



Wingbars

A Quarterly Publication of Georgia Audubon

FEBRUARY 2022



**GEORGIA
AUDUBON**

INSIDE

- Executive Director's Column.....2
- Georgia Bird Fest Returns.....3
- Volunteer Spotlight.....4
- A Million Thanks.....4
- Staff Updates and Transitions.....5
- Education Roundup.....6
- Remembering Sibley.....7
- Travel with Georgia Audubon.....7
- Species Profile.....9
- Upcoming Events.....9-11
- February Monthly Meeting.....12



Wingbars is the official newsletter of Georgia Audubon and is published four times a year. We feature news, upcoming events, meetings, field trips, and projects. We hope you will join us. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect policies of Georgia Audubon.

*Wood Duck, by Teri Franzen
Audubon Photography Awards*

Georgia Audubon Will Be Migrating to a New Home in 2022

By Dottie Head, Director of Communications

Georgia Audubon is thrilled to announce that we will be moving to a new home later in 2022. We have signed a lease to join Trees Atlanta in their new facility currently under construction at 825 Warner Street in the Oakland City neighborhood of Atlanta. In the meantime, we'll be maintaining a small footprint at our current home at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve in Buckhead.

Our new location will be connected by a short path to the Atlanta BeltLine and is right across the street from Adair Park. The new building will also be within walking distance of our recently completed Chimney Swift tower on the Westside BeltLine.

According to Trees Atlanta, the heavy industrial space presented an opportunity to return concrete to greenspace, as well as allow Trees Atlanta to build a structure that could house all of their staff, materials, tools, and vehicles. The space is designed for indoor and outdoor education, events, program operations, and administration.

"While we will be sad to leave our friends at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve, we are excited about the new space at Trees Atlanta and the opportunities to host large community engagement and education programs in the new collaborative space," says Executive Director Jared Teutsch. "We will have large, accessible in-house event space that will allow us to host events, like our Georgia Bird Fest Closing Celebration, as well as smaller classroom space for our popular Master Birder Program, Atlanta Urban Ecologists, and community engagement events. In addition, the new facility will have an outdoor environmental education space and easy access to the Atlanta BeltLine for birding outings. Finally, we'll have secure space for the habitat restoration

(Continued on Page 5)



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

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ADVISORS

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Mark Berry
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Pierre Howard
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STAFF

Jared Teutsch
Executive Director
jared.teutsch@georgiaudubon.org

Adam Betuel
Director of Conservation
adam.betuel@georgiaudubon.org

Victor Fioresi
Director of
Administration and Finance
victor.fioresi@georgiaudubon.org

Melanie Furr
Director of Education
melanie.furr@georgiaudubon.org

Michelle Hamner
Director of Development
michelle.hamner@georgiaudubon.org

Dottie Head
Director of Communications
Wingbars Editor
dottie.head@georgiaudubon.org

Gabe Andrle
Habitat Conservation Program Manager
gabe.andrle@georgiaudubon.org

Corina Newsome
Community Engagement Manager
corina.newsome@georgiaudubon.org

Kiana Leveritte
Community Engagement Coordinator
kiana.leveritte@georgiaudubon.org

Beverly Fooks
Membership and Development Associate
beverly.fooks@georgiaudubon.org

Alex LoCastro
Conservation Program Coordinator
alex.locastro@georgiaudubon.org

Ryan Myers
Habitat Restoration Program Coordinator
ryan.myers@georgiaudubon.org

Melissa Paduani
Education Program Coordinator
melissa.paduani@georgiaudubon.org

Kim Savides
Sea Grant Fellow
kim.savides@georgiaudubon.org

Mim Eisenberg
Wingbars Proofreader
mim@wordcraftservices.com

From the Executive Director

Spring Is in the Air

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

With 2021 in the rear view mirror and another successful Christmas Bird Count season under our belts, we're entering 2022 refreshed and recharged to continue our work building places where birds and people thrive. It's hard to believe that spring is just around the corner and soon the skies (and trees) will be filled with warblers and other species making their migratory journeys.

At Georgia Audubon, we're as busy as ever managing and scaling out existing programs and introducing new initiatives to protect birds and introduce more people to the joy of birds and birding. We've welcomed new staff members and elected a strong slate of board members, and we enter into 2022 ready to address the many challenges facing our birds and their habitats.

If you've been part of Georgia Audubon for years, you'll know first-hand the key role that board members play in ensuring our success. I'm excited about the talent that we have both on our board and with our staff. They bring a wealth of knowledge and skills that will help us reach new milestones for conservation, education, and community engagement. It's my great pleasure to welcome Paige Martin as our new board chair. Paige follows a long line of dynamic board chairs who have helped Georgia Audubon transition from a local bird watching club to a statewide conservation organization.

