



# wingbars

VOLUME XXXVIII, ISSUE 1 ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

## BRAZIL – AAS's 2012 Birding Tour

Sept. 1-12

AAS is organizing a tour of Brazil's Pantanal and Cerrado ecosystems. A birder's paradise, the Pantanal hosts more than 1,000 bird species, while more than 800 species can be found in the Cerrado.

AAS is partnering with Aventuras Naturales (a tour company committed to environmentally-responsible travel) to offer this breath-taking tour.



Brazil! AAS's 2012 Birding Tour

- Highly experienced, knowledgeable, and bilingual Brazilian guides

- Easy to moderate activity level

For more info, see the link on our home page or contact Jamie Hawk, AAS Executive Director, who is organizing and leading the tour:

404.290.1428 (cell) or audubonhawk@gmail.com

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## Get Snapping! The 2012 AAS Photo Contest



Prairie Warbler  
Photographer:  
David Cree

The 2012 AAS Photo Contest is in full-swing. As a reminder, acceptance of entries has already begun and will end Friday, March 2, 2012.

The awards banquet will be held Sunday, March 25, 2012. Once again, the event will be hosted at the Gordon-Biersch Brewery.

David Cree will act as chairman again and is asking for volunteers to assist him in uploading the photographs to Flickr. Volunteers can do this from the comfort of their homes with some instruction from David.

If you would like to help, contact David at peachstate@bellsouth.net or 770.377.3173.

## SPEAKER SERIES:

### ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD'S CRANES!

Thursday, Feb. 23, 7:00 PM Doraville Civic Center

The AAS Speaker Series resumes in February with a program on crane species. Two of the 15 species, Whooping and Sandhill, can be seen in the Atlanta area on their annual migrations to and from Florida. With an annual migration route to Florida, both travel over Georgia making it possible to see both in the Atlanta area. The Sandhills are the most numerous of the crane



Sandhill Cranes  
Photographer: Dan Vickers

*continued on page 4*

### *Winter Bird Walk at Blue Heron Nature Preserve*

*Join us Saturday, Feb. 4 from 10 AM-11:30 AM to celebrate Valentine's Day early at the Preserve and make a gift of love for the birds! We will take a bird walk, make a wintery treat for our feathered friends and warm up with hot chocolate, cookies and a story inside. Free for members, \$10 per child for non-members. Mail your check and or registration information to: Blue Heron Nature Preserve, 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA 30342. Information and registration forms are on the Blue Heron website: [www.bhnp.org](http://www.bhnp.org) or call the office, 404.345.1008.*

**Contacts:** Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon Educational Coordinator  
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Newsletter deadline is the first of the month for material to be published the following month. Please submit articles as MS-Word to ben.fitzgerald.smith@gmail.com. Email attachments, if possible.

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 Jamie Hawk

I've now been AAS Executive Director for one year, and it has been a wonderful year for me both professionally in this position and personally with the birth of my daughter, Sabina. I send my thanks to all that have supported me and my burgeoning family.

I want to take a moment to specifically thank two of my AAS colleagues. Ellen Miller, long-time member and former AAS Board President, has retired from the board, but she will always hold a special place in my heart. Ellen headed the committee to hire a new Executive Director, which culminated in AAS hiring me! She was my first contact with AAS, and I look forward to keeping in close contact with her throughout the coming years.

Harriette Hoyt worked tirelessly for AAS as Board President in 2011. Her skills and abilities made my transition smoother than I could have ever hoped for, and I am eternally grateful for her unparalleled support for AAS and her grace and generosity as a friend. If you are fortunate to meet Harriette and Ellen in your travels, please take a moment to express your thanks to them for their devotion to Georgia's birds and natural habitats.

I want to end here with two things – one essential to our work and one a chance for an unequalled birding experience. First, a gentle reminder of membership renewal: AAS memberships run the calendar year, and dues are our largest source of funds. Thank you to those who have already submitted their renewal. If you haven't yet renewed, please do so today – your continued support is integral to our success.

Also integral to birding fun is getting out-and-about to view birds in their native habitats. AAS is offering a birding tour of Brazil's Pantanal and Cerrado ecosystems (>1,000 bird species in the Pantanal alone!) from 1-12 September. I have the pleasure of organizing and going on the tour, and AAS benefits with a donation from the tour operator for each participant. The tour is capped at 14 people, so don't delay if this opportunity piques your interest. For more information, contact me directly or click the tour link on our homepage.

