



wingbars

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Lights Out Atlanta Will Help Protect Migrating Birds

By Adam Betuel, Director of Conservation

Since its launch two years ago, Atlanta Audubon's **Project Safe Flight Atlanta** (PSFA) has focused on gaining a better understanding of bird-building collisions in metro Atlanta. The end goal has always been to take action to reduce the number of bird-strike deaths in metro Atlanta. In the past year alone more than 500 birds representing 70 species were collected by volunteers and staff during PSFA patrols. While a few birds survived, the vast majority of birds were not so lucky.

The two main causes of bird-building collisions are reflective or transparent glass and nocturnal lighting.

Constructing bird-friendly buildings and retrofitting problematic glass facades can be expensive and time consuming. However, simply turning off or reducing unnecessary nighttime lights is much easier to achieve and can have far-reaching benefits. By reducing nighttime lighting, buildings not only save the lives of countless birds, but they can also save money by being more eco-friendly. While there are a myriad of other factors affecting bird-building collisions, we know from other nationwide efforts that "lights out" programs can be an effective way to reduce collision-related bird deaths.



With this in mind, Atlanta Audubon is excited to launch **Lights Out Atlanta**. This program, modeled after other successful programs nationwide, aims to reduce or eliminate unnecessary nighttime lighting. While we encourage these modifications year-round, our primary focus will be during spring and fall migration when collision rates are at their highest. Beginning in March 2017, **Lights Out Atlanta** will be accepting enrollments from large, privately managed buildings as well as from homeowners who wish to make their residences safer for nocturnal migrants.

Participants will pledge the following:

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Extinguish spot and flood lights
- Substitute strobe lighting where possible
- Reduce lobby and atrium lighting where possible
- Turn off interior lighting, especially on upper floors
- Substitute task and area lighting for workers staying late
- Down-shield exterior lighting or limit to ground level



Nighttime lighting confuses migrating birds. Photo by John Behr.

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Wingbars is the official newsletter of Atlanta Audubon Society and is published 10 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 Atlanta Audubon Society.



From the Executive Director

By Nikki Belmonte

The most exciting time of year is upon us—spring migration. There is no better time to invite people to experience a little bit of the birding world. Through the lens of birds, we can introduce people to so many aspects of the natural world. We can also create passionate advocates for wildlife and natural resources. This is our intention with Atlanta Bird Fest, to show the community the hidden gems of metro Atlanta's natural world and to create empathy.

Engaging people is what Audubon chapters do best. It is more important now than ever that we spread our welcoming wings as federal policies shift to deregulate and underfund our nation's natural resource and environmental programs that ensure critical protection for species and habitats. As National Audubon Society's President, David Yarnold, stated in an open letter to the Audubon network in March, Audubon members are "a credible voice for commonsense conservation, and that transcends party or politics." He speaks the truth: birds are a non-partisan issue. Where birds thrive, people thrive, period.

So as the leaves unfurl and our neotropical feathered friends arrive, let's leverage the rites of spring to engage



Ecologist Barbara Ballentine teaching teachers about birds.
Photo by Deb Jenkins.

more people in a unique outdoor experience. Participate in Atlanta Audubon's activities this season, and help me spread the word about the variety of Atlanta Bird Fest opportunities. The future of our birds—and of us—depends on it.



Field Trip Coordinator Needed

Atlanta Audubon's current Field Trip Coordinator, Mary Kimberly, will be retiring her post in July. We're seeking someone enthusiastic and organized to fill this important volunteer role. The Field Trip Coordinator is responsible for soliciting and managing field trips. This person interacts with Atlanta Audubon staff, volunteer field trip leaders, property supervisors, and people from the community. The role requires approximately eight to ten hours per month and a commitment of at least one year. Please contact Nikki Belmonte at nikki@atlantaaudubon.org if you are interested in this position.

Atlanta Bird Fest Kick-Off Event:

Join Us for Our Spring Open House on Saturday, April 15

Stop in on Saturday, April 15, between 11:00 AM and 2:30 PM for Atlanta Audubon's Open House at Blue Heron Nature Preserve, located at 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA 30342. We will be hosting many family-friendly events, including a guided bird walk, a scavenger hunt along the trails of the Preserve, live educational animals from AWARE Wildlife Center, the National Audubon Photography Awards Exhibit, critters from The Amphibian Foundation, an owl pellet dissection activity, and our Student Art Exhibit, featuring submissions from local 1st through 5th graders representing Georgia's native birds.