Paige brings a deep understanding of conservation and the importance birds play in our communities. As the key fundraiser for the global science team at The Nature Conservancy, Paige connects the work of conservation to those who can help support it. Paige has worked with The Nature Conservancy since 2014 in various roles, including managing a comprehensive \$35 million campaign. Prior to her time with TNC, she worked in development at Emory University as well as five years in the corporate world. Paige joined the Board in January 2020, just before the pandemic struck, and she has worked closely with outgoing board chair Linda DiSantis to ensure a smooth transition. Paige lives in Atlanta with her husband, two sons, and two rescue dogs. She is building her birding résumé and looks forward to helping shepherd our work.

As we enter year two of our ambitious strategic plan with a vision to build a conservation-minded Georgia where birds prosper, habitats flourish, and communities across the state are fully engaged, I am confident that we are well equipped organizationally to put this into practice. We look forward to seeing you out birding soon or at one of our many Georgia Bird Fest events this spring.

Keep birding,
Jared



Jared Teutsch



Paige Martin

Save a Tree: Switch to *Wingbars* Digital Delivery

Did you know that you can also receive your *Wingbars* newsletter via email? If you currently receive *Wingbars* by mail and would like to switch to email delivery, please email Dottie Head, at dottie.head@georgiaudubon.org or call 678-973-2437 and leave a message (don't forget to include your first and last name) so that we can update your account.

Save the Date: Georgia Bird Fest Returns April 23 to May 15, 2022

Registration opens on March 1 for Georgia Audubon members

By Michelle Hamner, Director of Development

Georgia Bird Fest will return this spring with more than 40 events between April 23 and May 15. Join fellow nature and bird enthusiasts for exciting field trips, workshops, and other events to celebrate and enjoy Georgia's exciting spring migration period.

This year we will welcome two special guests for Georgia Bird Fest 2022. Joining us for our opening weekend will be artist and author Rosemary Mosco.

Rosemary makes books and cartoons that connect people with the natural world. Her Bird and Moon nature comics were the subject of an award-winning museum exhibit and are collected in a book that's a 2019 ALA Great Graphic Novel for Teens. She co-wrote *The Atlas Obscura Explorer's Guide for the World's Most Adventurous Kid*, a New York Times Best Seller. She speaks at birding festivals and writes for the PBS kids' show, *Elinor Wonders Why*. Her newest book, *A Pocket Guide to Pigeon Watching*, is a quirky, funny, and scientifically correct field guide to observing one of the world's most commonly seen birds. Rosemary will present the Georgia Bird Fest 2022 Opening Keynote virtually on Sunday, April



Rosemary Mosco will give the keynote address at the virtual Georgia Bird Fest Opening Event on April 24. She is also the designer of our 2022 Georgia Bird Fest artwork featuring a Wood Stork. Photo by Adrienne Mathiowetz.

24.

Joining us for our closing weekend is author, public speaker, and filmmaker Dudley Edmondson, whose passion is nature and getting people of color outdoors. Dudley has considered himself a nature advocate ever since he discovered its ability to heal the mind and body as a young boy. He is the author of the landmark book, *Black & Brown Faces in America's Wild Places*, profiling African Americans in nontraditional vocations and avocations in the outdoors. In addition, Dudley's photography career spans nearly three decades. His work has been featured in galleries and in nearly 100 publications around the world. Dudley will present the Georgia Bird Fest 2022 Closing Keynote at SweetWater Brewing on Sunday, May 15.



Dudley Edmondson will give the keynote address at the Georgia Bird Fest Closing Celebration on May 15. Photo by Nancy Edmondson.

Other event highlights for Georgia Bird Fest 2022 include past favorites such as a behind-the-scenes tour of Zoo Atlanta's bird collection, a guided tour of the avian-inspired collections at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, nature photography workshops, and a Shorebird Weekend on the Georgia coast. We'll also be debuting new events, such as an overnight stay at the Len Foote Hike Inn.

NEW 2022 ARTWORK AND SHIRT PRE-SALE

This year's Georgia Bird Fest T-shirt features the Wood Stork, the only true stork that occurs in the U.S. and whose U.S. population breeds exclusively in the southeastern states of Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. This year's artwork was designed by Rosemary Mosco, who will also deliver the opening keynote address and will teach an artists' workshop during this year's Georgia Bird Fest. A limited number of Georgia Bird Fest T-shirts featuring this year's artwork will be for sale in our online store, with proceeds supporting Georgia Audubon's conservation, education, and community engagement efforts. Shirts must be pre-ordered by March 11.

Registration for Georgia Bird Fest events will open to Georgia Audubon members on Tuesday, March 1, and to the public on March 8. Please visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/birdfest for more information, to purchase T-shirts, and to preview the full schedule of events.



We're thrilled to introduce the 2022 Georgia Bird Fest artwork, designed by Rosemary Mosco, cartoonist, author, and science communicator.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT On Georgia LeMar

By Steve Phenicie

(This is the 52nd in a series on Georgia Audubon volunteers, board members, and staff.)

If invasive plants were criminals, Georgia LaMar might be the FBI. “I cringe every time I see ivy,” she says. “If we could make it cool to not have ivy in your yard, we could make progress.”

