessee River near Birchwood, Tenn., and sometimes a few show up during Atlanta’s Christmas Bird Count. Other spots you might see them are the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area at Valdosta, and Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge along the Chattahoochee River between Georgia and Alabama. By contrast, some populations in Mississippi, Florida, and Cuba do not migrate.

These birds have a long neck, long, black legs, and a short tail covered by drooping feathers that form a “bustle.” The bill is longer than their small head. Sandhills are slate gray, often with a rusty wash on the upperparts. Adults have a pale cheek and red skin on the crown. Juveniles are gray and rusty brown, without the pale cheek or red crown.



Sandhill Crane. Photo by Sheldon Goldstein, Audubon Photography Awards.

Their diet varies widely with location and season. It includes insects, roots of aquatic plants, rodents, snails, frogs, lizards, snakes, nestling birds, berries, and seeds. They may eat lots of cultivated grain if they can get it.

Their habitat varies too, but they usually nest among marshy vegetation in water up to three feet deep, although sometimes on dry ground close to water. The nest, built by both sexes, consists of a mound of plant material. It may be built up from the bottom or may be floating, anchored to standing plants. The female usually lays two eggs but sometimes one or three. Chicks can leave the nest within eight hours of hatching and are even capable of swimming. They stay close to their parents for nine or 10 months.

Some cool facts about Sandhills:

- They did not winter in Tennessee before the 1990s
- They are known for their dancing. Courting cranes stretch their wings, pump their heads, bow, and leap into the air in a graceful and energetic dance.
- Although some breed at two years of age, they may be as old as seven. They mate for life – two decades or more – and stay with their mates year round.
- The earliest Sandhill fossil, estimated to be 2.5 million years old, was found in Florida.
- The oldest Sandhill on record was at least 37 years, three months old. Banded in Florida in 1982, it was found in Wisconsin in 2019.

Updated Learning About Birds Curriculum Coming Soon

By Melissa Paduana, Education Program Manager

Georgia Audubon’s Learning About Birds curriculum (LAB) is the backbone of our education programs. Consisting of six units that include both educator and student guides, LAB offers resources and activities that expose students to hands-on, interactive learning about birds, their habitats, and their conservation. Conceived and formalized in 2012, the curriculum needed to be refreshed in order to better align with updated educational standards. Over the past two years, Georgia Audubon’s education team, Melanie Furr and



Photo of the updated LAB curriculum in action at a recent Trees Atlanta camp. Photo by Starr Whitten.

Melissa Paduani, have been working with the education committee to revise and update the curriculum to reflect the latest bird science and our changing learning environment.

This updated LAB curriculum will soon be available on the Georgia Audubon website for anyone to download, use, and share with others. Aligned with Georgia Standards of Excellence, the units include Common Birds of Georgia, Bird Adaptations, Bird Migration, Bird Conservation, Birds and Their Environment, and Bird Songs and Calls. Each unit includes classroom and outdoor activities, additional handouts, and suggested resources. We can’t wait to share LAB with anyone interested in teaching or learning about birds.



Observing a Red-shouldered Hawk at a recent Trees Atlanta camp. Photo by Starr Whitten.

Building Collision Data Analysis Shines Light on Collision Trends in Georgia and Beyond

By Adam Betuel, Director of Conservation

For eight years, understanding and reducing bird-building collisions across Georgia has been one of our focal conservation initiatives at Georgia Audubon. We have made great strides in educating the public, partner organizations, building owners and managers, architects, and decision-makers on this threat to birds.

To date, 12 buildings have been retrofitted with bird-safe window treatments, and more than 1,000 individuals have signed up to receive Lights Out Alerts, vowing to do their part in reducing our state's ambient light at night during peak migration.

On a positive note, a handful of metro Atlanta buildings have recently been constructed using collision-reduction methods, and we have many volunteers, interns, and students who are assisting with the program. It gives me hope that our efforts are having an impact.

We've been eager to dig deeper into data analysis, analyzing the data collected from the thousands of birds our volunteers and staff have found on Project Safe Flight surveys. Now, thanks to a partnership with National Audubon and KPMG, a professional services and accounting company, we are beginning to analyze and draw some conclusions from our data.

Data Analysis by the Experts

KPMG and National Audubon have been working with chapters within the Audubon network, including Georgia Audubon and chapters in St. Louis and Philadelphia, to see what new insights can be gleaned from various collision monitoring programs. They're exploring potential correlations between weather data and building strikes, examining how seasonality affects our collective findings, and looking at other components of this multifaceted issue affecting migratory birds.

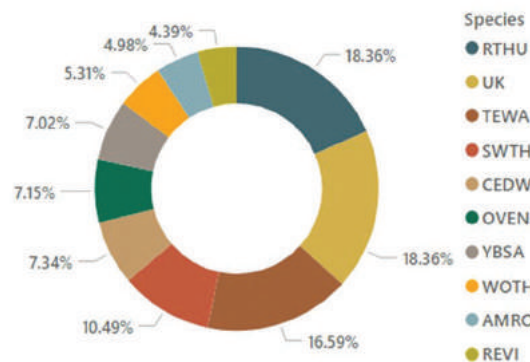
Georgia Audubon was thrilled to tap into this team of data analysts and find opportunities to improve our collision database, learn about the similarities with cities at different latitudes and in different flyways, and to gain a better understanding of the unique conditions here in Georgia. Going forward, this information will better inform our monitoring and conservation actions, and allow us to leverage these findings to pursue bird-friendly building legislation.

