



VOLUME XLIV, ISSUE 5, ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Atlanta Audubon Begins Installation of Bird-friendly Habitat Educational Exhibit in Piedmont Park

By Lillie Kline



Goldfinch on coneflower stem, by Dan Vickers

At the end of April, Atlanta Audubon broke ground on a Bird-friendly Habitat Educational Exhibit in Piedmont Park. As the excavation began, I was greeted by my first-of-the-year Blue Grosbeak perching fortuitously in the site. The "Exhibit," located in the Piedmont Commons beneath local brewery Orpheus's balcony, will feature a Native Plant Demonstration Garden as well as a 24-foot-tall Chimney Swift Tower—Georgia's first. The project is a cooperative effort between Atlanta Audubon Society and Piedmont Park Conservancy and was originally made possible by a generous donation from a private individual. The project is being fully funded by Atlanta Audubon Society thanks to this donation, as well as a National Audubon Plants for Birds Burke Grant.

As urban and suburban development continue throughout metro Atlanta, it is crucial to not simply set aside nature preserves for wildlife, but also to create spaces where both people and wildlife thrive. Improving the quality of the landscape matrix by planting a diversity of native plants provides high-quality resources to wildlife and also connects our large swathes of habitat, from Kennesaw Mountain to Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge. Piedmont Park provides an excellent example of how public green space can be a win-win for both people and wildlife. One of Atlanta's most popular parks, Piedmont Park is an urban haven for wildlife while providing countless recreation opportunities for metro Atlanta residents. The park hosts more than 160 species of birds throughout the year, and offers important migratory stopover habitat.

Located along Clear Creek, the Native Plant Demonstration Garden will provide high-quality habitat for birds and wildlife, and educate the public on the value of native plants. The garden will be a very visible example of an Atlanta Audubon wildlife sanctuary and will also serve as a location for future sanctuary certification trainings. Consisting of an assortment of native grasses and long-lived perennials, the garden will be a designed plant community that mimics a natural meadow ecosystem and invites exploration by birds, people, and pollinators.

"In the last decade a whole new concept in garden design has been developed—the idea of designed plant communities. Plants that thrive in the same conditions can be utilized together, in



Esther Stokes, Atlanta Audubon board chair, demonstrates the location of the Chimney Swift tower in the landscape. Photo by Lillie Kline.

structured plantings, to create resilient landscapes that can persist over time with management, not traditional maintenance," says Esther Stokes, Atlanta Audubon board chair, landscape architect, and lead designer of the garden. "Today we want to experience places that remind us of wildness, and these designed plant communities intend to do just that. This concept makes perfect sense to an ecologist like myself, as designed communities not only add year-round beauty to our gardens but also provide many resources for wildlife." The plant palette will include bird-friendly favorites such as Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), Joe-pye Weed (*Eupatorium sp.*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), and Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*).

The second feature, a Chimney Swift Tower, provides a summer nesting location as well as a roosting site. Common in urban areas, Chimney

(Continued on Page 5)

INSIDE

- From the Executive Director 2
- Habitat Restoration Fund 2
- Atlanta Bird Fest Thanks 3
- Ask Chippy 3
- Volunteer Spotlight 4
- A Million Thanks 4
- Early Bird Book Club 4
- In Memory of Scotty Johnson.... 5
- Introducing "Shep" 6
- Birding Through a Child's Eyes .. 6
- Field Trips & Live and Learn..... 7
- Sanctuary Tour Sponsorships.... 7
- Monthly Meeting Info..... 8



<https://www.linkedin.com>
Search "Atlanta Audubon"