Some others on her hit list: nandina (pretty berries but harmful to birds), Chinese privet (which infests more than a million acres

in Georgia), elaeagnus (the stuff that looks like privet on steroids and is pronounced “ellie-agnes”), and Nepalese browntop (also known as Japanese stiltgrass and by many other names).

She says if she had her way, Georgia stores would be prohibited from selling plants deemed invasives. Such an idea might not be as far-fetched as it sounds. Delaware, for example, recently enacted a law that takes effect July 1 banning the sale and import of 37 invasive plants in that state. Georgia notes that Stone Mountain Park is doing a fabulous job of fighting invasives and nurturing natives such as native azaleas and big leaf magnolias.

Georgia got active in Audubon more than six years ago, when she wanted to get her one-acre lake property certified as a wildlife habitat. She attended an Audubon Christmas party where someone told her that she should enroll in the Master Birder class. She used that experience as a stepping stone to become a Wildlife Sanctuary certifier and carry on her crusade against invasives. She certifies about five properties a year but

notes that people’s attitudes vary widely. “There’s a huge difference between those who take it seriously and those who want to just put up a few bird feeders,” she says.

Georgia is an Atlanta native, having been born at Georgia Baptist Hospital and living here most of her life except for a few years in Germany. She went to



Georgia LaMar (on right) poses with Cheryl Berg (left) after certifying Mim Eisenberg’s (center) yard as a Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo by Dottie Head.

Mississippi State University to study horticulture but shifted gears to launch a career as a tax accountant. She is the owner of LaMar Business Services, which was

started by her mother, Joyce LaMar, now 95 but still active in the business.

Georgia considers herself only a casual birder, but she’s been at it for maybe 20 years. She really got hooked when she bought her house on the lake at Stone Mountain and had water birds around much of the time. Herons on her dock are not unusual. She shares her home with a Rat Terrier named Coco.

For foreign adventure, she’s visited Honduras, Costa Rica, much of South America, and the Galapagos, which she says was “a whole new world with the frigates and penguins and albatrosses.” And she’s proud that she’s gotten her brother, a nonbirder who lives in Decatur, Ala., a bit interested in birds. His home is near Joe Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, but he had never been there until she paid him a visit.

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to all of our members and friends for their support throughout 2021 ... to **Melinda Langston, Lou Clymore, Esther Stokes, Margaret A. Stephen, Sheryl Berg** and the rest of our Avian Advocates for continued support with the Wildlife Sanctuary Program ... to our outgoing Board Members **Linda DiSantis, Leslie Edwards, Angelou Ezeilo, Shannon Fair, Melinda Langston, and Ellen Macht** ... to Project Safe Flight Georgia volunteers **Nancy Kennell, Kelly Bryan, Kendra Frick, Cynthia Peng, Michelle Wong, Steve Place, Maureen Carroll, Cheryl Hensley, Joanna Parkman, Michael Zhou, Mary Kimberly, Gavin MacDonald, Kiedon JerMias Bryant, Raquel Gonzalez, Cristal Valdez, Alejandra Tapia Batres, Steven Williams, Michelle Ross, Phillip Yovino, Halimah Budier, Amberlee Cook, Shanice Solomon, and Coralie Jean-Noel** ... to **Sandy Miller, Laura Waddick, and Mary Nevil** for help with the year-end membership mailing ... to **Little St. Simons Island** for their generous donation of a two-night stay for two for our 2021 Holiday Party Raffle ... to **Anne McCallum, Cathy McGraw, Charles Loeb, John Mayes, Kelly Daire, Lisa Slotznick, Margaret A. Stephen, Paul Campbell, Paul Miller, Robert McDonough, Sandy Murray, Shannon Fair, Steve Phenicie, Teresa Mayes, Nancy Kennell, Stephanie Madson, Phillip Pritchard, Cheryl Hensley, Diane Hawkins-Cox, Gavin MacDonald, Mary Kimberly, Kelly Bryan, Maureen Carroll, Mim Eisenberg, Nathan Farnau, Rona Cook, Steve Cook, Thea Powell, and Steve Rushing** for being recognized as our top volunteers for 2020 and 2021 ... to **Jay Davis, Annalise Kaylor, Anne McCallum, Carolyn Auger Joiner, Shannon Fair, Jay Davis, Gus Kaufman, Jamie Vidich, Mary Kimberly, Davis Balsler, Becca Dill, John Mayes, Teresa Mayes, and Shawn Taylor**, for leading field trips that connect people to birds in such meaningful and special ways. Because of you, people have the opportunity to find beauty in more places than they could have ever imagined.

Staff Updates and Transitions

Georgia Audubon is kicking off the new year with some staff additions and transitions to help us fulfill our mission of building places where birds and people thrive all across the state.

Please join us in welcoming **Ryan Myers** as Georgia Audubon's new Habitat Restoration Program Coordinator and **Melissa Paduani** as the new Education Program Coordinator. We're also pleased to announce that **Kianna Leveritte**, our former Education Program Coordinator, is transitioning to a new role as Community Engagement Coordinator.

