



PRESS RELEASE

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Media Note: Photos to accompany this article and a MS Word version of this press release are available for download at <https://ow.ly/T8yj50Qhmcb>

GEORGIA BIRD FEST RETURNS FOR 2024

(ATLANTA, GA,) March 4, 2024 – The ninth annual **Georgia Bird Fest** will return this spring with more than 40 events between April 6 and May 4. 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’s event will feature the **Inaugural Georgia Bird Fest Summit** on Saturday, April 20, in Athens, Georgia. Dr. J. Drew Lanham, poet laureate, McArthur fellow, and distinguished professor of wildlife ecology at Clemson University will give the keynote address on *Coloring the Conservation Conversation*. Participation in Georgia Bird Fest provides critical support for Birds Georgia’s conservation, education, and community engagement programs.

Georgia Bird Fest includes events across Georgia, from the mountains to the coast, including both in-person and virtual events and workshops. Some of the event highlights for Georgia Bird Fest 2024 include past favorites such as a tour of Zoo Atlanta’s bird collection; canoe trips on the Chattahoochee River; a Warbler Weekend in North Georgia; trips to Phinizy Swamp near Augusta and Harris Neck NWR on the coast; an overnight stay at the Len Foote Hike Inn in Dawsonville; and trips to other birding hot spots across the state. Some of this year’s virtual offerings include Birding 101, Warbler ID, Raptor ID, and a Building Your Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary webinars.

This year, we’re excited to premiere a new addition to the Georgia Bird Fest lineup of events. On Saturday, April 20, Bird Georgia will host our inaugural **Georgia Bird Fest Summit** from 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Classic Center in Athens, GA. The Georgia Bird Fest Summit is designed to bring people from

the state-wide birding community together to share knowledge and inspiration about what organizations are doing in Georgia's conservation, education, and community engagement programming.

The Summit will consist of our keynote presentation and six breakout sessions from which attendees can choose. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. In addition, there will be activities in and around Athens on the day of the event.

We're delighted to share that **Dr. J. Drew Lanham** will be giving our keynote address with a talk entitled, "Coloring the Conservation Conversation." Dr. Lanham will discuss what it means to embrace the full breadth of his African-American heritage and his deep kinship to nature and adoration of birds. The convergence of ornithologist, college professor, poet, author and conservation activist blend to bring our awareness of the natural world and our moral responsibility for it forward in new ways. Candid by nature — and because of it — Lanham will examine how conservation must be a rigorous science and evocative art, inviting diversity and race to play active roles in celebrating our natural world.

Drew Lanham, Ph.D., is a certified wildlife biologist, an academic, writer, artist, and public intellectual, from Edgefield and Aiken, South Carolina. He is an Alumni Distinguished Professor, Provost's Professor and Master Teacher of Wildlife Ecology at Clemson University, where his most recent scholarly efforts address the confluences of race, place and nature. A 2022 MacArthur Fellow, Dr. Lanham was also named one of the 100 most influential Black Americans by "The Root", in 2022. Creatively, Drew is the Poet Laureate of Edgefield County, South Carolina and the author of *Sparrow Envy - Poems*, *Sparrow Envy - A Field Guide to Birds and Lesser Beasts*, and *The Home Place - Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*. His memoir is a past winner of the Reed Environmental Writing Award (Southern Environmental Law Center), the Southern Book Prize, and a 2017 finalist for the Burroughs Medal. It was named a memoir and scholarly book of the decade by Lithub & Chronicle of Higher Education. His forthcoming works are *Joy is the Justice We Give Ourselves*, *The Bird I Became*, and *Range Maps - Birds, Blackness and Loving Nature Between the Two*.

Registration for Georgia Bird Fest opens on March 5 for Birds Georgia members and on March 12 for non-members. For more information or to view a full schedule of events, please visit <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/birdfest.html> .

Birds Georgia would like to thank the following event sponsors: Georgia Power Company, Barefoot Garden Design, Bird Collective, Bonsai Leadership Group, Jekyll Island Authority, Lynx Nature Books, Sticker Mule, Southwire, and Vortex.

About Birds Georgia: *Birds Georgia is building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-friendly communities through conservation, education, and community engagement. Founded in 1926 as*

the Atlanta Bird Club, the organization became a chapter of National Audubon in 1973, and continues as an independent chapter of National Audubon Society today. We look forward to celebrating the 100- year anniversary of our organization in 2026. Learn more at <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/>.

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