Wingbars

A Quarterly Publication of Birds Georgia NOVEMBER 2025

BIRDS GEORGIA

INSIDE

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 polices of Birds Georgia.

Northern Cardinal. Photo by Don Kaponoff.

100 Years of Birds Georgia – A Celebration for All

By Brooke Michael, Communications Coordinator

It all began with a handwritten note scrawled inside a copy of Chapman's *Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America*:

"Anyone interested in birds call C. R. W. Hemlock 2134. Please do this."

The note came from Carter R. Whittaker, the first president of the Atlanta Bird Club. At the group's first meeting on March 15, 1926, held at Whittaker's home, 14 bird enthusiasts gathered with a simple, clear mission: "For the protection and study of our native birds."

Nearly 100 years later, that vision has grown into Birds Georgia, the state's longest continuously running bird conservation organization. For a century, we have worked to protect birds, restore habitats, and inspire communities across Georgia.

In 2026, we invite you to be part of our Centennial Celebration – a year-long series of events honoring our legacy and launching the next 100 years of conservation. From guided birding trips and habitat restoration workdays to a special Centennial Bird Fest and Fall Flyway Festival, there will be something for everyone to honor the past while shaping the future.

As part of this milestone, we're also proud to announce the development of the Georgia Birding Trail, our Centennial legacy project. This statewide network of birding hotspots will protect habitats, boost eco-tourism, and inspire the next generation of conservationists.

Birds connect us all. Join us in honoring our history – and help us build a future where birds and people thrive.

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From the (Interim) Co-Executive Directors

Celebrating our Past and Looking to the Future

Adam Betuel

Dottie Head

As we pen this column, the leaves are changing colors and fall migration is beginning to wind down. We hope you've had an opportunity to step outside and see some of the migrating warblers and other birds that have been passing over Georgia on these cool fall evenings. It's hard to believe another year is almost over, but it's even more impactful to realize that we're wrapping up the 100th year of Birds Georgia! Over the past year, a host of staff and volunteers have been taking a deep dive into the organization's history, and we have made some delightful discoveries that we'll be sharing with you in the weeks and months to come: highlights of a century of building places where birds and people thrive. That's quite an accomplishment!

What began as the Atlanta Bird Club back on March 15, 1926, has today evolved into Birds Georgia. As the state's longest continually operating bird conservation organization, Birds Georgia has spent the past 100 years protecting birds, restoring habitats, and inspiring communities. In 2026, we invite you to join our Centennial celebration — a year-long series of events honoring our legacy and launching the next 100 years of conservation. Your support will help ensure Georgia's birds and wild places flourish for generations to come. Check out your Bird Buzz e-newsletter for upcoming Centennial events that will take place throughout 2026.

Our Birds Georgia Board of Directors will soon be announcing the new Executive Director for the organization who will guide our efforts as we begin looking ahead to the next 100 years of Birds Georgia.

Our 2026 Centennial celebration is not only a time to reflect on a century of conservation successes but also a pivotal opportunity to plan for the next 100 years. In our continued quest to build places where birds and people thrive, your support will drive innovative initiatives and sustain our efforts for future generations. Together, we can make a lasting impact on Georgia's natural heritage and inspire a legacy of stewardship for years to come. We hope you'll consider continuing your support of our next 100 years by making a gift to our end-of-year fund or supporting Birds Georgia on Georgia Gives Day, on December 3.

And in this season of thanksgiving, we would be remiss not to extend our deepest gratitude to you, our members, donors, and volunteers, who have so generously supported us over the years. Your generosity is what makes our work across Georgia possible.

We hope to see many of you at our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 7, at our offices at the Trees Atlanta Kendeeda TreeHouse, and we wish you all a healthy and happy holiday season filled with family, friends, and birds.

Cheers,
Adam and Dottie
Co-Executive Directors (Interim)

BIRDS GEORGIA
CENTENNIAL
1926-2026

Wingbars Is Retiring

It is with many mixed emotions that we announce that this November issue of *Wingbars* newsletter will be the last. With the cost of printing and postage soaring, the advent of the 24/7 news cycle, and access to improved content creation, it no longer makes sense to produce a printed newsletter. We plan to continue offering great and timely content on our social channels, on our blog, and on our YouTube channel, as well as in our *Bird Buzz* e-newsletter and special digital publications. These digital communication channels allow us to quickly distribute relevant and timely content and also provide us with detailed, real-time metrics about what content is resonating with our members and other audiences. It is also more environmentally sustainable. We encourage you to follow us online and subscribe to our e-newsletter, *Bird Buzz*, to stay abreast of all of the fantastic stories and opportunities taking place across Georgia.