Ryan will be working with Gabe Andrlle on our habitat restoration efforts across the state, including at Jekyll Island, Sams Lake, Cooper's Furnace, and other locations. He is an ecologist and environmental educator who moved from Daytona Beach, Florida, to Atlanta eight years ago to begin focusing his time in southeastern

plant and wildlife conservation. After studying environmental sciences and urban ecology at Emory University, he began working for a variety of local eco-focused nonprofits specializing in different facets of conservation. These organizations, including Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Amphibian Foundation, Blue Heron Nature Preserve, and Dunwoody



Ryan Myers joins Georgia Audubon as the new Habitat Restoration Program Coordinator.

Nature Center, have provided Ryan with invaluable interdisciplinary experience that will guide and support his habitat restoration work with Georgia Audubon. He is

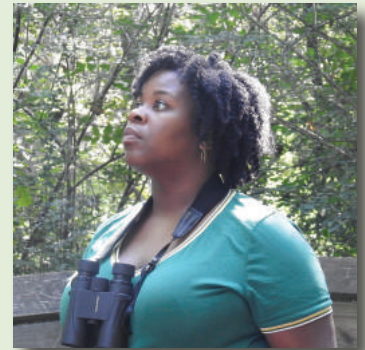
looking forward to supporting the success of the many conservation and restoration projects, both present and future, in all the amazing habitats Georgia has to offer.

Melissa is a Florida girl turned Georgia Bulldog and beach enthusiast. She completed her undergraduate work in environmental studies at the University of Central Florida, then went on to earn a Master's degree in Natural Resources at the University of Georgia. A few of her favorite things include hiking, collecting seashells, and trying all of the food that Atlanta has to offer. As the new Education Program Coordinator, she is looking forward to helping Georgia Audubon carry out our mission.



Melissa Paduani joins Georgia Audubon as the Education Program Coordinator.

In her new role as Community Engagement Coordinator, Kianna Leveritte will be working closely with Corina Newsome to expand Georgia Audubon's community engagement work and deliver new and existing programs to a diversity of audiences all across the state.



Kianna Leveritte is transitioning to a new role as Community Engagement Coordinator.

Georgia Audubon Will Be Migrating to a New Home in 2022

(Continued from Page 1)

crew's truck and storage for the tools and plants that we use to build bird-friendly habitats across the state. It's a win-win for both Georgia Audubon and Trees Atlanta."

The building is being designed by Lord Aeck Sargent Architects and Landscape Architects. The new 22,073 square-foot space will be two stories tall. Inside the building, visitors will encounter a large lobby, with two boardrooms and a lobby for volunteers near the entrance. In addition, two classrooms will offer more than 120 seats on the main floor of the building. The upstairs will include enclosed executive offices, but the large majority of the office space will have an open concept design, as well as a number of meeting rooms of various sizes. It will be a collaborative space with other conservation organizations also using the building (more information on that to come!)

In a recent update from Trees Atlanta, they shared that demolition of the existing structure on the lot is

complete and the lot is currently being graded. Before grading and preparing the land for a new foundation, brownfield remediation was conducted to remove soil contaminants, which is typical of previous industrial properties.

All of the old structure was removed, except for the large steel cylinder that still stands. The structure was once a grain silo; for most of its history, the building had been used by various baking companies. It was also temporarily used as an art space cleverly called The Bakery.

The next stage is construction of the buildings. The final steps will include extensive landscape installation, including the planting of approximately 150 native trees and thousands of plants. The new facility is scheduled for completion in late 2022.

Stay tuned for more exciting updates on Georgia Audubon's new home with Trees Atlanta!

Education Roundup: Sharing the Joy of Birds with All Ages

By Melanie Furr, Director of Education

Georgia Audubon's education programs continued to engage birders of all ages in 2021, in spite of ongoing challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic. While our Zoom calendar remained full, a reprieve from lockdown as infection rates dropped and vaccinations became widely available meant that we were able to resume some in-person outreach as well as our signature environmental education programs, including our Atlanta Urban Ecologists program for teens, Taking Wing professional development for educators, and Connecting Students to STEM through Birds program, a partnership with Title I schools. More than ever, people are turning to birds as a way to connect with wildlife and nature and find solace and distraction from everyday stresses. Environmental education can enhance that connection and inspire action. Georgia Audubon is committed to making sure that opportunities to connect with, learn from, and conserve birds are available to anyone who seeks to do so.

