



PRESS RELEASE

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GEORGIA BIRD FEST SUMMIT SLATED FOR APRIL 20 FEATURING KEYNOTE BY J. DREW LANHAM

(ATLANTA, GA,) March 18, 2024 – Birds Georgia will host the inaugural **Georgia Bird Fest Summit** on Saturday, April 20, from 8:30 to 2:00 PM, at the Classic Center, in Athens, GA. J. Drew Lanham, Ph.D., poet laureate, MacArthur fellow, and distinguished professor of wildlife ecology at Clemson University will give the keynote address on *Coloring the Conservation Conversation*.

The Georgia Bird Fest Summit will bring bird enthusiasts from across the state to share knowledge and inspiration about birds, birding, and related issues in Georgia.

The Georgia Bird Fest Summit is part of the ninth annual **Georgia Bird Fest** which returns this spring with more than 40 events between April 6 and May 4. Participation in the Georgia Bird Fest Summit and Georgia Bird Fest events provides critical support for Birds Georgia's conservation, education, and community engagement programs.

The event will officially begin at 8:30 AM on Saturday, April 20, with the keynote address, entitled, *Coloring the Conservation Conversation*, by J. Drew Lanham. He 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.

Avid Bookshop, an Athens-area book store, will be on hand selling a selection of Lanham's books that will be available for the books signing event.

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*.

In addition, the Summit will feature six breakout sessions from which attendees can choose. To see the full schedule of events, please visit <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/georgia-bird-fest-summit.html>.

Early bird registration (through April 5) is \$100 (\$50 for students with a .edu email address). After April 6, the registration fee increases to \$125 (\$62 for students). Refreshments and lunch are included in the Summit registration fee. Registration is now open for the Georgia Bird Fest Summit and other Georgia Bird Fest events at <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/birdfest.html>.

Birds Georgia would like to thank the following event sponsors: Georgia Power Company, Barefoot Garden Design, Bird Collective, BirdNote, Bonsai Leadership Group, eBird, Jekyll Island Authority, Lynx Nature Books, Patagonia, 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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