Thanks for all that you do for AAS, and as always, I'd love to hear from you with ideas on how to improve and enhance our programs and activities. We are an organization of members and for members, and your input is not only welcomed, it is treasured!

## Letter from the Editor



*Hello and welcome to 2012! As always, the New Year brings new changes – including myself. My name is Benjamin Smith and I will be taking over as Managing Editor for Wingbars. I'd like to thank Diane Hawkins-Cox for all the hard work she's put into this newsletter and we wish her the very best of luck for her future endeavors. No doubt, I have big shoes to fill.*

*I would just like to give a little background about myself for those wondering: I was born in Illinois, but grew up outside of Boston, MA. I attended Auburn University, where I graduated with a degree in English with a concentration in Creative Writing, and minored in Political Science. After graduation, I interned for the state of Georgia, where I am now happily employed.*

*Over my lifetime, I have been very fond of the outdoors and conserving our precious natural resources, as well as those species that make their habitats therein. While I'm not, to be honest with you all, a birdwatcher, I am excited to learn about it while doing my part to get this wonderful organization's message of conservation out to the public.*

*I look forward to continuing this publication and working with those who so care about our wonderful State, its resources, and the citizens who call it home (human and non-human).*

*Sincerely,*

*Benjamin Smith*

## MISSION STATEMENT:

PROTECTING GEORGIA'S BIRDS AND THE HABITATS THAT SUSTAIN THEM  
THROUGH EDUCATION, CONSERVATION AND ADVOCACY.



## Bird of the Month – February

# THE RESPLENDENT RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

**By Lenny Borg**



When I was growing up on Nancy Creek about a mile downstream from the Blue Heron Nature Preserve, my family's wonderful neighbor, Joe Burke, enjoyed a lengthy relationship with a Red-headed Woodpecker. Mr. Burke spent most of his free time tending to his manicured lawn. Intrigued by the Red-headed Woodpeckers occasionally chiseling his trees, he began carrying a few peanuts in his pocket; thereafter, when a Red-headed Woodpecker came within earshot, Joe would call "Hey Woody," make three clicks with his mouth, and then toss a peanut into the air. No one alive today knows how long it took for Woody to embrace the game, but he embraced it enthusiastically. Upon hearing Mr. Burke's call and clicks, the woodpecker would dart down to a position on a tree near Joe. When Joe would toss the peanut upward, Woody would catch it in midair.

Even in Mr. Burke's declining years when he no longer had the strength to work in his yard, the game continued. Woody would tap on the gutter above a sliding door often used by Mr. Burke. Woodpeckers, because they are not songbirds, often drum on gutters, siding, etc. to attract a mate or to establish a territory; nevertheless, it seemed clear that Woody's drumming was for food. Delighted by a visit from his old friend, Joe would step outside to repeat the ritualized call, clicks and toss. The game continued for a remarkable 12-15 years. It is likely that Mr. Burke trained multiple generations. The U.S. Forest Service admits that the lifespan of a Red-headed Woodpecker is unknown. The longest lifespan of a banded bird is nine years, 11 months from the time of banding; many survive only about two years.

Upon Mr. Burke's death, his wife, Louise, and daughter, Janet, tried diligently to perpetuate the tradition of feeding Woody, but their tosses lacked the precise verticality and consistent height of Joe's. When one of their errant tosses would land on the roof above or the terrace below, the woodpecker displayed no interest in claiming it. Before long Woody evidently decided to find his own nuts and



Red-headed Woodpecker  
Photographer: Dan  
Vickers

didn't visit the house again.

**Diet and Behavior:** It is no wonder that Red-headed Woodpeckers are so adept at catching peanuts. They often either catch prey from the air in the manner of flycatchers or swoop down to the ground to capture insects. Of course they do plenty of chiseling for wood-boring insects but less than other woodpeckers.