In addition, Chris Wood from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will be on site between 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM for a meet-and-greet and to discuss his work at Cornell. Chris is the Assistant Director of Information Science at Cornell, where he works on a variety of projects, including

eBird, Birds of North America, and Neotropical Birds. He is widely

recognized as a leading authority on bird identification and distribution and has written and consulted on various books, popular literature, and scientific literature on birds. These activities are all built around Chris's primary interest: developing ways to connect birders with researchers and the conservation community to better understand and conserve birds and their ecosystems. Last year, Chris led the Cornell Lab's Big Day challenge team, Team Sapsucker, to a Big Day state record in Colorado.

The Open House is free and open to the public, but we do ask that you register for the event at www.atlantaudubon.org/abf-events to receive all event communications.



Chris Wood



Atlanta Bird Fest Registration Is Open

Spots still remain in select Atlanta Bird Fest events. Plan to join us for a month-long celebration of Georgia's birds in one of the more than twenty Atlanta Bird Fest field trips, workshops, and other events between April 15 and May 14. More information and event descriptions may be found at www.atlantaudubon.org/atlanta-bird-fest.

ASK CHIPPY

Dear Chippy,

Flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds (RWBB) have been visiting my feeders each morning and evening for a few weeks now. All of them are a deep rich black and have bright red and yellow coverts. There do not appear to be any females in the flock. Are these flocks all male? Where would the females be? Do they form separate flocks?

Dear Curious Birder,

That's a fun and interesting question. Atlanta is home to both resident and migratory RWBB. Populations of RWBB may be found from Central America throughout the U.S. and into Canada and Alaska. Considered a pest bird by some farmers, RWBB populations were severely impacted by bounty hunters until the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed in 1918. Today, RWBB are still declining due to the loss of their marshland habitats. RWBB are breathtaking in large numbers as they move through the air in a sort of dance.

Female RWBB are a streaky brown all over and are often mistaken for sparrows, though RWBB have a sharply pointed conical bill, which distinguishes them from sparrows. Female RWBB migrate later than males, which depart earlier to find breeding territory. In 1914, Arthur Allen wrote a life history of RWBB. Living in Ithaca, NY, he found that there are seven groups or migratory waves. The first three consist of the adult males arriving between early



February and early March. These adult males are just passing through. The male resident birds begin arriving by end of March. The fourth wave brings in the females, mixed with late flying and immature males during the last weeks of March and into early April. Around this time, you may begin seeing female-only flocks of RWBB. This continues until resident female and males are in place.

Why? The males strike out early for territory. Their reproductive organs are smaller than late-flying and resident males. Females arrive when the air temperature has warmed enough to support insect life. Females need plenty of bugs to provide sufficient calcium and protein necessary to lay eggs.

RWBB are often found along streams, wetlands, and marshes during nesting season. You should start seeing female RWBB by the end of March.

Good Birding,



*Thanks for all you do,
Curious Birder*

-Chippy

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT on Declan Greenwald

By Steve Phenice

(This is the 19th in a series on Atlanta Audubon volunteers.)

Not every Atlanta Audubon volunteer has been around since Passenger Pigeons darkened the skies. In fact, some of them are high school students. One such is Declan Greenwald, an 11th grader at Ben Franklin Academy, a private school of about 100 students that is housed on the campus of Emory University and emphasizes individualized instruction.

One of Declan's teachers happened to meet Audubon's conservation director, Adam Betuel, and introduced Adam to Declan, who says he has long been interested in animal behavior, especially ornithology. Adam recruited Declan to help monitor the bird populations at the Confluence for both the National Fish and Wildlife Federation grant that Atlanta Audubon had at that location as well as for the grant that South Fork Conservancy has along its trails. The Confluence—in case you aren't familiar with it—is where Ga. 400, Interstate 85, the Buford Highway Connector, and Peachtree Creek meet.