A special "A Million Thanks" to Kathy Mays, our *Wingbars* designer, and Mim Eisenberg, our *Wingbars* proofreader, who have worked with Dottie Head to produce and edit this publication over the past decade. We couldn't have done it without them!

$99 for 99: Share Your Story and Shape the Next Century for Birds

This Giving Tuesday, Birds Georgia is kicking off our Centennial celebration with $99 for 99: Stories of the Century. We're inviting our community to honor 99 years of bird conservation by raising or giving $99 and by sharing the stories that connect you to birds and nature. Whether it's a memory of the bird that sparked your passion, a special place you cherish, or a hope for the next 100 years, your story matters. **Join us on December 2 to launch the next century for birds!**

To learn about ways to submit your stories and create your peer-to-peer fundraising page, visit https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/givingtuesday

GA GIVES ON #GIVINGTUESDAY

Travel with Birds Georgia in 2026

Go beyond backyard birds and travel the world with Birds Georgia during our Centennial Year in 2026. Our carefully curated domestic and international trips offer small-group travel with knowledgeable guides and itineraries that appeal to all levels of bird and nature enthusiasts.

This year's lineup is shaping up to be unforgettable: Oregon/Washington, Arizona, St. Marks, Wheeler, South Dakota, and Colombia are all on the horizon. Spots will sell quickly.

Registration is now open. Learn more or sign up today at www.birdsgeorgia.org/travel.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT on Pat Prosser

By Pat, herself, and Steve Phenicie

(This is the 68th in a series on Birds Georgia volunteers, board members, and staff.)

Birders often ask, "What was your spark bird?" to denote when they knew birding was for them. For Pat Prosser, you might ask, "What was your spark bird walk?" and "How did this lead you to your dedicated participation in Birds Georgia habitat restoration?"

Pat Prosser

During the Spring 2022 Bird Fest, Pat, who was new to birding, signed up for the "Birding the Riparian Forest" at the Campbellton Park Boat Ramp in South Fulton County. Led by Giff Beaton, the group saw or heard dozens of species of birds. An amazed Pat signed up for a Birds Georgia habitat restoration project in August 2023 at Campbellton Park. There she was introduced to Birds Georgia habitat team members, who explained that this property would be part of the Chattahoochee RiverLands Camp and Paddle Trail along the Chattahoochee River.

In addition to pulling invasives, the volunteers learned about several plant species native to the area and were introduced to the iNaturalist page that was set up for the property. Utilizing this online tool, those working at the site can record the native plants, insects, and birds observed there and monitor progress over time.

Pat's "spark" to habitat restoration projects was made. For more than two years, she has participated in multiple volunteer workdays at each of the Camp 'n Paddle locations, including the Mableton one near her home that is still under development. Once opened, this site will be known as the RiverLands Gateway Park. She has also participated in sweat-demanding projects at the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. At the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Sparrow Field (Cochran Shoals), she has answered questions from visitors curious about the habitat work there.

Outside of volunteering, recent birding activities include the Birds Georgia trip to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama in January 2025 and Warbler Weekend in the North Georgia mountains in May.

Pat recently became president of the alumni association of her alma mater, Blackburn College in Carlinville, Ill. (an hour northeast of St. Louis). The college has a work program that builds in its students, faculty, staff, and alums a lifetime appreciation of the institution, and Pat is on the "mulch team" at the annual Beautification Day. She also holds a master's degree from Miami University in Ohio and is a member of the Georgia Native Plant Society and a hiking group, Terrific Tuesday Adventures.

Retired since 2020, Pat's work life in marketing and public relations included stops at a long list of businesses, including Home Depot, Cracker Barrel, and IHOP. Originally from Chicago, she's lived around the country, including Tennessee, the Pacific Northwest, and Grand Rapids, Mich.