As a program focused on hands-on outdoor learning, our Atlanta Urban Ecologists program continued through both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, although we've had to make some pandemic-related adjustments. Offered in partnership with several metro Atlanta conservation nonprofits, including founding partners The Amphibian Foundation and Trees Atlanta, the program exposes youth in grades 8 through 12 to the fascinating, rich ecology of our city, while providing opportunities for hands-on field experiences, career exposure, and fun with their peers. In addition to a first-year program for new students, a second course is offered for returning students, some of whom have participated in the program multiple years. Each year we mix up the lineup and focus to keep the experiences new and exciting

for all students. At one of our most recent sessions, the students visited the Panola Mountain Banding Station with Charlie Muise to see how birds are banded, learn how the research is used in conservation efforts, and explore careers related to birds and habitat management. Students were fascinated to get to see a bird up-close in the hand, and several students had the thrill of releasing a bird after it had been banded. When Charlie's son found a garter snake, all the students wanted a turn to hold it, many of them having had experience handling scaly critters from previous sessions with the Amphibian Foundation. Whether we are marveling at the sun and exploring solar astronomy with Stephen Ramsden and Sunlit Earth! or examining coyote scat with Atlanta Coyote Project, students have opportunities at each session to discover the amazing natural world around us while learning how to protect it. We are excited to be launching this program in another metro region in Georgia next school year and to expand to additional regions of Georgia in the future, helping to inspire and equip the next generation of conservation professionals across the state.

After having to cancel our 2020 Taking Wing professional development when the pandemic hit, we were thrilled that we could again host this 50-hour, grant-funded immersive training for educators for the 2021-22 school year, starting with a four-day summer workshop at Unicoi State Park in June followed by a one-day workshop at Arabia Mountain in September during migration. During these workshops, eleven teachers from Title I schools in DeKalb, Carroll, and Camden counties were immersed in the world of birds, including their identification, ecology, and conservation, learning

(Continued on Page 8)



*Siblings in the Audubon Urban Ecologists program show off the Panola banding station T-shirts that were donated by a station volunteer as prizes.
Photo by Melanie Furr.*



*Gavin Allvine, a student in our Audubon Urban Ecology program, gets ready to release a bird banded by Charlie Muise at the Panola Mountain banding station.
Photo by Melanie Furr.*

Fly High Again: Remembering Survivor Sibley, Georgia Audubon's Ambassador Hummingbird

By Melanie Furr, Director of Education

When I applied for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permit to keep two injured, non-releasable hummingbirds as education ambassadors for (then) Atlanta Audubon in late 2017, I was met with skepticism. A permit had never been granted for hummingbirds in education, and the USFWS office had a lot of questions about how I intended to manage their care. In spring of 2018, our first education ambassador Shep came into my care, and in September, a juvenile bird dubbed Sibley joined him. When Shep passed away after 15 months in care, a female bird, Polly, joined Sibley as an Audubon ambassador. Each of these birds were injured in window collisions that rendered them flightless. Sadly, they were victims of the same fate that befalls thousands of birds in our state each year, especially during migration, and which is often fatal. Georgia Audubon's Conservation Director, Adam Betuel, has discovered that of the more than 100 species that have been collected during our Project Safe Flight monitoring routes, hummingbirds suffer a disproportionate number of casualties. Fortunately, Shep, Sibley, and Polly, rescued by kind Samaritans, had a second chance at life and have been able to reach thousands of people through virtual and in-person outreach, dazzling audiences with their tiny stature and miraculous abilities while imparting important conservation messages.



Sibley on one of his favorite perches, a silicone bracelet. Photo by Melanie Furr.

Sadly, Sibley passed away unexpectedly just before the New Year at more than three and a half years of age. (The average life expectancy of ruby-throats is three years.) A truly remarkable bird, #SurvivorSibley, as he was known on social media, loved taking baths on misted leaves, traveling in the car, catching spiders dangled in front of his perch, and watching the bird feeders; and he didn't mind an audience. He kept a busy calendar of virtual and in-person appearances, and in October 2021, he was even featured in the "Hummingbird Heaven" episode of Georgia Public Broadcasting's *Georgia Outdoors*. During his time as an ambassador, he delighted thousands of people and made them take notice of the wonder of birds and the threats they face.

While the Georgia Audubon flock is deeply saddened by his passing, we are grateful that we had the opportunity to share this incredible, full-of-life, little fighter with the world, and I am eternally grateful for the privilege of providing his care. His companion, #PollyPollinator, will continue to provide outreach to educate and enchant audiences across Georgia and beyond.

Support for Georgia Audubon's Ambassador Bird Program is provided by The Harriet F. Cane Ambassador Bird Endowment Fund. Established by Georgia Audubon member Les Cane in loving memory of his wife Harriet Cane, the Harriet F. Cane Ambassador Bird Endowment Fund provides funding to support the day-to-day care of current and future ambassador birds, including aviary construction, food, medical care, and enrichment activities.