AtlantaAudubonSociety



@AtlantaGAudubon



Board of Directors 2018

Esther Stokes | Chair
Stokes Landscape Design

Robert Johnson | Vice Chair
Principal Financial Group

Ellen Miller | Secretary
State of Georgia

Charles Loeb | Treasurer
Retired CFO

Linda DiSantis | Past Chair
The DiSantis Law Firm, LLC

Craig Bell
Georgia Power

Joy Carter
Friends of Constitution Lakes

Gina Charles
Community Volunteer/Philanthropist

Roarke Donnelly
Oglethorpe University

Angelou Ezeilo
Greening Youth Foundation

Shannon Fair
TransUnion

Jairo Garcia
Consultant, Climate Policies and Renewables

Melinda Langston
Retired, City of Atlanta

Rusty Pritchard
Tearfund

David Schaefer
Latin American Association

Michael Wall
Georgia Organics

Amanda Woomeer
The Carter Center

STAFF

Nikki Belmonte | Executive Director
nikki@atlantaaudubon.org

Adam Betuel | Director of Conservation
adam@atlantaaudubon.org

Melanie Furr | Director of Education
melanie@atlantaaudubon.org

Michelle Hamner | Director of Development
michelle@atlantaaudubon.org

Dottie Head | Director of Membership and Communications | *Wingbars* Editor
dottie@atlantaaudubon.org

Victor Fioresi | Administrative and Finance Manager
victor@atlantaaudubon.org

Lillie Kline | Conservation Program Manager
lillie@atlantaaudubon.org

Mim Eisenberg
Wingbars Proofreader
mim@wordcraftservices.com

AKME Graphics | Proforma
Wingbars Design | Printing

COORDINATORS

Teresa Lyle | Field Trip Director
teresalyle0@gmail.com

Melinda Langston | Wildlife Sanctuary Program Coordinator
sanctuary@atlantaaudubon.org

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

Summer is upon us, and so is new life in the bird world. If you have been lucky enough

to observe birds courting each other, building nests, and raising chicks, then you know that awe factor in watching life unfurl in front of you. This spring we have had two opportunities to sneak a peek into the private lives of our yard birds. In late March a pair of Carolina Wrens made a nest in our gourd house. All of us were thrilled to hear the three nestlings peeping for food whenever we went out on our porch. It was a treat for me to watch my children watching these birds and their young.

As I type, we are awaiting the fledging of one Eastern Bluebird from our box. Sadly, of three eggs, only one hatched successfully. What assertive, protective parents! They've been dive-bombing anything that gets within 20 feet of the nest box, including unwitting squirrels, dumbstruck Mourning Doves, and not-so-well-intentioned Blue Jays.

As I reflect on these not-so-small life events for these parents, I'm reminded of something that Julie Zickefoose said in her presentation to us during Atlanta Bird Fest.



Author and Illustrator Julie Zickefoose was the keynote speaker for the Atlanta Bird Fest Opening Celebration in April 2018. Photo by Dottie Head.



Carolina Wren babies. Photo by Nikki Belmonte.

She said that raising and caring for baby birds turned out to be great preparation for being a parent herself, that you learn when to help, when to hold on, and when to let go. Watching the Carolina Wren parents guide their young around the yard, showing them how to forage for themselves, and now suddenly seeing them visiting our feeders and planters on their own made me feel so proud for the mama and papa.

As Atlanta Audubon continues to grow, the pride I have in this organization and its staff and board continues to swell. We are growing and maturing at lightning speed, not unlike a baby bird. As one of the main stewards of the organization, my job is like a mama bird—to feed, guide, and grow the organization so it can sustain itself and contribute to the greater world. Knowing when to let go and trust in the outstanding work of staff and volunteers is critical.

You'll be receiving a letter from me about the 2018 Annual Fund. Please help me be a good parent and contribute. Your support in the past has helped us grow into a strong organization that has firmly embraced its mission of building places where both birds and people thrive. However, just like being a parent, we are not done with the care and feeding of Atlanta Audubon. You can donate to the Annual Fund at www.atlantaaudubon.org/donate.

Announcing Atlanta Audubon's Habitat Restoration Fund

Atlanta Audubon and its partners play an important role in creating bird resiliency in the Southeast. Through our collaborative conservation and engagement programs, we are building places where birds and people thrive. Thanks to a generous gift to Atlanta Audubon from a private donor honoring Doug Downing, we are proud to be able to offer support to a bird-friendly habitat improvement project through the newly established Habitat Restoration Fund.

The Habitat Restoration Fund aims to increase high-quality habitat for birds while also increasing community partnerships and educational outreach. Modeled after our other habitat restoration projects, the Habitat Restoration Fund invites community groups, friends groups, municipalities, and other property managers to apply for this competitive opportunity to receive consulting and services to restore critical habitat. This can include removal of invasive, exotic plant species, installation of bird-friendly native plants, garden/habitat design services, bird monitoring, and community programs.