Pat's husband, Daryl, retired from Coca-Cola Co., is a woodturner who creates exquisite bowls and specialty items. His most recent project is wooden gear clocks. They have a calico cat, Mia, who "runs the household and manages their schedules."

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to our Project Safe Flight volunteers for their continued efforts as we finish our 10th year of monitoring for bird-building collisions: Georgia Tech intern **Rita Tran; Larry Klink, Paul Miller, Adrianne Miller, Karen Osborne, Kelly Bryan, Jay Davis, Mary Kimberly, Gavin MacDonald, Sharon Harp, Cheryl Hensley, Mike Brune, Mike Ayling, Maureen Carroll, Courtenay Dusenbury, Martha Rees, Nancy Kennell, Joy Martin, Karen Conneely, Cole Ruberti, Mike Ruberti, Nicholas Berardi, Arthur Redfern, Brittani Long, Sarah Fortuno, Alex Nystrom, Ewan Pritchard** and the **Birdwatching Club at Georgia Tech**, **EcoAdvocates** on the Georgia Southern University Armstrong Campus, and **College of Coastal Georgia students and staff: Claire Hannah** and **Dr. David Stasek** ... to our **Avian Advocates** for coordinating the certification of more than 22 new Wildlife Sanctuaries in 2025: **Melinda Langston, Esther Stokes, Gabe Andrle, Lou Clymore, Maggie Stephen, Kelly Plaskit, Paula Grad, Sheryl Berg, Mary Ann Hines**, and **Greg Mauldin**... to **Dr. Bob Cooper** for presenting the webinar "Habitat Management for Nongame Wildlife"... to **Diana McGrath** for presenting the webinar "Bobwhite Habitat Management for Private Lands: Opportunities and Challenges" ... to **Dr. Michael Ulyshen** for presenting the webinar "Effects of Landscape Context, Tree Composition, and Fire on Pollinators in Southeastern US Forests" ... to **Anthony Simmons, Cathy Minor**, and **Ben Overlie** for help with hosting the bioblitz at Laverlea Preserve and co-leading a bird and plant ID walk at Mistletoe State Park as part of the Fall Flyway Festival ... to **Jesse Kamps, Sue Potter**, and **Pat Dunlop** for help with hosting the bioblitz at Laverlea Preserve ... to **Russ Lumpkin** for letting us host the

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A Million Thanks...

(Continued from Page 4)

bioblitz ... to **Jason Alstad** for letting us partner on the Burning for Birds events throughout the year ... to **Heather Brassell, Sam** and **Laura Breyfogle, Roger Macuch, Noah McCoard**, and **Jesse Kamps** for being part of the Conservation on Private Lands video ... to **John Stubbs**, who built and donated an Eastern Screech Owl box and 10 Eastern Bluebird houses for use in our Wilburn Farm bird house network ... to those who have helped with invasive plant removal, seed collection and dispersal, and a bioblitz at RiverLands Showcase Park and Wilburn Farm: **Elise Livius, Alexis Wysocki, Kevin Kareis, Jasmine Fuller, Lory Conte Hill, Carolyn Brown, Jason Steidel, Greg Lohmeier, Melissa Sisson, Adrian Fox, Crystal Prather, Pat Prosser, Winkler Weinberg, Wendy Hoback, Roland Alston, Diane Hawkins-Cox, John Lewis, Leena Shah, James Stratton, Laura Binford, Samantha Durfey, Luke Wylie, Brittany Heller, Joseph Roberts, Kale Bryant, Lorenza Baker, Erykah Vi, Casey Chaviano, Nick Chaviano, Sophia Story, Robert Herrington, Tina Mullen, Allyson Read, Alexis Alexander, Barbara Powell-Schager, Sally Sears, Cynthia Fleck, Melissa Smith, Anna Benifield, Candace Allison, Colleen Stapleton, Francine Kaplan, Wayne Roberts, Maggie Stephen, Jeanne Shulman, Jessica Ferree, Inyoung Jang, Chanho Kim, Naomi Wilson, Collin Argo, Leah Clements, Kristen Formby, David Formby, Edward Yao, Alex Nazzaro, Nick Berardi, Molly Schechter, Harper Wolf, John Mayes, Owen Rohm, Jane Branscomb, Laura Carruth, Barbara Mahon, Carol Wong, Nathan Hwang, Emily Kalafut, Garrett Beresford, Wesley Hatch**, and **Layla Hudaib** ... to field trip leaders **Kevin O'Toole, Anne McCallum. Abby Cox, Steven Seligsohn, Heather Levy, Roseanne Guerra, Dottie Head, Alicia Thompson, Josh Jackson, Liz Freeman, Terry Miller, Jay Davis, Shannon Fair, Alice Rolls, Becca Dill, John Harty**, and **Jack Bruce** ... to **Mary Lindsey Lewis** for helping with a tabling event at Fernbank.