Travel with Georgia Audubon in 2022

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

Southwestern Spain: Extremadura, Coto Doñana, and Tarifa

Guide: Melanie Furr, with local support from Manuel Solar
April 25 to May 4, 2022

South Florida: Miami, The Keys, and Dry Tortugas

Guide: Adam Betuel
May 3 to 8, 2022

Montana and Yellowstone: Where the Mountains Meet the Plains

Guide: Michelle Hamner, with local support from Red Hill Birding
June 22 to 27, 2022 (with optional Cassia Crossbill Idaho extension June 27 to 29)

New Jersey: Winter Birding in the Mid-Atlantic

Guide: Adam Betuel, with local support from George Armistead
December 1 to 7, 2022

GROW YOUR LIFE LIST WITH GEORGIA AUDUBON

SMALL-GROUP TRAVEL WITH FELLOW BIRD AND NATURE ENTHUSIASTS

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Spain: Extremadura Region
Montana & Yellowstone
South Florida & Dry Tortugas
Winter in the Mid-Atlantic

REGISTRATION OPENING SOON

Colombia
Southeastern Arizona
Maine
Madagascar

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Education Roundup: Sharing the Joy of Birds with All Ages (Continued from Page 6)

practical ways to engage students in hands-on, real world learning while meeting state performance standards. In addition to the training, teachers receive a pair of binoculars, field guides, and other resources to take back to their classrooms. Although most of the teachers who participate teach science, the workshop attracts educators from a variety of disciplines, including art and English. Teachers often report that the workshop is life-changing, and I am amazed by the ways they use their new awareness and knowledge of birds to connect their students to meaningful learning experiences. One of this year's participants wrote of the program, "I have taken many summer professional developments over the years and admit this was one of the best summer classes an educator can take...Taking the class has made a difference in my life, teaching, and students." This year's cohort of teachers will meet one final time in March, when they will have an opportunity to share how they have implemented the training and exchange ideas with each other. Taking Wing is another program we plan to offer in other parts of the state for the next school year, giving teachers the opportunity to engage in meaningful, place-based learning that they can bring back to their students.

Installing bird-friendly native plant gardens as outdoor classrooms in Title I public schools as part of our Connecting Students to STEM through Birds program came to a halt while schools were shut down, but happily we were able to resume the program last fall, partnering with Crawford Long Middle School and South Atlanta High School, both Title I Atlanta Public Schools. At each school, under the expert and enthusiastic guidance of our partner Daniel Ballard of Convivial Landscapes, LLC, more than 100 students helped plant a variety of native trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses to create a wildlife sanctuary that can be used for hands-on learning in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and other core subjects. Before each class period got started, Georgia Audubon's conservation program coordinator, Alex LoCastro, and I talked with the students about the importance of birds and their connections with the ecosystem health and human health, all while vultures soared overhead or chickadees gathered seeds above us.

Many of the students had never paid any attention to birds or had the experience of planting a garden, and



Students at South Atlanta High School dig in with shovels and mattocks to install a bird-friendly native plant garden on campus. Photo by Melanie Furr.

everyone was excited to be learning actively outdoors. I had to laugh when I asked a group of high school boys trying to extract a large rock from some compacted soil if they had ever used a pickax (technically a mattock), and one responded, "Only in Fortnite" (a video game). How satisfying to see them having fun digging in the dirt and putting the tool to its proper use instead. (The same young man who responded to my question asked and received permission to stay an extra two periods to continue helping.) Now that the gardens have been installed, each school will receive a training for teachers to provide lesson ideas and curriculum resources to enhance their use of the new outdoor classroom, and this spring, as the gardens are beginning to bloom, we will return to deliver a class set of binoculars for the school and provide another hands-on day of learning for students. The schools also have the opportunity to participate in our Careers in Conservation virtual series, hosted by Georgia Audubon's community engagement staff, Corina Newsome and Kiana Leveritte. Like our Urban Ecology and Taking Wing programs, we see great potential for partnering with schools in other parts of the state to create outdoor classrooms that benefit birds and people.

These interactive programs that take place over the course of the school year are only part of our efforts to connect diverse audiences with the joy of birds and inspire their conservation. Our Master Birder program is more popular than ever; long waiting lists prompted us to offer two cohorts for each course last year. Other 2021 highlights included monthly Zoom programs and in-person field trips with the Shepherd Spinal Center, our virtual monthly Homeschool Adventures with The Amphibian Foundation, visiting schools and community groups across the metro area, and of course, providing outreach with our beloved ambassador bird Sibley, who recently passed away after three and a half years in care.

With Georgia Audubon's new education program coordinator Melissa Paduani on board, I look forward to collaborating with our fellow staff to soar to new heights, engaging more communities across Georgia in the enjoyment, study, and conservation of birds.



Teachers in our Taking Wing program sample some beautyberries as we explore the connection between birds, native plants, and migration at Arabia Mountain. Photo by Melanie Furr.

Species Profile: The Ruby-crowned Kinglet

By Steve Phenicie

Time waits for no man, according to an old saying, and the Ruby-crowned Kinglet doesn't wait for time or anything else. This tiny bird, smaller than a chickadee, can move faster than a cockroach darting under your couch.

They're present in Georgia and much of the southern United States during the winter and also in most of Mexico. In the summer they inhabit mainly Canada, Alaska, and the mountain West. During migration they show up between these areas, meaning that at some time during the year you're able to see them in most locations across North America. Populations fluctuate but seem to be stable long-range.