The application deadline is August 31, 2018. One project will be chosen by committee and announced at the end of October. To learn more about eligibility, criteria, and schedule for this new opportunity, please go to www.atlantaaudubon.org/habitat-restoration-fund.html.



The Confluence is a tremendous habitat restoration success story. Photo by Adam Betuel.

Special Thanks to Everyone Who Contributed to an Amazing Atlanta Bird Fest 2018!

Planning Committee members Les Cane, Rosemary Crump-Sims, Linda DiSantis, Phyllis Hawkins, Robert Johnson, Charles Loeb, Susan Loeb, Ellen Miller, Robyn Newman, Steve Newman, Steve Phenicie, and Rusty Pritchard.

Atlanta Bird Fest trip and workshop leaders Vinod Babu, Tammy Bates, Natalie Bailey, Jim Bearden, Kris Bisgard, Eric Bowles, Zeb Brown, Danielle Bunch, Joy Carter, Jay Davis, Shannon Fair, Nathan Farnau, Gena Flanagan, Melanie Furr, Barbara Gray, Laura Hardy, Jerry Hightower, Malcolm Hodges, Ellen Honeycutt, Carolyn Johnson, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, Gus Kaufman, Lillie Kline, Christy Knight, Nick Lorch, Bill Lotz, Melissa Mattee, Patrick Maurice, Anne McCallum, Jennifer McLaurin, Patty McLean, Ellen Miller, Steve Sanchez, Bob Sargent, Iris Schumacher, Dan Vickers, Mike Weaver, and Bill Witherspoon.

Atlanta Bird Fest volunteers and ambassadors Nikki Belmonte, Adam Betuel, Ken Boff, Joy Carter, Gina Charles, Rosemary Crump-Sims, Linda DiSantis, Melanie Furr, Phyllis Hawkins, Dottie Head, Libby Hedaya, Kimberly Johnson, Robert Johnson, Mary Kimberly, Lillie Kline, Melinda Langston, Susan Loeb, Ellen Miller, Robyn Newman, Steve Newman, Esther Stokes, Stella Wissner, and Amanda Woomer.

Special thanks to our event partners The Amphibian Foundation, Berry College, Blue Heron Nature Preserve, Café Campesino, Chattahoochee Nature Center, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Clayton County Water Authority, Cubihatcha Outdoor Center, Eagle Eye Bookshop, Emory's Michael C. Carlos Museum, Fulton County Public Works, Manuel's Tavern, Master Gardeners of Cobb County, Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, Pole Bridge Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility, Serenbe, Smithgall Woods State Park, Sweetwater Creek State Park, SweetWater Brewery.

We extend additional gratitude to our **Atlanta Bird Fest Patrons** Anonymous, Brickworks Gallery, Marcia Bansley, Patricia Barmeyer, Tom Blaisdell, Jim and Ann Curry, Patricia Davis and Curtis Johnson, Linda DiSantis and Bob Kerr, Charles and Janice Edwards, Nancy Hamilton, Phyllis Hawkins and Mark Seaman, Tracy Hoskins, Melinda Langston, Bill and Condit Lotz, Katharine O'Hare, Tom Painter and Carla Roncoli, Judy Renault, Mel Schulze, Arnold Silverman, and Esther and Jim Stokes.

Finally, thank you to each of our **Atlanta Bird Fest sponsors** for your generosity:



ASK CHIPPY



Q: Hello. I had a bird build a nest on a bookshelf underneath my carport. Odd thing was, when I pull in with my car, my car door is literally inches from this bookshelf, and I had to be careful not to bump it with items/packages I was retrieving from my car. Why would birds nest so close to human activity? Could it be that her nest was invaded previously by predators when it was out in the open, and therefore she turned to areas more hidden?

A: Thanks for contacting the Atlanta Audubon Society.