"It was a way not only for the monitoring to be completed but for me to find and train interested

volunteers. Declan also did some scouting for Project Safe Flight on Emory's campus and did a little bit of monitoring in Midtown, finding a Sora one morning that had unfortunately collided with a building," Adam says.

Declan, who lives near Piedmont Park, says he got interested in animals when his family rehabilitated a squirrel that had been hit by a car. The squirrel eventually died, but the family then got a parrot, which prompted him to read different studies about their behavior. This led to an interest in other birds.



Declan Greenwald

At school he has been president of the Green Club, which works to reduce the school's carbon footprint, and the Philanthropy Club, which raises money for charities. He's also gotten involved in hydroponic gardening. He'll soon be filling out college applications and is thinking about small New England schools such as Wesleyan and Hampshire.

He's interested in studying physics, ornithology, or film making but admits that it will be hard to find a career that incorporates all three.

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to the invasives-munching goats that improved the bird habitat this winter at Murphey Candler Park ... to the humans who do the grunt work that improves bird habitat at Atlanta Audubon project sites as well as at places such as Clyde Shepherd and Reynolds nature preserves ... to our bird walk leaders for March: **Jason Ward, Roseanne Guerra, Chris O'Neal, Angie Jenkins, Anne McCallum, Lieren Forbes, Rob McDonough, Dave Butler, Mary Kimberly, Vinod Babu, Gus Kaufmann, Adam Betuel, Joy Carter, Jay Davis, and Sheila Stevens** ... to **Bob Jensen** with the Chocoy Raptor Center in Marquette, Michigan, for presenting at the February monthly meeting ... to the **Chattahoochee Nature Center** for bringing a Red-tailed Hawk for the February monthly meeting ... to **Mary Lou Collins, Gina Charles, Monica Ritchie, Sandy Miller, Larry Stephens, Max Brown, and Anita Chilcut** for helping with Peel & Stick for the March issue of *Wingbars* ... to **Mary Nevil** for maintaining the Atlanta Audubon library ... to **Mary Nevil and Laura Waddick** for helping with the 2017 Atlanta Bird Fest postcards ... to Atlanta Audubon Board members **Joy Carter, Angelou Ezeilo, Jairo Garcia, Bob Johnson, Charles Loeb, Tom Painter, Esther Stokes, Victor Williams, and Amanda Woomer** for assisting at the February monthly meeting that had record-breaking attendance ... to **Melinda Langston, Scottie Johnson, and Laura Northrop** for their assistance with our Sanctuary Certifier training ... to **Larry Stevens, Sandy Murray, and Adam Betuel** for their help with educational outreach.

Lights Out Atlanta Will Help Protect Migrating Birds

(continued from page 1)

Several other cities in the North, including New York City, Toronto, and Baltimore, have implemented lights out programs and have experienced measured declines in bird deaths. Atlanta Audubon is hoping to have similar results. We are excited to partner with the **Southface Energy Institute's Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge** to launch **Lights Out Atlanta**, and we will be working together in the coming years to expand this program in Atlanta and the Southeast.

Atlanta is home to a multitude of sustainability organizations, eco-friendly groups, and a strong environmental community. Atlanta takes pride in its reputation as "The City in the Forest." In the coming years, Atlanta Audubon will be working to harness this collective energy to make Atlanta a welcoming home for both migratory and resident birds.

You can pledge to participate in Lights Out Atlanta, learn more about the issue, and even register your place of employment at <http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/lights-out-atlanta>.



Joel Owen, Project Safe Flight Intern, and Adam Betuel, Conservation Director, are shown here with the birds collected during 2016 Project Safe Flight patrols.

EYES on EDUCATION

2017 Hog Island Scholarship Winners Announced

by Melanie Furr

Atanta Audubon Society is pleased to announce our scholarship winners for 2017. The recipients will attend National Audubon Society's ornithology camps this summer on Hog Island, Maine.

As the recipient of the Louisa Echols Scholarship, **Kimberly Johnson**, who teaches gifted students at Emma Hutchinson Elementary School (Atlanta Public Schools), will attend Educator's Week on Hog Island. Kimberly began birdwatching with her father as a young girl, and they have been birding together in all fifty states and on five continents. Although her father is 90 years old, Kimberly is trying to teach him how to use eBird! In addition to birding, she enjoys gardening, hunting, and fishing. A member of the Atlanta Audubon flock, Kimberly also participated in our Flying Together professional development workshop for teachers last summer at Amicalola Falls. Already she has engaged her students in many bird-themed lessons and made some bird-friendly improvements on the school campus, including the installation of a nest box for the Brown-headed Nuthatch.