Red-heads are the most omnivorous woodpeckers in North America. About half their diet is composed of animals, mainly insects such as beetles (*Coleoptera*), ants and wasps (*Hymenoptera*), true bugs (*Heteroptera*), grasshoppers and crickets (*Orthoptera*), butterfly and moth larvae (*Lepidoptera*), spiders (*Araneae*), and centipedes (*Myriapoda*). But no morsel seems to thrill them as much as a juicy June bug. Occasionally Red-heads will eat vertebrates such as small lizards, mature birds, and mice. Infrequently these highly aggressive and territorial birds have even been known to rob the eggs or young from the nests of other birds.

The botanical half of their diets is composed of mast (dry fruit from woody plants, especially acorns, beech nuts, and pecans), berries (dogwood berries, huckleberries, strawberries, mulberries, elderberries, black cherries, and chokeberries), fruit (grapes, apples, pears, pawpaws, and Carolina laurel cherries), seeds, and corn. Several types of woodpeckers cache food for the winter, but the Red-headed is the only one known to conceal its stored food with a cover of moistened wood or bark. Sap is also part of their diets.

**Habitat:** Blue Heron Nature Preserve

(BHNP) is one of the most reliable places in Atlanta to find Red-headed Woodpeckers year-round. The habitat is well-suited since Red-heads prefer to nest, roost, and forage in bottomlands where there are multiple dead, barkless deciduous trees ("snags") with few or no remaining limbs and standing in open fields with little or no understory to interrupt their flycatching, a broad term that refers to catching any kind of flying insect in midair. In addition to the snags near the Community Garden in the field along Roswell Road, the northern half of the preserve contains other clusters of snags along the trail by the condos at 4222 Rickenbacker Drive and also on Rickenbacker Way near the Preserve. Red-headed Woodpeckers can sometimes be found at all three stands of snags during a single visit.

**Migration:** Despite being considered a migrating bird in part of its range, Red-heads are regarded as year-round residents in Atlanta; nevertheless, many of them will migrate for short distances in winter if the local supply of mast becomes insufficient.

**Nesting Cavity and Breeding:** Nest cavities created by Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers are frequently usurped by Red-headed Woodpeckers; however, in the majority (57%, according to one study in Ohio) of cases, Red-heads occupy cavities that they have created themselves. If a new cavity must be drilled, a male Red-headed Woodpecker will create an entry hole of about 1 1/4 inches in diameter. As prevailing winds in Atlanta are from southwest to northeast, the first place to search for the entry hole is on the northeast side of the tree. The edges of the entry hole will be "beautifully beveled off, and the inside is as smooth as if finished with a fine rasp." Inside is a cavity of 8-24 inches in depth. Work is completed in about two weeks. The fine chips created in chiseling the cavity form such an excellent bed for the deposition of the eggs that no other nesting material is needed. Pairs tend to be loyal to their nests, reusing the same nest for several years.

*continued on next page*



## Protecting Trees, Saving the Environment

*Local teacher trying to shield trees from danger*

*By Jeylin White*

*Originally published December 21, 2011 –  
Clayton Daily News*

Cynthia Brown, English Speaker of Other Languages instructor at Roberta T. Smith Elementary School in Clayton County, may not be classified as your average teacher.

During her time off — when school's not in session — she spends her time cleaning, and protecting trees, located on the school's property.

Her passion for protecting the area emerged last year, when she noticed an old, water oak tree — located in a small, grass area — while taking some students, who participate in the after-school program, on a nature walk.

Brown said she enjoys sharing her passion for the environment with students at the school, and often takes them around the campus, teaching the youngsters how important trees are to the environment.

Since the discovery of the water oak, she has grown fond of the tree, and its surroundings. "This has been my baby for a couple of years now," Brown declared.

She said she checks on the area where the tree sits, at least once a week, making sure that it's safe and presentable for students. However, recently — while cleaning — she said she noticed a long vine resembling a rope growing in the area around the tree. "I kept pulling and pulling and pulling," said Brown, "until it covered my whole hand."

What she found, was something called kudzu — a weed that climbs over trees or shrubs and grows rapidly. It could potentially kill the tree because of heavy shading, she said.