What Did We Learn?

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have been our most commonly collected species on Project Safe Flight Georgia routes across all seasons. We found this surprising, since hummingbirds migrate during daylight hours, unlike many other collision-prone species. Several other southeastern states have also reported a high percentage of hummingbird collisions, leading us to wonder what could be creating so many hummingbird victims. We'll be digging deeper into this data in the months to come to see if we can discern a cause and, perhaps, implement a solution to reduce hummingbird collisions.

The bulk of the other top 10 species collected were neotropical migrants that pass through Georgia, as well as Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and a few fruit-loving birds that are prone to collisions at buildings adjacent to fruiting trees (Cedar Waxwings and American Robins).

Top 10 Species per Collision



i - 10 most frequently found species on collisions surveys across the entire year

During fall migration, when we tend to find the most birds, we learned that Tennessee Warblers are our most commonly detected species. We also see an increase in the number of Common Yellowthroats and Gray Catbirds during fall. In springtime, Cedar Waxwings become the most frequently collected species, with Indigo Buntings and House Finches also joining the top 10. Though more analysis is needed, the data suggests that younger birds were found more frequently than adults and males more often than females.

Additional Findings

Building, weather, and climatic indicators also had some interesting correlations. While most building characteristics are not included in our dataset, we were able to detect a positive relationship between building height and the number of collisions. This supports what has been found across the nation. In Atlanta, most of our Project Safe Flight monitoring occurs in Buckhead and downtown Atlanta, the only local areas with many tall buildings, so it's possible this may be skewing our findings. Nonetheless, residential and small commercial buildings continue to account for the bulk of bird fatalities.

Stronger correlations were found when looking at weather and climate variables. 80% of all of our detected collisions were on days when there had been no rain in the previous 24 hours. This was surprising, since one would expect that precipitation would cause birds to fly lower or "fall out" and be more in line with buildings. Perhaps the reason is weather patterns, but it's also possible that our volunteer effort is impacted by rain. (It's not much fun to look for dead birds in the rain!)

(Continued on Page 9)

(Continued from Page 8)

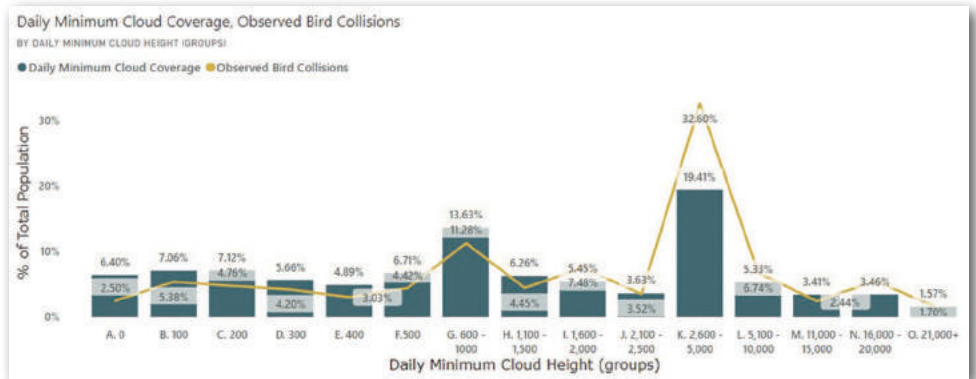
An analysis of climate factors led to an interesting finding: bird collisions increased after a significant decrease in temperature. This may be because more birds pass through Georgia in the fall, and those birds are likely going to ride a tail wind to reduce energy usage. These tail winds would be coming from the north and often are followed by cooler temperatures. As I write this, just a day ago hundreds of thousands of birds died in Chicago after colliding with a single building after crossing Lake Michigan. While there may have been other factors at play, Chicago did experience an extreme temperature drop on that night, pushing the birds across the lake, where they then flew into the tall glass building on the shore.

Collisions in Atlanta were also more common on days with high pressure swings but low humidity changes. Surprisingly, wind gusts did not correlate with collisions. Finally, when we compared our collision findings to cloud cover, we found a significantly positive correlation to bird collisions when the minimum cloud cover ranged between 2,600-5,000 feet. If the clouds are lower, maybe the birds stay grounded. If the clouds are much higher, the birds possibly fly at a higher, and safer, altitude. Most of this data and our findings are preliminary and need refining, but it is extremely informative and may allow us to predict days that could lead to higher collision events.