With a bird-friendly garden being installed this spring at Hutchinson Elementary as part of our Connecting Students with STEM through Birds project, generously funded by the Morgens West Foundation, Kimberly will return to school this fall with a beautiful outdoor classroom to implement all the great teaching ideas she brings back from Hog Island.



*Julia Weil, Hog Island Youth Scholarship Winner.
Photo by Joe Scarpelli.*



*Kimberly Johnson is the recipient of the Louisa Echols Scholarship.
Photo by Christopher Johnson.*

Julia Weil, a sophomore at Chamblee Charter High School, will attend Audubon's Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens camp as the recipient of the Edward Barnsley Scholarship for Youth. Julia is an all-around bird enthusiast. She has been caring for small tropical birds since she was 8 years old and currently cares for a recently-rescued parakeet and a conure she has had for four years. She and her father maintain several feeders and nest boxes at their house as well. They make their own suet and are currently building a jelly/orange feeder to entice orioles to their yard. Julia's interest in serious birding and ornithology has blossomed in recent years. Last summer she attended Camp TALON, and she participated in her first Christmas Bird Count this past winter. (A talented bird photographer as well, Julia captured the shots of our CBC team's best finds, a Greater White-fronted Goose and some Vesper Sparrows.) Julia is excited to learn about possible careers in conservation and ornithology while at Hog Island, but she is especially excited to see the puffins!

***Congratulations to Kimberly and Julia.
We can't wait to hear about your adventures.***

LIVE and LEARN

With These Atlanta Audubon Society Workshops

Warbler Workshop 2017

Wednesday, April 5 • 6:00-9:00 PM

Few families of songbirds get birders more excited—and frustrated and confused—than the wood-warblers, some of the most colorful birds in North America. With more than 20 breeding species in Georgia, these elusive and quick birds can be a challenge even for experienced birders.

Our Warbler Workshop, held at the Atlanta Audubon office with Master Birder instructor Theresa Hartz, will cover all of Georgia's warbler species, concentrating on key field marks, tips for song recognition, and sorting out tricky identifications.

Space is limited, so register early at www.atlantaaudubon.org/adult-workshops

FEE: \$40 Atlanta Audubon members
\$50 Non-members
\$35 Master Birders in good volunteer standing

Note: If you register for the Warbler Weekend, you should not also register for the Warbler Workshop. A Warbler ID class is included in the cost of the Warbler Weekend.

Camp TALON

(Teen Adventures Learning Ornithology and Nature)

New in 2017: Two sessions!

June 3-8 and June 17-22 – St. Simons Island, Ga.

TALON is a one-of-a kind camp for teens with a strong interest in the outdoors, birding and ecology. Each day the adventure begins as campers travel by charter bus to barrier islands, state parks, wildlife management areas, and refuges along Georgia's coast. Evening classes challenge our campers with presentations and quizzes about bird identification, songs, behavior, flight, migration, and other "birdy" topics. At camp's end, students return home with new and improved birding skills, a better understanding of coastal ecology, and great memories.

Registration (includes a \$100 non-refundable deposit at time of registration)

- \$425 – Early registration through April 7 (balance due April 7)
- \$500 – after April 8 (balance due May 5)

For more information and to register, visit: <http://www.georgiawildlife.com/CampTALON>



Camp Talon Participants. Photo by Patrick Maurice.

Warbler Weekend Workshop 2017

Class TBD (April)

Trip to North Georgia Mountains: May 6 to 7

Stretch your neck and warm up those ears. It's time to prepare for spring migration. Georgia hosts more than 20 breeding warblers, and this workshop will cover them all. This two-part workshop will begin with a Warbler ID class with Giff Beaton held in April at the Atlanta Audubon office. The class will concentrate on the key identification characteristics of warbler species, as well as tips to song recognition. Participants will put their ID skills to the test during the weekend field trip with Master Birder instructor Theresa Hartz on Saturday, May 6, and Sunday, May 7, in the North Georgia mountains, where it's possible to find more than 20 species of warblers, many of which will be singing on their breeding grounds.