After the discovery of kudzu, Brown contacted Beryl Budd, an arborist for the Georgia Forestry Commission, located in Athens, to inspect the area. He determined

*continued on page 5*

## The Resplendent Red-headed Woodpecker *continued from previous page*

Breeding can occur at any time between February and early September with nesting in early April through July. In Georgia, they typically lay three to four pure white ovate eggs and often raise two broods per year. Incubation requires 12-14 days. The parents typically remain monogamous for several breeding seasons; even though they are solitary in winter. Outside of the breeding season, the mates sleep in separate roosting cavities, which provide a degree of protection against winter winds and predators.

**Identification:** The bold colors of this spectacular bird, one of John J. Audubon's favorites, could not be easier to identify. Of the seven different types of adult woodpeckers found in Atlanta, all except the female Downy and Hairy woodpeckers have at least small patches of red on their heads; nevertheless, the Red-headed Woodpecker is the only one in North America whose entire head, not to mention his neck, is red. His chest is white and his back is black with a large patch of white secondary feathers. The males and females look alike – at least to us! Several juveniles, easily identified by their grayish-brown heads, have been seen frequently at BHNPP this year. Unlike the adults with their pure white secondary feathers, the white secondary feathers of juveniles are overlain with black bars. In the intermediate stage, when they are known as immatures, a bit of red has begun to develop on their heads.

**Voice:** [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/red-headed\\_woodpecker/sounds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/red-headed_woodpecker/sounds)

**Predation and Other Risks:** Nests are robbed by snakes (rat snakes and eastern racers), raccoons and flying squirrels. Other predators of Red-headed Woodpeckers include Cooper's Hawks, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Eastern Screech-owls, and red foxes. Many birds can be lost to severe winters.

**Conservation:** Red-headed Woodpeckers, once very common throughout the eastern half of our country, are now classified as uncommon. The fortunes of these gorgeous birds have fluctuated dramatically over the past 200 years, dependent

largely upon the number of standing dead trees available to house their nest cavities and the amount of open acreage available for flycatching. The chestnut blight of the early 1900s and the Dutch elm disease of the mid-20th century provided numerous homes to woodpeckers for a time, but then their numbers began to decline again. From an annual decline averaging 2.2% from 1966-1996, the Breeding Bird Survey determined that after 1980 the rate of decline accelerated to 4.6%. These troubling numbers have led them to be placed on the Yellow Watch List of The American Bird

Conservancy/American Audubon Society as a species in decline. They are not classified as Endangered in Georgia, but in multiple states and provinces they are.

Authorities attribute their declining populations to an array of factors: cutting of snags, clear-cuts, agricultural development, channeling of rivers, reduction of beaver ponds and the flooded forests/dead trees they create, regeneration of eastern forests, fire suppression, pesticides applied to burned forests to reduce the incursion of insects, monoculture crops, the loss of small orchards, and the decline of beech trees/beech nuts in the Rockies.

**Attracting Red-headed Woodpeckers:** At least in my experience, they have not been as easily attracted to feeders containing nuts – even peanuts – as Downy, Hairy, or Red-bellied Woodpeckers. They seem to prefer suet feeders placed at least five feet above the ground. If you happen to live where a dead tree can be allowed to remain standing, your yard is likely to be popular with numerous birds that are cavity nesters. Of course, all birds appreciate a source of water.

**Preventing Damage By Woodpeckers:** See [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/NR\\_WD\\_006.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/NR_WD_006.pdf)

**Legal Protection:** Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the penalty for killing a migrating bird is a fine of up to \$500, jail for up to six months, or both; furthermore, any guns or other equipment used in the killing will be forfeited.

## THE WORLD'S CRANES *continued from front page*

species, while Whooping Crane have the fewest numbers.

Cranes can be found on most continents and each member has a special story. Called the most elegant of the world's bird families, they include the tallest flying birds, but have some of the most rapidly declining populations.

AAS member Ted Reissing has logged 14 members of the group on his Life List and he will share his experiences with us. Details for each of the cranes will be highlighted including their individual status and where in the world they can best be seen. The work being done by The International Crane Foundation to save each member will also be reviewed.