The bird eats mostly insects, including many small beetles, flies, leafhoppers, true bugs, and others. For a change of pace, it samples spider and insect eggs, and caterpillars and spiders aren't out of the question either. Sometimes it consumes oozing sap or visits flowers, possibly for nectar. In the winter, it will go after berries and seeds. Foraging takes place from treetops to low brush as the bird examines foliage, twigs, and major limbs, always on the move. It often hovers while plucking items from foliage and sometimes flies out to catch insects in mid-air.

For habitat, it prefers mostly conifers, where it breeds in spruce, fir, and hemlock, less often in Douglas-fir or pines. In migration and winter it may be found in deciduous trees but tends to seek out conifers even then, including pine groves and exotic conifers planted in cemeteries and parks. You might observe one in the shrubbery outside your window.

In coloration, the Ruby-crowned is olive-green with a prominent but uneven white eye ring and white wingbar.

This wingbar contrasts with an adjacent blackish bar in the wing. The "ruby crown" of the male is visible only occasionally.

For a nest, the female builds a deep, hanging cup of moss, lichens, bark strips, spider webs, twigs, and leaves, lined with feathers, plant down, rootlets, and other soft materials. It averages about 50 feet above the ground and is attached to hanging twigs below a horizontal branch, close to the trunk and well protected by foliage above. There she typically lays eight or nine eggs, although clutches can range from five to 11. Incubation is by the female only and lasts about 14 to 15 days. The male may feed the female during incubation. Both parents feed the nestlings, and the young leave the nest about 14 to 19 days after hatching.

If you know a kinglet when you see one but can't remember the difference between a Ruby-crowned and its cousin, the Golden-crowned, here's a memory device: Gold is "fancier" than rubies, and the Golden-crowned is "fancier" than the Ruby-crowned. The Golden-crowned has stripes along its head; the Ruby-crowned does not.



Ruby-crowned Kinglet, by Ronald Newhouse, Audubon Photography Awards.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Lichen Workshop with Malcolm Hodges

Virtual Workshop: Thursday, February 3, at 7:00 PM via Zoom

In-person Field Trip: Saturday, February 6

(Rain date is Saturday, February 13), time TBD

Cost: Master Birder in good volunteer and membership standing – \$25

Georgia Audubon Member – \$30

Non-member – \$35

Workshop Only (no field trip) – \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members

Participants will be introduced to the fascinating world of lichens through a 45-minute webinar. We will visit an area with a high diversity of lichens, where we will look at lichens in forests and on a large rock outcrop, and apply information learned in the webinar.

**Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, February 5, at 8:00 AM**

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



Moss and lichen. Photo by Mary Kimberly.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please check our website or our *Bird Buzz* e-newsletter for additional events that may be scheduled after *Wingbars* goes to press.

FEBRUARY (Continued from Page 9)

Georgia Audubon Master Birder Program

February 15 through March 27, 2022 (see full schedule on website)

Cost: \$450

Registration is now open for our popular Master Birder Program. The winter session will run from February 7 through March 27, with virtual sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and field trips on Saturday or Sunday each week.

Course content includes classification and identification of birds, birding equipment, bird songs and calls, attracting birds and backyard wildlife habitat, anatomy and physiology, bird ecology, bird behavior, flight and migration, and bird conservation. Upon graduation, Master Birders are encouraged to complete annual volunteer service for Georgia Audubon or their local Audubon chapter to receive added membership benefits such as early registration opportunities and discounted event fees.

The course will fill quickly, so please register soon. To learn more or register, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/master-birder-program.

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

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

Conservation Career Series – Virtual

11:00 to 11:50 AM

February 8 and 10 | March 15 and 17

FREE

Join Georgia Audubon for our Conservation Careers Series featuring conservation professionals working across the state of Georgia. Learn about the paths they took to get to their positions and different career options for people interested in their field of expertise.

Geared toward people ages 14 to adult (but all ages welcome), we encourage you to share this program with individuals, classrooms, and groups (in Georgia and beyond) to help equip the next generation of conservation professionals and environmental stewards.

February 8 – Kiana Leveritte: Kiana Leveritte is the Community Engagement Coordinator at Georgia Audubon. She has worked in environmental education in her current role as well as with the U.S. Forest Service and has conducted research to learn more about grassland bird species.

February 10 – Corina Newsome: Corina Newsome has worked as an animal care professional in zoos around the country, specializing in animal husbandry and animal training. She recently earned her master's degree in biology conducting research on sparrows in Georgia's coastal marshes, and currently serves as the Community Engagement Manager at Georgia Audubon.

March 15 – Oya Money-Worthy: Oya Money-Worthy is fascinated with how water shapes communities and the natural world, which led her to earning a BSc Geology degree from Georgia State University and Master of Science in Hydrology and Water Security from the University of Oklahoma.

March 17 - Michela Williams: Michela Williams is the co-founder and CEO of a nonprofit called Black Too Earth. Her goal is to be able to provide a consistent volunteer base for Black farmers nationally and to help develop the next generation of Black environmental stewards.