Participants in recent years have seen 20 warbler species, including the unusual Brewster's Warbler, a hybrid formed by a Golden-winged Warbler and a Blue-winged Warbler. The group will visit some of the mountain hot spots as well as some new warbler-rich locations.

Space is limited, so register early. To register online, visit www.atlantaaudubon.org/adult-workshops.

For more information about the workshop, contact Theresa Hartz at jthartz50@gmail.com. For registration questions, contact Education Director Melanie Furr, at melanie@atlantaaudubon.org or 678.973.2437.

FEE: (excludes food and lodging)
\$150 Atlanta Audubon members \$175 Non-members



Worm-eating Warbler by Giff Beaton.

Youth Birding Competition 2017

The Youth Birding Competition (YBC), occurring during the height of spring migration, aims to encourage a greater interest in and appreciation of birds and the outdoors. Competing against other teams in the same age group, youth find as many species as they can during a 24-hour period from 5:00 P.M. Saturday, April 29, to 5:00 P.M. Sunday, April 30. Teams may use as much or as little of this 24-hour period as they like, visiting as much or as little of the state as they want, as long as they cross the finish line and turn in their list by 5:00 P.M. The competition ends with a wildlife show and awards banquet at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in Mansfield, Georgia.

Participation is free.

Register by March 31 at www.georgiawildlife.com/YBC



Youth Birding Competition by Melanie Furr.

FIELD TRIPS

are open to the public and free (unless otherwise noted). We welcome everyone from beginners to advanced birders. No registration is necessary except where indicated below. The only fees that apply are parking fees at some venues such as state and national parks. Any applicable fees will be listed in the field trip description on the website.

Editor's note: In the interest of saving space (and trees), Atlanta Audubon is reducing the field trip listings in our newly redesigned *Wingbars* to date, location, time, contact information, and GPS coordinates. Details about trips, including driving directions, can be found on our website: www.atlantaaudubon.org/field-trips. As always, we encourage field trip participants to check the Atlanta Audubon Field Trips web page before any of these trips to check for updates, changes, typo corrections, etc., and for the most up-to-date information. Also, frequently trips are added after the newsletter deadline has passed.

Saturday, April 1
Piedmont Park (Fulton Co.)

8:00 AM
Leader: Jason Ward
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.759.7770
GPS: N 33 47.025 W 84 22.746

Saturday, April 1
Chattahoochee Nature Center (Fulton Co.)

8:00 AM
Co-sponsored by Chattahoochee Nature Center
Leader: Iris Schumacher
Cell contact morning of walk: 404.724.3153
GPS: 34.002356, -84.382846

Saturday, April 1
Fernbank Forest (DeKalb Co.)

9:00 AM
Co-sponsored by Fernbank Museum of Natural History
Leader: Jay Davis
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.644.6798
GPS: 33.77540, -84.32936
Registration required: 404.929.6400

Saturday, April 8
Oakland Cemetery (Fulton Co.)

8:30 AM
Co-sponsored by Historic Oakland Foundation
Leader: David Kuechenmeister
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.822.8089
GPS: 33.7474539 -84.3751184

Tuesday, April 11
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (Cobb Co.)

7:30 AM
Co-sponsored by National Park Service
Leader: Joel McNeal
Cell contact, morning of walk: 617.259.0944
GPS: N 33 59.127 W 84 34.852

Wednesday, April 12
Reynolds Nature Preserve (Clayton Co.)

8:00 AM
Leader: Anne McCallum
Cell contact, morning of walk: 678.642.7148
GPS: 33.601464, -84.346874

Saturday, April 15
Piedmont Park (Fulton Co.)

8:00 AM
Leader: Jason Ward
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.759.7770
GPS: N 33 47.025 W 84 22.746

Monday, April 17
Frazier-Rowe Park (DeKalb Co.)

8:00 AM
Co-sponsored by the Friends of Frazier-Rowe
Leader: Ralph Smith
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.358.2166
GPS: 33.824903, -84.289595

Tuesday, April 18
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (Cobb Co.)