# Sparrow Workshop Report

By Leigh McDougal

*Georgia Sparrows – the small, the brown and the sneaky.* Tim Keyes' title perfectly described the Atlanta Audubon Society Sparrow Workshop, held near Brunswick, Ga., Nov. 11-13. During Friday's evening classroom session, we learned that sparrows resist identification because: 1. they are sometimes hard to see and, even if seen, they have subtle plumages; 2. they have variable field-marks; and 3. many species have several subspecies. Since field mark basics like streaks and spots are not always present, Tim encouraged us to learn sparrows by their overall size, shape, posture, behavior and habitat. He suggested we study our backyard species, like the Song Sparrow, so we can compare them to more unfamiliar species. For example, if you see a flock of sparrows on the ground in a field that appear smaller than Song Sparrows, have heads that resemble ping pong balls, have small bills and long tails, they are Spizella sparrows (think Chipping). In contrast, if you walk into a coastal plain longleaf pine forest and see a single, medium-sized sparrow with a large bill and long tail, it could be a Bachman's Sparrow.

Saturday morning we headed to the frosty but sunny Marshes of Glynn off the Jekyll Island causeway with leaders Tim Keyes and Gene Keferl. The class was moved to the coast this year in order to include a different selection of sparrows, including the "Salty Sparrows" that inhabit marshes. Our marsh visit was timed to be at high tide so that more birds would be near the shore. We began slogging through the vegetation and mud and birds began popping up, flying away, and diving back into the bushes in front of us. A faint whiff of papermill blended into the smell of marsh muck, but the morning light was spectacular. Gene mentioned that the large, dark birds we were glimpsing were Seaside Sparrows. Eventually, the birds slowed down and became more visible as they reached larger bushes and a break in the marsh. Once they stopped moving, we saw more detail on the Seaside Sparrows – white throat, yellow lores, and greenish dark body.

We watched the marsh grass swaying mysteriously before a Sharp-tailed Sparrow walked into view - but was it a Nelson's or a Saltmarsh Sparrow? The bird had an orange breast with faint streaks and its white belly was clearly defined so it must be a Nelson's Sparrow. Tim, who is a DNR wildlife biologist, said that surveys last year found that Nelson's Sparrow was more common in the interior marshes while the Saltmarsh Sparrow seemed to prefer the more remote, outer marshes. Both Nelson's and Seaside Sparrows have two subspecies from different parts of the country that winter on the Georgia coast, and Tim and Gene pointed out the plumage differences.

Next we drove to the manmade Andrews Island, which the GA DOT and Army Corps of Engineers utilize as a place to dump dredge spoil. We parked and walked down a sandy road with fishing boats and Brunswick in the background. A sparrow flew by that had a short tail, yellowish face and finer breast lines than a Song Sparrow and which we

identified as a Savannah Sparrow. A cooperative White-crowned Sparrow responded to a recording and sat in a tree. Gene said that they are uncommon on the coast, in contrast to White-throated Sparrows, which are abundant.

Before we walked into a brushy field, Tim warned us that it would be full of sand spurs. A Swamp sparrow was seen but quickly forgotten as Tim spotted a slender Le Conte's Sparrow, a rare bird on the coast. We moved through the field, jumping the sparrow repeatedly but it disappeared by sneaking away on the ground. Finally we surrounded a 30-foot wide clump of small bushes and the bird reluctantly jumped into the open on top of a bush. When seen close, LeConte's Sparrow is a beautiful bird with a dramatic scaled back pattern and a handsome face with a white strip down the top of its head. After everyone got a good look at the bird, it slipped away again. In case you are ever covered with sand spurs, Tim said the best way to remove them is with a comb.

After lunch, we descended on Paulk's Meadow WMA to search a boggy powerline right-of-way for Henslow's Sparrows. Giff Beaton described this species in *Birding Georgia* as "a rare winter resident below the fall line ... but nightmarish to actually get a look at" and not surprisingly, Henslow's is a close relative of the LeConte's Sparrow that we were chasing before lunch. Tim and Gene grabbed either end of a thick, 100-foot long rope and dragged it over wet grass, bushes and pitcher plants to try to flush birds. The rest of us stumbled behind. We spent the next two hours repeatedly jumping and chasing about 10 Henslow Sparrows. This species is nicknamed "the mouse" because it prefers to sneak away under the grass and you can almost step on them before they will fly. Finally one, probably exhausted, Henslow's flew up and froze in a short pine tree, letting us see its greenish face and scalloped back pattern.

After all the excitement on Saturday, Sunday morning was rather anticlimactic as we looked for some of the less reclusive sparrow species.