The Georgia Birding Trail Is Taking Flight in 2026

By Heather Levy, Conservation Program Manager

Our neighbor to the south, Florida, is undeniably one of the birdiest states in the country. If you have spent time there, you have likely noticed large brown signs with a Swallow-tailed Kite that reads "Great Florida Birding Trail" posted along county highways and in parks and refuges. Texas was the first state to officially create a birding trail back in 1996, followed closely by Florida in 2000, and these two are some of the largest and most well-known trails. In the last 25 years, many states followed suit and have developed birding trails that either span the entirety of the state or are concentrated regionally.

To celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2026 and provide a lasting impact for our state's communities and birds, Birds Georgia is excited to become one of the 25+ states with a state-wide birding trail. This will build upon the regional trails developed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Despite the name, a birding trail is not a single, continuous trail, but rather a collection of exemplary birding sites. Georgia's trail will feature sites statewide from the mountains to the coast, to celebrate and highlight our state's biodiversity and natural resources. Individual sites will be grouped into regional sub-trails, providing opportunities to enjoy birding at a local level. In total, we are envisioning a trail that spans more than 400 sites with more than 50 sub-trails. The trail will tie together nature-based tourism, education, and environmental stewardship and is geared toward birders and nature enthusiasts of all levels.

It is not secret that birding as a hobby has soared in the years since the COVID-19 pandemic. As people were forced to stay home, birds became a refuge for many. More people are not only birding in their own yards and local patches, but traveling farther afield to find birds. More than two million visitors come to Georgia annually, seeking opportunities for birding and wildlife viewing. One of our staff's favorite sayings is "birds mean business," because it's true. Annually, $10.6 billion dollars are spent on wildlife watching in Georgia, bringing revenue to local businesses and communities. The development of a trail that highlights sites for both Georgians and travelers could have real impacts on rural communities and local economies.

Our goal is to make the Georgia Birding Trail welcoming to all levels of birders and nature enthusiasts by strategically selecting sites that are easily accessible and have ample amenities, such as restrooms, picnic tables, visitor centers, and interpretive signage. While these types of sites will make up the majority of the trail, we will also include other top birding hotspots that may not be as easily navigable. To make your trip planning and visiting experience as informed as possible, we will be collecting information for each site about access, amenities, and relevant website links. A website is currently in development that will contain maps of the sub-trails and individual sites, as well as general information on birding 101, birding and photography ethics, and birding by habitat.

By partnering with sites that offer educational opportunities through interpretation and nature walks, the trail will help to amplify these efforts through collaboration. We want to foster a sense of stewardship and deep appreciation for nature both near and far, and learning is most effective when people feel comfortable and welcome. We are excited to offer continual

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Think Globally, Act Locally: Become a Bird-friendly City

by Sarah Manning, Coastal Conservation Coordinator

From the mountains to the sea, communities are making strides to benefit birds, be more sustainable, and create a culture of conservation. The saying, "Think Globally, Act Locally" is extremely relevant when it comes to conservation of our feathered friends. Each year, billions of birds migrate across the hemispheres, embarking on journeys we are just beginning to understand.

One extreme is the rufa subspecies of Red Knot, which makes a 9,000-mile journey from Argentina to the Arctic, annually. Georgia's coast is a critical stopover site for Red Knots each spring, providing the fuel they need to continue to their breeding grounds. Want to spot a Knot? Visit the Georgia coast in the springtime (April-May for peak Knot activity) and look for a **CARE-certified guide**. Such guides are trained in the best practices for water-based ecotourism. Bird-based tourism is big business, serving an estimated 2.3 million visitors and residents, contributing 1.8 billion to the economy in Georgia each year.