Although it seems odd that this delightful little bird, a Carolina Wren, would nest so close to humans, it is not at all unusual. I've seen an active nest in a bucket left unattended too long in a yard. We recently learned about a Carolina Wren that built a nest next to the engine block under the hood of a family van. According to information on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds site, they have been known to nest in "discarded flowerpots, mailboxes, propane-tank covers, and a variety of other items. Their nests have even been found in old coat pockets and boots." This last is hard to believe, but if you'd like to see some photos of a Carolina Wren nest in a boot, check out the Sialis website at <http://www.sialis.org/nests/carolinawren.htm>. There is even a photo of a nest that a pair of Carolina Wrens built on a shelf in someone's bathroom. The homeowner left the bathroom window open for a month to accommodate them.

Nestwatch.org has more stories of unlikely nest sites, including a bike helmet, the spare tire on the back of a Jeep, a Mason jar, an old barbecue grill, a clothespin container, and other unusual places.

Apparently, they don't mind humans at all!

Happy Birding! —Chippy



Carolina Wrens are well known for building nests in unusual places. Photo by Dan Vickers.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT on Dave Kuechenmeister

(This is the 30th in a series on Atlanta Audubon volunteers.)

By Steve Phenicie

You've got to get up pretty early in the morning to be on Dave Kuechenmeister's Christmas Bird Count team because he'll have you in the woods before daylight. (I know from personal experience.) Dave, who lives in Atlanta's Kirkwood neighborhood, participates in both the Marietta and Intown CBCs, among his numerous bird-related activities.

Now mostly retired, he's a native of Duluth, Minn., and jokingly likes to say that he was "raised by wolves." Actually, he grew up in a private nature preserve, and his parents were conservationists and birders. The property was prime territory for the local Audubon chapter during the annual CBC.

Dave graduated from Minnesota State University in 1979 with a degree in environmental studies and biology. He later got a graduate degree in urban and regional planning at the same institution. Dave spent more than 20 years in the "for profit" environmental consulting engineering arena, most notably with Woodward-Clyde Consultants, specializing in site acquisition, environmental assessment, regulatory compliance, and permitting. In the early 1980s he was vice president and managing partner of a consulting firm that focused on bio-fuels plants, lake restoration, and composting facilities.

Dave came to Atlanta in 1994 and eventually became a project manager with The Trust for Public Land, a land conservation group. He worked to preserve more than 30 greenspaces totaling more than 4,000 acres. These included new city and county parks plus additions to Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. He also spearheaded a program that focused on repurposing arrested real estate developments.

After becoming a Master Birder in 2008, he wrote an early version of Volunteer Spotlight and was on the Atlanta Audubon Board of Directors from 2010 to 2014. Occasionally he has led Atlanta Audubon bird

walks but more often leads walks for neighborhood groups including Kirkwood, The Fraser Center,

Presbyterian Village and the Central DeKalb Senior Center. Each week he does a walk at Mason Mill Park for seniors.

As a third-generation Eagle Scout, he is interested in mentoring Boy Scouts toward Eagle rank and helping them earn the Bird Study Merit Badge. He's also an army veteran and served on the board of his condo association for five years and was its president for two. And in the early 1990s he was on the Parks, Recreation

and Natural Resources Commission for the City of Eden Prairie, Minn.

Dave's partner, Marilyn, isn't quite as gung-ho about birds as he is, but she enjoys observing Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that visit their feeders. Dave's daughter, Anja, who lives near Grant Park, is a commercial kitchen designer, and her husband, Jason, designs and builds custom furniture and kitchen cabinets.



Dave recently ran an Atlanta Audubon Society bird walk station for second graders at an event held at the Atlanta Food Forest.