Overall, the Workshop was a great success; we saw a total of 12 species of sparrows, and everyone had a good time.



LeConte's Sparrow  
Photographer: Ken Hanft

## Protecting Trees

continued from page 4

that the water oak is between 70 and 80 years old.

Budd said if the kudzu takes over, the tree could be in danger of having to be cut down.

"It would take chemicals to kill the kudzu," said Budd. "But, the chemicals could be dangerous to the area." He added that the best way to get rid of the kudzu is manually removing it from the area, adding, "It would take a lot of manpower."

Brown said she is going to do her best to preserve the area and the tree, for the school, and the students. She said she will pull together some of her friends, who share her passion for the environment, and start removing the kudzu.

Budd said if Brown can get the area cleared of the kudzu, it will be an excellent area for students to learn about nature. "Instead of taking [students] on field trips to nature centers," he said, "the school could save money — because they have a nature center right here."

Brown said she is a member of Atlanta Audubon Society, an independent organization. She said its mission is to protect Georgia's birds and the habitats that sustain them, through education, conservation and advocacy.

To protect the water oak tree and its natural surroundings, Brown said, her goal is to talk with the school's principal and school district officials about having Atlanta Audubon Society certify the area as a wildlife area for birds.

***"The students are our future," she said, "and it's important for them to learn about our environment and natural resources."***



By Nikki Belmonte

## A “Great” Way to Get New Birders Involved

As bird lovers, we never stop looking for, admiring, or listening to birds; it is part of who we are and can be contagious. This is a great time of year to share your love of birds with someone else and to contribute to the ever-growing pool of citizen science observations. Mark Feb. 17-20 down on your calendars – these are the dates for the annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). The GBBC is a four-day event in which bird enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels can help create a current snapshot of where birds are found throughout the United States and Canada. To participate, you must identify and count birds for a minimum of 15 minutes at a location of your choosing during this weekend. Then you report your data to the GBBC website, [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/), and that's IT! You can participate from anywhere – outdoors or indoors next to a window. This is a great opportunity to show others how to identify birds, and relay the importance of citizen science.

This year, AAS will partner with the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) to provide a morning of birding for beginners to showcase this important birding event. Our partnership with CRNRA rangers is an important one – they help keep the properties along the Chattahoochee River clean, safe, and accessible. One way we can give back is by helping to provide educational programs and teaching them our trade. I hope to see some of you and your family and friends at this event.

### Great Backyard Bird Count at Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

**Johnson Ferry Unit - North Entrance Saturday, Feb. 18, 2012 9 AM – 12 PM**

***Reservations are required; please call 678.538.1200 to make your reservation.***



Come participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count while discovering the many fascinating birds that inhabit the wetlands at Johnson Ferry, one of metro Atlanta's best wildlife viewing areas. During a brief tutorial, Atlanta Audubon naturalists will provide tips on how to identify bird species by sight and sound and how to conduct your own 15-minute backyard bird count at home. Guided walks will begin at the pavilion at 9:15, 10:15, and 11:15. We will submit our counts via the GBBC website to be included in the national tally. Craft tables will be open to kids of all ages, weather permitting.

The bird walks and tutorial are geared toward beginner birders and children ages 7 and up, however all are welcome to attend. Binoculars will be available to borrow, but you may want to bring a notebook and a camera.

**Location:** We will meet at the pavilion at the Johnson Ferry unit, North entrance, located across from Columns Drive on Johnson Ferry Road, Marietta, GA 30068. Detailed directions can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/chat/planyourvisit/unitdirections.htm>. Restrooms and water fountains are available at the pavilion.

There is a \$3 daily park entrance fee. This is not required for vehicles displaying a current Annual Park Pass. Reservations are required; please call 678.538.1200 to make your reservation.

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## Home School February Flocking

A new series of programs for home school students and their families! Workshops will take place at the AAS office at Blue Heron Nature Preserve, 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta. These classes are timed to provide some preparation for those participating in the Youth Birding Competition on April 27-28.