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

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden

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

Field Trip: Murphey Candler Park | Leader: Mary Kimberly

Thursday, February 24, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.



Georgia Audubon's Master Birder Program is a six-week program that includes virtual events on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and weekend field trips. Photo by Phillip Pritchard, a Georgia Audubon Master Birder.

A graphic for the 'CONSERVATION CAREERS Series' by Georgia Audubon. The graphic features a grid of nine small portraits of professionals, each with their name and title. The dates for the sessions are listed at the top: 1/11, 1/13, 2/8, 2/10, 3/15, and 3/17. The Georgia Audubon logo is in the top right corner, along with the time '11:00 to 11:50 AM ET'. The background is a dark, textured image of a forest path.

Date	Name	Title
1/11	Alex Troutman	Wildlife Biologist
1/13	Kris Howard	Fisheries Scientist
2/8	Kiana Leveritte	Environmental Educator & Biologist
2/10	Corina Newsome	Animal Care Professional & Ornithologist (birds)
3/15	Oya Money-Worthy	Environmental Scientist
3/17	Michela Williams	CEO and Co-founder of Black Too Earth Inc./ Grants and Agreements Writer

FEBRUARY (Continued from Page 10)

Adaptive Field Trips for the Mobility Challenged

Join Georgia Audubon for a series of free Adaptive Field Trips that are accessible for people who experience mobility challenges in the outdoors. Find details for each trip at www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

- George Pierce Park, Sunday, February 27, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
- Olde Rope Mill Park, Saturday, April 16, from 9:00 to 11:00 AM

Early Birds Book Club: February Meeting Sunday, February 27, at 2:00 PM via Zoom FREE

The Early Birds book club will continue to meet on Zoom on the 4th Sunday of the month at 2:00 PM. For February, the group will read *The Peregrine*, by J.A. Baker. To learn more about this free book club or to see past or future book selections, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/early-birds-book-club.



MARCH

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, March 6, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Piedmont Park | Leader: Rob McDonough
Saturday, March 6, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, March 9, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Webinar: Becoming a Better Birder, with Georgann Schmalz
Tuesday, March 15, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM

Cost: \$15 for Georgia Audubon members/ \$20 for non-members
Register at www.georgiaaudubon.org/virtual-events

Webinar: Georgia Through Time: Clues of the Past in the Rocks of the Peach State
Wednesday, March 16, from 6:00 to 7:00 PM
FREE

While driving through the Atlanta area, have you ever noticed the rock outcrops? Have you ever thought about what was here before Georgia looked the way it does today? Join Cameron Muskelly as he takes us back half a billion years to explore Georgia's ancient life, now fossilized in the rocks of the state we call home.

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, March 19, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Webinar: Birding by Ear, with Georgann Schmalz
Tuesday, March 22, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM
Cost: \$15 for Georgia Audubon members/ \$20 for non-members

Early Birds Book Club: March Meeting
Sunday, March 27, at 2:00 PM | Either in person at Manuel's or virtually on Zoom. Please check website for details.
FREE

Webinar: Raptor ID, with Georgann Schmalz
Tuesday, March 29, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM
Cost: \$15 for Georgia Audubon Members/ \$20 for non-members

APRIL

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, April 2, at 8:00 AM | To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Reynolds Nature Preserve | Leader: Anne McCallum
Wednesday, April 13, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve | Leader: Stephen Ramsden
Saturday, April 16, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Field Trip: Morgan Falls Overlook Park | Leader: Roseanne Guerra
Saturday, April 16, at 8:00 AM
To learn more or sign up, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/field-trips.

Early Birds Book Club: April Meeting
Sunday, April 24, at 2:00 PM | via Zoom; Please check website for details.
FREE



Belted Kingfisher. Photo by Dan Vickers.

Wingbars

GEORGIA AUDUBON

4055 Roswell Road, NE · Atlanta, GA 30342

678.973.2437

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Georgia Native Plant Society Symposium Healing Our Habitats: At Home and In the Wild Virtual Event February 19 and 20, 2022

Georgia Audubon is thrilled to once again partner with the Georgia Native Plant Society (GNPS) to co-host the 2022 Symposium. This year's event will be a virtual event featuring a terrific lineup of speakers.

Saturday, February 19, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

- Mincy Moffett – **The Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance: A Novel Partnership that Transformed Plant Conservation**
- Georgann Eubanks – **Saving the Wild South: River Cane**
- Jennifer Ceska – **Cues of Care in the Native Garden**

Sunday, February 20, from 2:00 to 4:30 PM

- Angela Burrow – **Why Garden Certification Matters**
- Rick Huffman and Tradd Cotter – **Applied Ecology: Approaches to Improving Landscapes and Ecosystem Health**

Registration for this virtual event is now open. The cost is \$10 per day for current Georgia Audubon and GNPS members and \$12 for non-members. To learn more or register, visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/virtual-events.