Another long-distance migrant, the Swainson's Thrush, winters in the old-growth rainforests of Mexico and northern South America. Each spring, these shy, "spectacled" songbirds travel to the northern reaches of Canada's boreal forest to breed before commencing on the southern leg of their migration. Along the way, these nocturnal migrants seem especially susceptible to collisions with glass. Two simple actions that benefit Swainson's Thrushes are to go **Lights Out** during migration and to treat problematic glass to prevent collisions.

Although about seventy percent of North American birds are migratory, some, including the adorably squeaky Brown-headed Nuthatch, are year-round residents in their range. Only found in mature pine forests with open understories in the Southeastern U.S., they are sensitive to logging practices and fire suppression that reduce the number of standing dead trees (snags) that they use for nesting. In Georgia, landowners, municipalities, and land managers can help **improve habitat for Brown-headed Nuthatches** by leaving snags standing, promoting prescribed fire as a management practice, and transitioning to uneven-aged timber stand management wherever practical. Own private land or manage land in timber rotations? Consider Birds Georgia's **Habitat Stewardship program.**

These species represent just a small fraction of the 350 or so regulars found in Georgia. Although the scope of their travel sometimes seems to dwarf the time they spend here with us, we can still contribute greatly to their success along the way.

From a community standpoint, a bird-friendly community does all of the above and more. Take Decatur as an example: From leading educational bird walks in green spaces, preserving the urban tree canopy, creating their own Hometown Habitat award, and implementing sustainability into the very fabric of the community, municipalities like Decatur are uniquely poised to gather grassroots efforts and share them at a larger scale. We are excited to recognize Decatur as our first **Bird City** in Georgia, which was formally recognized with a designation ceremony on Friday, October 17, 2025.

New Member Benefit for 2026: Birds of the World Full Access

Exciting News! Pine Warbler-level members and above ($100+/yr) now get access to Birds of the World, the ultimate online resource for birders and researchers by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, as part of their Birds Georgia membership starting in 2026. Explore species accounts, maps, sounds, videos, and more – now available in English and Spanish.

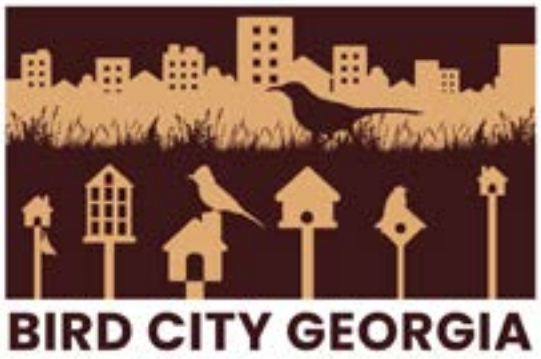
Upgrade or renew your membership at the Pine Warbler level or higher by December 31 to unlock this exclusive benefit.

Learn more at birdsgeorgia.org/joinrenew

Bird City Network Celebrates Bird City Decatur Launch

The Bird City Network is excited to announce the launch of Bird City Georgia with Bird City Decatur. The City of Decatur is the first Georgia City to receive certification as a Bird City in Georgia, and has been designated at the High Flyer level, the highest level of recognition. The designation was approved at a meeting of the Decatur City Council on September 15, and the city was officially designated as a Bird City at a ceremony on October 17.

A collaborative effort between the City of Decatur and the Bird City Network, the Bird City Initiative promotes bird conservation and creates healthier communities for both people and birds across Georgia. Bird City Georgia is led by Birds Georgia with support from the Georgia Native Plant Society and the Georgia Ornithological Society.



"Birds Georgia is thrilled to recognize the City of Decatur as the first city to receive the Bird City designation in the state," says Adam Betuel, co-executive director, interim, of Birds Georgia. "Where birds thrive, people thrive, and the City of Decatur has committed to implement a variety of initiatives that support thriving bird populations and, thus, their residents."