### “Common Birds of Georgia”

Tuesday, Feb. 28, 10 AM – 12 PM AAS office at Blue Heron Nature Preserve

\$6/student for AAS members, \$8/student for non-members (*no sibling discounts*)

Join an AAS naturalist for a hands-on presentation about common birds of Georgia. Students will learn how to identify at least 10 species of birds by sight and sound, how to use binoculars and field guides, and how to record data on bird sightings. Activities are aligned with science Georgia Performance Standards for grades 1-5 (age range 7-12 years old). Rain or shine.

To register, please download a registration form at [www.atlantaaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org) and mail the completed form with payment to Atlanta Audubon Society, 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA 30342. Questions may be directed to Nikki Belmonte via email [atlantaauduboned@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaauduboned@gmail.com) or phone at 678.973.2437.

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## Youth Birding Competition Prep Workshop

The 7th annual Youth Birding Competition is rapidly approaching, and the Atlanta Audubon Society is proud to support Georgia Department of Natural Resources again this year. The Youth Birding Competition is an annual 24-hour bird count hosted by DNR. Teams of students compete against each other within their age group to find as many birds as they can in Georgia. The 2012 event will be held April 27-28 with the finish line at Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center in Mansfield, GA.

How can you get involved? Joining or mentoring a YBC team is an experience unlike any other. Atlanta Audubon Society is happy to help you prepare! Join Eddie Hatchett for an informative workshop on planning for the YBC on Saturday, Feb. 25 from 11 AM – 12 PM at Panola Mountain State Park Visitor Center. Topics will include equipment, birding skills and ethics, and birding route strategies. With just a little planning, your team can have a successful and fun 24 hours.

Participants can also benefit by stopping by the Important Bird Area (IBA) of Panola Mountain for bird banding before the workshop. This is a wonderful way to study birds up close and do some birding with local experts. Please contact Charlie Muise, IBA Coordinator, if you plan on attending bird banding at [cmmbirds@yahoo.com](mailto:cmmbirds@yahoo.com).

The workshop and banding, like the YBC itself, is free of charge. For more information, please contact Nikki at [atlantaauduboned@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaauduboned@gmail.com) or by phone at 678.973.2437. Registration for the actual YBC event is handled by DNR. To find out more detailed information, including rules and registration for the event, visit [www.georgiawildlife.org/getinvolved/programs/youth\\_birding\\_competition](http://www.georgiawildlife.org/getinvolved/programs/youth_birding_competition).



# Live and Learn with these AAS Workshops

## 2012 Warbler Weekend Workshop



Canada Warbler at Brasstown  
Photographer: Dan Vickers

**Class: May 6, 2:30-5:30 pm**  
**Field Trip: May 19-20, 2012**  
**\$135 AAS members / \$185 non-members**  
**(excludes food and lodging)**

Ever have trouble identifying those flitting warblers high in the trees? Do you wonder who's singing that song? The North Georgia Mountains host over 20 breeding warblers and this workshop will cover them all! Join Atlanta Audubon's warbler experts for a comprehensive class and field trip to help you sort out these beautiful species.

To introduce you to the warblers, there will be an in-depth, three-hour class session at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve. The class will concentrate on the key identification characteristics of the warbler species, as well as tips to song recognition. The two-day weekend field trip will be led by Theresa Hartz and Leslie Curran on May 19 and 20, 2012, in the North Georgia Mountains where it's possible to find 20+ species of warblers, many of which will be singing on their breeding grounds. We will visit the mountain "hot spots" such as Burrell's Ford Road, Ivy Log Gap Road, Brasstown Bald, Sosebee Cove and others.

This will be limited to 12 participants. To register, download a registration form at [www.atlantaaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org) and send your completed form with payment to the AAS office at 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA 30342. For more information, contact Theresa Hartz: email: [jthartz50@gmail.com](mailto:jthartz50@gmail.com), phone: 706.579.3350 or cell: 678.936.0785.

## Beginning Birding for Kids

**Saturday, March 10, 9:30-11:30 AM**  
**Ages 5-8**

**\$20 per child AAS/BHNP member, \$25 per child non-members**  
**"The Burrow" at Blue Heron Nature Preserve**



Kids learn to use binoculars  
Photographer: Nikki Belmonte

Introduce your children and friends to the world of birding! With their peers, children will explore the Blue Heron Nature Preserve with an AAS naturalist. Students will learn about common birds in our environment and how to identify them. They will also learn how to use binoculars and different ways of keeping track of their observations. Light hiking involved, rain or shine! Fee includes a nature journal, pencil, field guide, and handouts.