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to **Phyllis Hawkins** and **Susan Loeb** for organizing this year's Student Art Show as part of the Atlanta Bird Fest Open House and Earth Day Celebration ... to our bird walk leaders for May: **Joel McNeal, Jason Ward, Chris Showalter, Angie Jenkins, Anne McCallum, Mary Kimberly, Joy Carter, Gus Kaufman, Vinod Babu, Rick Taylor, and Pat Markey** ... to **Kristina Williams** for her talk at the April meeting about sea turtles found along the Georgia coast ... to **Martha and Jack Fasse, Stella Wissner, Dottie Head, Nikki Belmonte, Ellery Smith, Mary Kimberly, Melinda Langston, Lou Clymore, Les Cane, Robyn and Steve Newman, Toni Smith, Maggie Stephen, Ellen Miller, Mike Weaver, and Michelle Hamner** for their help at our spring plant sales ... to **Chattahoochee Nature Center, Beech Hollow Farms, and the Blue Heron Nature Preserve, especially Henning von Schmeling, Jeff Killingsworth, and Brooke Vacovsky**, for their partnership on our spring plant sales ... to **Melinda Langston** for continuing to push the Sanctuary Certification program on an upward trajectory ... to **Larry Stephens, Gina Charles, Jack Fasse, Martha Fasse, Steve Cook, Phyllis Hawkins, and Andrea Abelman** for their help with May Peel & Stick ... to **Mary Nevil** and **Laura Waddick** for helping assemble some new office furniture ... to **Mary Nevil** for her help with the membership mailing ... to **Ralph Smith, Warren Walter, Mary Kimberly, Steve Dupont, and Steve and Rona Cook** for their help with festival outreach ... to **Sandy Miller, Mary Nevil, and Laura Waddick** for their help with the Annual Fund mailing.

Join the Early Birds Book Club

By Mary Nevil

The Early Birds are Atlanta Audubon members who gather before the Atlanta Audubon Monthly Meeting at Manuel's Tavern to discuss a book selected by consensus at the previous meeting. So far, we have read *Birding Without Borders* by Noah Strycker, *Baby Birds* by Julie Zickefoose, and *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* by Janisse Ray. All three books have initiated interesting conversation.

Please consider joining the Early Birds for our next meeting on Sunday, June 24, at 2:00 PM at Manuel's Tavern. The book for June is *Wild America* by Roger Tory Peterson and James Fischer. This classic of birding literature recounts the pair's 30,000-mile, 100-day birding tour of North America in 1953. Some of us plan to also read *Return to Wild America* by Scott Weidensaul. Fifty years after Peterson's and Fischer's famous trip, Weidensaul retraces their journey to discover what has changed, what is gone, and what remains. Read one or both and join us for lively conversation and an opportunity to meet others who like to read about the birding life.

In Memory of Scottie Johnson

By Dottie Head

Atlanta Audubon is mourning the loss of a devoted friend, advocate, and volunteer. Eleanor “Scottie” Johnson, a long-time Atlanta Audubon supporter died peacefully at her home in Morgantown, West Virginia, on May 17, with her family by her side.

A graduate of the 2016 Master Birder class, Scottie volunteered countless hours with Atlanta Audubon Society over the years. There are few, if any, Atlanta Audubon programs with which Scottie was NOT involved. She was one of the first volunteers to sign up for Project Safe Flight Atlanta monitoring. She was a very active certifier for the Wildlife Sanctuary Program. In addition, Scottie staffed festival tables, presented school and garden club programs, and attended events on behalf of Atlanta Audubon’s education efforts. She participated in Christmas Bird Counts, Climate Watch, and other citizen science efforts. And, in recent years, she and Cheryl Beshke were the voice of “Chippy,” answering bird-brained questions that came in through the website and preparing a monthly column for the *Wingbars* newsletter. She resigned this post just last month after her health took a turn for the worse.

“Scottie was one of the first people to welcome me to Atlanta Audubon when I started in 2014, offering her help with education programs and festival outreach. When she was available, she was always one of the first people to respond to my Master Birder volunteer requests, and when she wasn’t, she often checked in with me to make sure I’d found someone, even offering to change her schedule if possible,” says Melanie Furr, Atlanta Audubon director of education. “She loved teaching others about birds and regularly shared her passion with her neighbor’s children, even leading a session for their school science night. I will miss her friendship and gentle, kind spirit.”

According to Steve Phenicie’s Volunteer Spotlight on Scottie, which was published in June of 2017, Scottie, whose formal name is Eleanor Scott Johnson, was an Atlanta native who grew up on a horse farm near what is now Lenox Square. Her career as a nurse took her to places such as Colorado, New Mexico, Kentucky, and Texas, but she returned to Atlanta in 1999 and worked at Trinity School. She was always interested in the outdoors and cited a number of experiences that increased her interest in birds. When she lived in Texas, she ran into some falconers and sometimes went on adventures with them. In the 1970s, she had a chance to observe Sandhill Cranes—“not your usual birds.” And after she had a cabin near Mineral Bluff in North Georgia, she began to watch the birds there.