Located in DeKalb County, the City of Decatur is known as a vibrant and walkable community located roughly six miles east of Atlanta. The city has undertaken a range of initiatives to support bird populations, including:

- Habitat Creation and Restoration: The City's Environmental Sustainability Board has created a Hometown Habitat award for residents. This program recognizes residential properties that promote ecological health, resilience, and community engagement. The City of Decatur is working with partners at Legacy Decatur, Trees Atlanta, WoodsKeeper, and the Intown Chapter of the Georgia Native Plant Society to remove invasive plant species and plant more than 400 native plants at Legacy Park.
- Reducing Threats to Birds: This includes implementing measures to minimize light pollution, window strikes, and pesticide use. Project Safe Flight Decatur monitors buildings during the spring and fall migration periods for bird/building collision victims. The City of Decatur has also inventoried all street lighting for Dark Sky compliance and is currently transitioning existing fixtures to dark-sky approved fixtures.
- Promoting Public Awareness: The City of Decatur is committed to educating the community about the importance of bird conservation and engaging citizens in birdwatching and monitoring activities. The City of Decatur and Birds Georgia partner for weekly bird walks at Legacy Park.
- Supporting Research and Monitoring: Decatur's many birders collaborate with scientists to study bird populations and inform conservation efforts through community science and monitoring projects.
- Organizing and Promoting Events for World Migratory Bird Day: By joining the global celebration of migratory birds, Decatur is raising awareness about their long-distance journeys and conservation needs.

Bird City Georgia invites communities across the state to join the initiative and work together to protect and conserve bird populations. By participating in Bird City Georgia, communities can contribute to a larger effort to promote sustainability and biodiversity.

For more information about Bird City Georgia and the other collaborating programs in the Bird City Network map, visit https://birdcity.org/georgia

Celebrate Birds Georgia's Legacy in Style

As we prepare to mark our 100th year in 2026, we're honoring the journey that brought us here. To celebrate our rich history, we're re-releasing past festival T-shirt designs – each one a snapshot of the moments, people, and places that shaped our story. Wear a piece of our legacy, share in the nostalgia, and join us in celebrating a century of connection, community, and conservation.

Check out the following vintage designs:

- The original Bird Fest design, featuring a Brown-headed Nuthatch, designed by Paul Riss
- The 2017 Bird Fest design, featuring a Wood Thrush, designed by David Hale
- The 2018 Bird Fest design, featuring a Pileated Woodpecker, designed by Kyle Brooks (aka Black Cat Tips)
- We're hoping to bring more designs online soon.

Shirts are available in a variety of colors and short- and long-sleeved options in our Bonfire store at https://www.bonfire.com/store/birds-georgia/.

Species Profile: The Ring-necked Duck

By Steve Phenicie

"When I start renaming birds, that one is at the top of my list." I once said that as my colleagues and I gazed at a Ring-necked Duck on a DeKalb County lake during a Christmas Bird Count.

The person who named this bird must have missed an appointment with the optometrist. Oh sure, there's a brown ring around the neck of the male, but it's very hard to see. Meanwhile, the white rings on the bill are obvious. The male is a gleaming black, gray, and white. The female, which is brown, has a white ring toward the end of her bill, and the area around the base is a lighter color than her head. At a distance, look for the distinctive peaked head to help you identify this bird.

This duck nests mostly in the northern United States and Canada and winters in the southern U.S., Mexico, and the Caribbean. In summer it can be found on freshwater marshes, ponds, and bogs, mainly in openings in forested country; in the winter it also likes rivers and bays. These ducks put their nests among dense sedges and other emergent plants, typically building them directly over the water or on floating vegetation; this helps protect them from land-based predators.

They don't do much nest building, however, until the female begins to lay eggs; at this time the nest is typically just a flimsy collection of bent-over plant stems. The female then makes a simple bowl out of sedges and other plants that she gathers from nearby. She lines the nest with her own down feathers. The finished nest is up to 11 inches across, with a cup two to four inches deep. There the female lays eight to 14 eggs, and there's usually a ramp built to help her get in and out of it while incubating.

Ring-necked Ducks feed by diving underwater, rather than by tipping up as "dabbling" ducks do, going after submerged plants and aquatic invertebrates. Plants they like include pondweed, water lilies, wild celery, wild rice, millet, sedges, and arrowhead. They also eat mollusks (swallowing them whole and crushing the shells in their gizzard) as well as snails, caddisflies, dragonfly nymphs, midges, earthworms, and leeches.

Ring-necked Duck. Photo by Mick Thompson.