7:30 AM
Co-sponsored by National Park Service
Leader: Joel McNeal
Cell contact, morning of walk: 617.259.0944
GPS: N 33 59.127 W 84 34.852

Saturday, April 22
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (Cobb Co.)

7:30 AM
Co-sponsored by National Park Service
Leaders: Bob and Deb Zaremba
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.791.5006
GPS: N 33 59.127 W 84 34.852

Saturday, April 22
Stone Mountain Songbird Habitat and Trail (DeKalb Co.)

9:00 AM
Co-sponsored by Fernbank Science Center and the Stone Mountain Memorial Association
Leader: Chris Showalter
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.625.7004
GPS: 33.79548, -84.14609

Saturday, April 22
Morgan Falls Overlook Park (Fulton Co.)

8:30 AM
Co-sponsored by the City of Sandy Springs
Leader: Roseanne Guerra
Cell contact, morning of walk: 678.358.4916
GPS: 33.97004, -84.37996
Registration required: <http://www.sandyspringsga.gov/registration> or 770.730.5600

Sunday, April 23
Noonday Creek (west section) (Cobb Co.)

8:00 AM
Leader: Angelia Jenkins
Cell contact, morning of walk: 678.570.4891
GPS: 34.00125, -84.59163

Monday, April 24
Mary Scott Nature Park (DeKalb Co.)

8:00 AM
Co-sponsored by the Friends of Frazier-Rowe
Leader: Ralph Smith
Cell contact, morning of walk: 404.358.2166
GPS: 33.856069, -84.279227

Tuesday, April 25
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (Cobb Co.)

7:30 AM
Co-sponsored by National Park Service
Leader: Joel McNeal
Cell contact, morning of walk: 617.259.0944
GPS: N 33 59.127 W 84 34.852

Friday, April 28
South River Trail (DeKalb Co.)

7:30 AM
Leaders: Stan Chapman and Ralph Smith
Cell contacts, morning of walk: 404.775.0650 (Stan); 404.358.2166 (Ralph)
GPS: 33.6537562, -84.186523

If you would like to lead a field trip, contribute ideas for places to go, or give feedback about leaders, trips, or the field trip directions, please e-mail Field Trip Director Mary Kimberly at mmkimberly1954@gmail.com.



ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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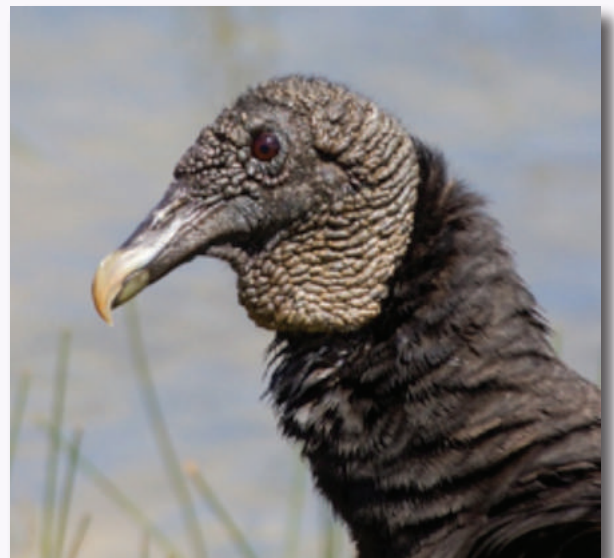
April Monthly Meeting

Seasonality and Flight Behavior of Vultures in Georgia with Jim Ferrari

Sunday, April 23, 2017, 3:30 to 5:30 PM at Manuel's Tavern

Jim Ferrari, Professor of Biology at Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, will join us for our April Monthly Meeting to discuss "Seasonality and Flight Behavior of Vultures in Georgia." Vultures play an important role in Georgia ecosystems as they consume roadkill, recycle elements, and suppress the spread of disease. In this talk, Jim will address a number of questions: *What kinds of vultures do we have in Georgia? Do they migrate, and if so, when? What are the social dynamics of our two vulture species, and how is this reflected in their flocking and flight behavior?*

Join us for this social and casual afternoon talk.



Black Vulture by Dan Vickers.

Manuel's Tavern is located at 602 N. Highland Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307. Our monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Free parking is readily available to the south of the building. Food and drink are available for purchase.