After retirement, Scottie enrolled in the Master Birder class and focused her efforts on volunteer activities. When not volunteering for Atlanta Audubon, Scottie took courses in Chinese medicine, gardened, and explored the outdoors.

After living in Virginia Highlands for many years, Scottie and her husband, Jack Meadows, moved to Morgantown, West Virginia, in 2017 to be closer to family. Her sixth grandchild and namesake, Scott Kane, was born on April 7, and Scottie had a chance to meet and hold him before she died.

Scottie is survived by her husband Jack Meadows, daughter Erin Setzer, Murphy Kane, grandson Scott Kane, sister Clare McFadden (Johnson), and step-daughters Abi Meadows and Amy Morici (Meadows). In lieu of flowers, the family has requested contributions to the Atlanta Audubon Society.



Scottie Johnson (left) was very active with the Wildlife Sanctuary Certification Program.
Photo by Melinda Langston.

Bird-friendly Habitat Educational Exhibit in Piedmont Park

(Continued from Page 1)

Swifts are migratory birds that travel from South America each spring to breed here Georgia. They provide excellent pest control as they careen through the air like little flying cigars. Their diet consists of flies, mosquitoes, wasps, ants, and other insects caught in flight. Incredibly, one Chimney Swift may consume up to 1,000 mosquito-sized insects in a single day. In recent years, Chimney Swift populations have declined due to loss of tree cavities. Once an urban success story, their alternative nesting sites—chimneys—are now being capped. Constructing Chimney Swift towers is a recent conservation tool to curb declining swift populations. In late summer and early fall, the birds gather in sizable flocks and spend the night in communal roosts. As the swifts descend on a tower at dusk, a large group forms, and they then pour into the chimney like smoke. Once the swifts find and inhabit the tower, Atlanta Audubon plans to host educational programming, such as “Swift Night Out” gatherings where the public can observe the spectacle of these roosting birds. Atlanta Audubon is working on the tower design with John Monnat, a Seattle-based designer with extensive experience in parks and recreation, and local engineer Pierre Coiron of Stability Engineering. The tower will provide crucial habitat for Atlanta’s charismatic swifts, and a unique educational experience for park visitors. Both the native garden and tower will provide invaluable resources for Atlanta’s birds.

The unveiling for the project is slated for September to coincide with the inaugural “Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month.” Please stay tuned for updates on the project, and for details about our ribbon-cutting celebration this coming fall.



The Native Plant Demonstration Garden in Piedmont Commons will provide high-quality habitat for birds and wildlife and educate the public on the value of native plants. Photo by Lillie Kline.

Protect Georgia’s Birds with a Gift to the 2018 Annual Fund

Atlanta Audubon’s largest source of funding is **YOU!** Our spring Annual Fund complements your yearly membership dues, and both are integral to our success. Birds need our help more than ever right now, and every gift makes a difference. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Introducing “Shep,” the First Winged Addition to the Audubon Flock

By Melanie Furr



Meet Shepherd—Atlanta Audubon’s first feathered member of the flock. Shep is a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird who collided with a window last fall as a hatch-year bird, breaking a wing. His rescuer brought him to AWARE Wildlife Center for care, but sadly, his injury rendered him flightless and unable to return to the wild. Because of his calm temperament around people, and knowing my wish to have an educational ambassador for Atlanta Audubon, Marjan Ghadrddan, AWARE’s Director of Animal Care, suggested that I apply for a permit with U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to give this little flightless fellow a permanent home. After submitting a lengthy application, I waited, checking in on Shep each Tuesday during my regular volunteer shift at AWARE. As soon as the permit was granted this spring, Shep came home with me. For the past few weeks, he’s been getting settled into his new surroundings and routine. He’s a smart bird, quickly learning how to navigate his perches and step up on my thumb, and he seems to enjoy riding around and having a change of scenery. He may not fly, but no hummingbird has stronger legs than he does from balancing on his perch in the car!