Some cool facts about Ring-necked Ducks:

- During fall migration, they can form immense flocks. Several hundred thousand congregate each fall on certain lakes in Minnesota to feed on wild rice.
- While on their breeding grounds occasionally they get attacked by the much larger Common Loon, the Red-necked Grebe, and even the much smaller Pied-billed Grebe.
- The oldest known Ring-necked Duck was at least 20 years, 5 months old. He was banded in Louisiana in 1964 and shot in Minnesota in 1983.

Among the many places in Georgia where they were reported last winter were Bear Creek Reservoir in Jackson County, Lake Windward in Alpharetta, Piedmont Park in Atlanta, Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, Phinizy Swamp in Augusta, and Haig Mill Lake Park in Dalton.

The Georgia Birding Trail *(Continued from Page 5)*

bird walks, workshops, and talks that are geared toward a diverse range of audiences, and hope to instill a feeling of community for like-minded folks and inspiration for the next generation of young environmental stewards.

The official Georgia Birding Trail logo features the Southeastern American Kestrel, an iconic cavity-nesting falcon species. This subspecies of the American Kestrel is a non-migratory resident across the Southeast and requires open, fire-maintained sandhills, savannahs, and grasslands. They are declining due to habitat loss, habitat mismanagement, and a loss of natural nest sites. The kestrel symbolizes power, beauty, and the vital tie between habitat health and conservation. You can find kestrels throughout the state by exploring in the right habitat and keeping your eye to the sky, and several of our trail sites will be in kestrel habitat!

Partnerships are key for birding trails, and most state-wide trail efforts are managed by multiple partners, including state agencies, state or local Audubon chapters, and state ornithological societies. We are excited to be partnering with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, local Audubon chapters, and Georgia tourism agencies to select, promote, and celebrate sites. Our growing list of partners is invaluable to helping with a project this large in scale – both geographically and conceptually. As we launch the trail next year, we will have celebrations at select sites from each region to celebrate the trail, the local community and partners, and, of course, birds. We will post event information on our website and in *Bird Buzz*. We look forward to birding with you at a trail site soon.

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

Raffle Tickets: $25 each or 6 for $120

Get ready for a getaway that's all about birds, breezes, and bliss! Little St. Simons Island has generously donated a two-night stay for two at The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island for our 2025 Holiday Party Raffle. This all-inclusive escape includes everything you need for a true island retreat such as cozy accommodations, round-trip boat transfers, guided naturalist-led adventures, and all recreational gear.

The lucky winner will be drawn at our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 7, at 3:00 PM at Trees Atlanta Kendeda TreeHouse. Don't worry if you can't make it since you don't have to be present to win! The trip must be used by December 15, 2025, so mark your calendars for your future adventure.

Grab yours now at www.birdsgeorgia.org/upcoming-events.

Give the Gift of Membership This Holiday Season

Give the gift of a Birds Georgia membership to friends and family and introduce them to an inspiring world of bird appreciation, conservation, and habitat protection. It's also another great way to extend your own support of Georgia Audubon's work building places where birds and people thrive.

Gift membership recipients will receive a letter and new member welcome packet from Birds Georgia notifying them of your generosity. All regular membership benefits are bestowed upon gift recipients.

Following your gift membership purchase, you may also download a Gift Membership Card to print or email to your gift recipient. A selection of different card themes is available to choose from. Purchase a gift membership today at www.birdsgeorgia.org/joinrenew.

Flocking Together for Georgia's Birds – Help Us Meet Our Goal by December 31

As we prepare to celebrate Birds Georgia's Centennial in 2026, we're closing out the year with a bold goal: to raise $75,000 to power the next century of bird conservation, education, and community engagement. We're close, but we need your help to reach the finish line.

Your gift today supports habitat restoration, STEM-based education for students and educators, free field trips throughout the state, coastal bird monitoring, and expanding statewide conservation programs that are all vital efforts that help birds and people thrive together.