While this preliminary data is only a drop in the bucket, we can use it to inform our collision reduction efforts. It was interesting to see what variables/

predictors were shared across all three focal cities (fall is deadlier than spring, days with no rain had more collisions, to name a few); those that were shared across two cities (warblers were most common in Atlanta and St. Louis but not Philadelphia); and the novel findings specific to our Atlanta data (importance of cloud height, temperature drops correlating with collisions).

Bird-building collisions are the third leading cause of bird death in North America, and we have the tools to drastically reduce this problem. Avian migration is one of the most amazing natural feats and is often conducted on the razor's edge for the birds that traverse our hemisphere. As we continue to preserve and restore habitats, keep our cats indoors, and tackle climate change, we need to continue to reduce our ambient light at night and deal with our shiny windows that we all love. Georgia Audubon will continue to do our best to remain at the forefront of this effort here in Georgia and the Southeast.



Daily minimum cloud coverage and observed bird collisions by daily minimum cloud heights (grouped)

End-of-Year Sale: Stock Up on Georgia Audubon Swag for the Bird Lover

Georgia Audubon members can enjoy **30% OFF** Georgia Audubon apparel and other limited items in our online store. From our popular T-shirts and ballcaps to our vanishing birds notecards and magnets, the store contains great holiday gifts. (The offer does not apply to coffee, chocolate, or books.) The discount will automatically be applied for logged-in members.

Shop today at:
georgiaaudubon.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/georgiaaudubon/giftstoreprogram

30% OFF

Gifts for Birders

Thank You to Our 2023 Annual Fund Donors

We are excited to announce the generous support of our members and friends for the 2023 Annual Fund. This year, almost 200 donors flocked together to raise more than \$60,000. Gifts of every size combine to support our work building places where birds and people thrive. Thank you for supporting Georgia's birds!

Every attempt has been made to include all donors and to accurately identify them. If you believe there has been an error, please contact Lory Conte Hill, Director of Development, at lory.hill@georgiaaudubon.org so that we can correct our records.

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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 2023 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 3, 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, 2024.

Last year, Winkler Weinberg was the lucky winner of this drawing and had this to say about the trip. "Even though I am a lifelong East-coast birder, Little St. Simon's Island was amazing, fun, and afforded a couple of lifers. The trip leaders there are almost as good as Georgia Audubon's! The hiking, biking and boating are good opportunities, too," said Wink. His wife, Lynn, joined him for the trip and said, "As a casual or non-birder, I have to be selective about what trips I go on with Wink. LSSI was perfect!" To learn more or purchase raffle tickets, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/upcoming-events.



Georgia Audubon will be raffling off a two-night stay for two in Lodge at Little St. Simons Island. Photo used with permission of Little St. Simons Island.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Volunteer: Pollinator Garden at Island Ford Unit of CRNRA

Monday, November 13, at 9:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/volunteer

Conservation Careers Series Webinar: Ariel Moon, National Museum of African American History and Culture
Thursday, November 16, at 11:00 AM

To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/conservation-career-resources.

Field Trip: Piedmont Park | Leader: Becca Dill

Saturday, November 4 | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Legacy Park – Beginner Focused | Leader: Josh Jackson

Sunday, November 5, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum

Wednesday, November 8, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Webinar: How to Use the Morgens Environmental Education Gateway

Thursday, November 9, 7:00 to 8:00 PM | Via Zoom webinar | Free to attend, but registration IS required.

Join us in exploring our new educational platform for our members and program participants. We will be offering an inside look of Morgens Environmental Education Gateway, where you will see courses and resources including Migration Forecasting and Lights Out Georgia, Beginning eBird and Backyard Birds of Georgia. Bring your questions for our Q&A.

Field Trip: Ivy Creek Greenway at George Pierce Park | Leader: Terry Miller

Sunday, November 12, 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 18, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Chattahoochee Nature Center | Leader: Abby Cox and Alicia Thompson

Sunday, November 19, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips

DECEMBER

Field Trip: Murphey Candler Park | Leader: Mary Kimberly

Friday, December 1, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Legacy Park – Beginner Focused | Leader: Josh Jackson

Sunday, December 3, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Ivy Creek Greenway at George Pierce Park | Leader: Terry Miller

Sunday, December 10, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum

Wednesday, December 13, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

JANUARY 2024

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum

Wednesday, January 10, at 8:00 AM

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

Dedication of Bird Collision Artwork and Project Safe Flight Update

Sunday, January 28, at 3:00 PM

Join Georgia Audubon and Brickworks Gallery owner Laura Adams



Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Janine Burke.

Wingbars

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Holiday Party and Annual Meeting at Manuel's Tavern

602 N. Highland Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307

Sunday, December 3 | 3:00 to 5:00 PM | FREE, but registration is required so that we know how much food to order

Register today at www.georgiaaudubon.org/georgia-audubon-at-manuels-tavern.

Join Georgia Audubon for our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 3, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at Manuel's Tavern and help us celebrate our many successes in 2023 building places where birds and people thrive. We'll also hold a short annual meeting, at which 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 nonalcoholic 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 3, 2023
3:00 to 5:00 PM
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602 N. Highland Avenue, NE
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Registration requested, at
<https://ow.ly/cvme50PTY1F>