Shep’s name was suggested a few days after he came into my care while I was leading an annual birdwatching retreat for the Shepherd Center, one of several birding events I enjoy providing for patients each year. The Shepherd Center is a world-renowned nonprofit hospital and research facility whose mission is “to help people with a temporary or permanent disability caused by injury or disease, rebuild their lives with hope, independence and dignity, advocating for their full inclusion in all aspects of community life while promoting safety and injury prevention.” As I introduced this little wonder to the group at the retreat, some in wheelchairs or with prosthetics, noting that he was awaiting the perfect name, Wendy Battaglia, the horticulture therapist who organizes the retreats said, “How about Shepherd?” The group immediately endorsed the name, and Shep was christened. The name is fitting for this little survivor who will teach others to protect birds by turning out lights, making windows bird-friendly, avoiding pesticides and herbicides, and more. Stay tuned for more updates on Shep.

Birding through the Eyes of a Child: Olivia’s First Bird Walk

By Dottie Head

Mmeet Olivia Granier. This fifth grader from Marietta upstaged the birds, including a rare American Bittern, at the Yellow-Crowned Night Herons at Constitution Lakes bird walk as part of Atlanta Bird Fest 2018, which was Olivia’s and her father Randall’s first-ever bird walk. It was a birthday present for just turned 11-year-old Olivia. Randall

discovered Atlanta Audubon Society and Atlanta Bird Fest through an internet search while looking for the perfect birthday present for his bird-crazy daughter.

Olivia’s youthful enthusiasm and exuberance for every single bird spotted was contagious. All of the attendees were completely enamored with her and were eager to help her spot birds just to see her reaction. From American Cardinal to Yellow-crowned Night Heron to the warblers, Olivia was thrilled by them all.

“Olivia was an absolute delight and was so excited about every bird we saw,” says Linda DiSantis, immediate past board chair and an attendee on the trip. “She was an ace at seeing the birds with her rather basic set of binoculars, but when I offered her a better pair she responded, ‘No, I like my binoculars.’”

The bird of the day was a rare American Bittern. Olivia said it was her favorite bird of the day, not for its rarity but for its camouflage. “It was very hard to find because it looked just like a stick poking out of the water,” she said.

Olivia says she came to love birds by way of the parrot. Her interest in potentially having a pet parrot led her to research parrots, their habitats, and behavior, which opened up the wide world of birds to her young mind. “I

usually watch birds in my backyard or on Kennesaw Mountain,” says Olivia. “You can learn a lot by just watching them.”

Randall reports that he didn’t really know very much about birds at the beginning of the trip. “I was surprised and amazed at how much Olivia knew! I love her passion for learning about birds.”

For now, Randall is helping Olivia upgrade her birding gear with a set of Georgann Schmalz bird song CDs. They’re also shopping for better pair of binoculars. “We can’t wait to see our new birding friends on our next birding adventure,” he says.

Olivia says her favorite part of the bird walk was being surrounded by people who adore birds like she does. She’s considering two career options: avian biologist or actress. We’re pretty sure she will be successful at whichever one she chooses.



Olivia and Randall Granier

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.

Saturday, June 2, 2018
Piedmont Park (Fulton County)
8:00 AM

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

Sunday, June 3, 2018
Atlanta Memorial Park (Fulton County)
8:00 AM

Leader: Bill Lotz
Cell contact morning of walk: 404.569.1590
GPS: 33.819019, -84.409191

Wednesday, June 13, 2018
Reynolds Nature Preserve
(Clayton County)
8:00 AM

Leader: Anne McCallum
Cell contact morning of the walk: 678.642.7148
GPS: 33.601464, -84.346874

Sunday, June 17, 2018
Take Your Dad Birding
Constitution Lakes (DeKalb County)
8:00 AM

Leaders: Joy Carter and Vinod Babu
Cell contacts morning of the walk:
404.822.0030 (Joy); 413.230.6276 (Vinod)
GPS: 33.68306, -84.34740

Saturday, June 23, 2018
Noonday Creek Trail (Cobb County)
8:00 AM

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

Saturday, June 23, 2018
Chattahoochee Nature Center (Fulton County)
8:00 AM

Co-sponsored by Chattahoochee Nature Center (CNC)
Leaders: Gus Kaufman and Vinod Babu
Cell contacts morning of the walk: 404.483.7457
(Gus), 413.230.6276 (Vinod)
GPS: 34.002356, -84.382846

Sunday, June 24, 2018
Olde Rope Mill Park (Cherokee County)
8:00 AM

Leader: Roseanne Guerra
Cell contact morning of walk: 678.358.4916
GPS: 34.1242443, -84.5316593

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.