Join us in building a legacy for the next 100 years of birds in Georgia. Please make your gift by December 31 at www.birdsgeorgia.org/donate

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Field Trip: Legacy Park | Leader: Josh Jackson
Sunday, November 2, at 8:30 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Newman Wetlands Center | Leader: John Harty
Saturday, November 8, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Constitution Lakes | Leader: Becca Dill
Saturday, November 8, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Sams Lake Bird Sanctuary | Leader: Kevin Hayes
Sunday, November 9, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, November 12, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips

Field Trip: Little Mulberry Park , Fence Road Entrance | Leader: Liz Freeman
Saturday, November 22, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Red-headed Woodpecker.
Photo by Susan Berthelot.

Field Trip: Chattahoochee Nature Center | Leader: Dottie Head and Alicia Evans
Wednesday, November 12, at 8:00 AM
(See your *Bird Buzz* e-newsletter for a discount code for free registration for Birds Georgia members.)
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips

Sparrow Identification Workshop, with Adam Betuel
Webinar Part 1: Tuesday, November 18, at 7:00 PM
Webinar Part 2: Thursday, November 20, at 7:00 PM
Optional Field Trip: Saturday, November 22, 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM (Space is limited.)

Ready to sharpen your skills identifying those "little brown jobs?" Often skulking, elusive, and confusingly similar, sparrows can make fall warblers seem easy. Join Adam Betuel, Birds Georgia's interim co-executive director, for this Master Class that will help participants learn more about the many sparrow species that winter in Georgia. Two virtual class sessions will be held via Zoom to teach participants about sparrow taxonomy, behaviors, habitat, and identification. Participants will then have the chance to practice their identification skills in the field with a guided trip to find and observe sparrows in their preferred habitat. Potential species include Field, Swamp, Fox, Savannah, and Vesper Sparrows, in addition to more common resident and wintering species.

Tuesday, November 18, 7:00 to 8:00 PM: Webinar Part 1
- What is a sparrow
- Taxonomy
- Physical adaptations/diet/behavior
- Habitat preferences and movement
- Why they are challenging
- Tips for species identification

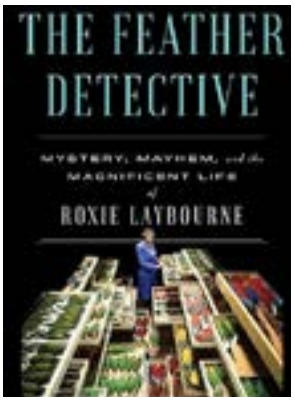
Thursday, November 20, 7:00 to 8:00 PM: Webinar Part 2
- Detailed species overviews
- Separating similar species
- What is expected in Georgia
- Non-sparrows that can cause confusion
- Conservation concerns

The webinars will be recorded and a link sent to registered participants. To learn more or register, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/upcoming-events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER *(Continued from Page 9)*

Early Birds Book Club: November Meeting
Sunday, November 23, at 2:00 PM
Virtually via Zoom Meeting
Free to Attend
Learn more or register at www.birdsgeorgia.org/early-birds-book-club



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.

For November, the Early Birds will read *The Feather Detective: Mystery, Mayhem, and the Magnificent Life of Roxie Laybourne*, by Chris Sweeney.

DECEMBER

Field Trip: Legacy Park | Leader: Josh Jackson
Sunday, December 7, at 8:30 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, December 10, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Birding with GAGGLE at Lullwater Preserve | Leader: Jay Davis and Alice Rolls
Saturday, December 20, at 8:30 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

Royal Terns.
Photo by Susan Bethelot.

JANUARY

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, January 14, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.birdsgeorgia.org/field-trips.

American Kestrel. Photo by Steve Rushing.

Barred Owl. Photo by Mike Ayling.

Wingbars

BIRDS GEORGIA
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Save the Date: Birds Georgia Holiday Party and Annual Meeting

Sunday, December 7, 3:00 to 5:00 PM, Birds Georgia Office at Trees Atlanta, 825 Warner St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30310

Free for Members | $12 for Non-members

Join Birds Georgia for our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 7, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at Birds Georgia's home at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda TreeHouse and help us celebrate our many successes in 2025 and look ahead to our Centennial Year in 2026. Enjoy an evening of light bites and drinks as we reflect on the progress we've made in creating places where birds and people thrive. We'll also proudly present the Scottie Johnson Spirit Award, honoring the remarkable legacy of Eleanor "Scottie" Scott Johnson, whose kindness, perseverance, and passion for birds continue to inspire us.

Register at https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/upcoming-events.html