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 Teresa Lyle, field trip director at teresalyle0@gmail.com.

LIVE and LEARN

With This Atlanta Audubon Society Workshop

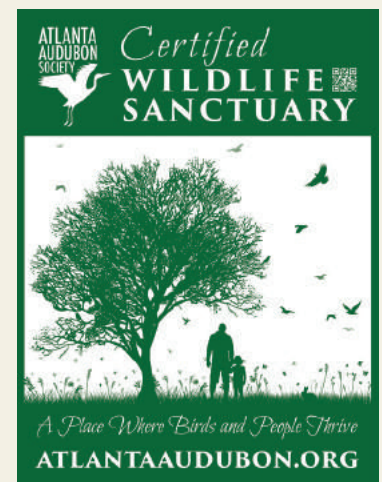
Wildlife Sanctuary Certifier Training

Saturday, June 9, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Chattahoochee Nature Center

9135 Willeo Road, Roswell, GA 30075

Atlanta Audubon will be hosting a certifier training for our Wildlife Sanctuary Certification program on Saturday, June 9, taught by the Chattahoochee Nature Center's Senior Director of Operations, Henning von Schmeling. The training will comprise a full-day event of learning. The morning session will include both a classroom portion and a hands-on outdoors portion, at which trainees will learn about native plants and how landscaping can provide high-quality habitat for wildlife. We will break for lunch, and then move on to the afternoon session, at which trainees will tour several nearby sanctuaries alongside current certifiers. Come learn how you can make a difference for Atlanta's birds as a sanctuary certifier. The event is free to attend, but registration is required. For more information or to register, please visit www.atlantaaudubon.org/workshops.



Sanctuary Tour Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available

Are you interested in sponsoring the 2018 Sanctuary Tour, which will be held in the Decatur area? Sponsorships begin at \$250, and sponsors receive benefits, including complimentary Sanctuary Tour tickets, business name/logo on promotional materials, social media recognition, and more. Contact Michelle Hamner at michelle@atlantaaudubon.org for more information.



ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

4055 Roswell Road ♦ Atlanta, GA 30342
678.973.2437

*Atlanta Audubon Society is an independent, non-profit
501(c)(3) organization. Your donations are tax
deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.*



Wingbars is printed on recycled paper.

www.AtlantaAudubon.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Atlanta, GA
Permit #917

June Monthly Meeting

**The Chattahoochee River Corridor: Facts, Fables and Downright Lies
Featuring Jerry Hightower, Environmental Education Coordinator, CRNRA
Sunday, June 24, 2018, 3:30 to 5:30 PM at Manuel's Tavern**

The Chattahoochee River Corridor has been a rich ribbon of diversity for many millennia. From the rhododendron thickets of its Appalachian birth to the Tupelos of its swamp-lined southern sections, to the sandy beaches of its final destination, this is a beautiful, interesting, and even intriguing geographical feature of Georgia. Just as the river rambles over our landscape Jerry Hightower will ramble on about our Chattahoochee. He will address a few hundreds of millions of years of the corridor's history as well as the mere 10,000 years of the human history within the corridor. All of this, mind you, in a time span of 45 minutes.

Jerry Hightower grew up in what is now Sandy Springs. The abundant fields, forests, streams, and the Chattahoochee River were his best classrooms. This led to a life of service to others and the natural world. After returning from Vietnam, he began volunteering with conservation organizations, university professors, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Jerry is known as one of the original "River Rats," the group that began the effort to save the Chattahoochee River. He now has more than 43 years of service to the U.S. and is an award-winning, nationally-recognized educator and ranger, with more than 50 years in environmental education. Jerry has served in law enforcement, resource science, and environmental education during his time in service. He is currently the Environmental Education Coordinator providing programs to thousands of students each year and training to teachers from across the state and beyond. And he is still an active volunteer.



Cochran Shoals

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.