This is a drop-off program for children ages 5-8 (grades K-2) at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve's new education room, "The Burrow," located on the first floor of 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta 30342. To register, please visit [www.bhnp.org](http://www.bhnp.org) and click the "Calendar" tab. Feel free to contact Nikki Belmonte with any questions about this program at 678.973.2437 or [atlantaaduboned@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaaduboned@gmail.com).

## Shorebird Workshop 2012



Royal Tern (banded)  
Photographer: Linda Liu

Witness a spectacular event that occurs each spring on our Georgia Coast.

Get ready for Atlanta Audubon's Shorebird Workshop, May 11, 12, & 13. Once again AAS is scheduling this workshop to coincide with the spawning of horseshoe crabs and shorebird migration on our Georgia Coast.

The two part workshop consists of a class session on Shorebird Identification on March 11, taught by Georgann Schmalz, AAS's resident ornithologist, at The Blue Heron Nature Preserve, 2 PM-4 PM, and coastal field trips and class session in May. Highlights will be a Friday evening class taught by Tim Keyes, Wildlife Biologist for DNR, a Saturday boat trip into St. Catherine's Sound, (weather permitting), a Sunday morning romp around Jekyll Island with Lydia Thompson, coastal naturalist, and a field trip to Harris Neck WR. There will be two full days of birding on May 12 and 13.

Trip cost will be \$225 per person; \$250 for non-members. This does not include food and lodging.

For more info contact Lisa Hurt: email: [artisahurt@bellsouth.net](mailto:artisahurt@bellsouth.net)  
phone: 770.934.7660 or cell: 678.233.4293

Participants will be limited to 14. To register, download a registration form at [www.atlantaaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org) and send your completed form with payment to the AAS office at 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA 30342. Payment confirms your registration.

## Becoming a Better Birder is Back!

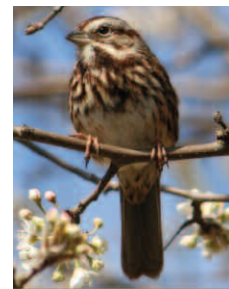
**Sunday, Feb. 12, 2012**  
**1:00 PM-3:00 PM**

**AAS Office at Blue Heron Nature Preserve**  
**\$35 AAS members / \$40 non-members**

Start off a new year of birding with confidence! Join Georgann Schmalz for a two-hour workshop on improving your birding skills. This class is a must for any new birder who feels somewhat overwhelmed by the birding skills of other, more advanced birders.

Becoming a Better Birder covers aspects of birding that a novice birder usually needs to learn by experience in the field and often does not. Time will be spent learning good techniques of birding in the field and choosing good optics, books and sound devices. Not only will participants develop key identification skills under Georgann's expert guidance, but they will also experience the satisfaction that better birding can yield.

Only a few spots remain, so secure your spot now by downloading a registration form at [www.atlantaaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org) and sending your completed form with payment to the AAS office. For more info, visit our website or contact Nikki Belmonte by email [AtlantaAudubonEd@gmail.com](mailto:AtlantaAudubonEd@gmail.com) or by phone 678.973.2437.



Learn how to identify this common sparrow with Georgann's guidance!  
Photographer: Iris Schumacher



OCTOBER was a great month for birding both in the Atlanta area and in Georgia as a whole. There were a number of uncommon migrants that were still around plus the beginnings of some of our winter visitors. Read on for some of the details of impressive numbers of Lincoln's Sparrows, Clay-colored Sparrows plus many more.

The Atlanta area came in with 164 species (average = 155.4) which brings the year-to-date total to 251 (average = 243.9). The Georgia area came in with 248 species (average = 240.9) to bring that year-to-date list to 319 (average = 328.6).

## ATLANTA AREA

**DUCKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS** – Good duck sightings included five NORTHERN PINTAILS at the E.L. Huie Land Application Facility (ELHLAF) in Clayton Co. on 28 Oct. (JSe) and a GREATER SCAUP at Lake Lanier also on 28 Oct. (JFly). A very surprising report was that of 30-40 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS in Forsyth Co. on 5 Oct. (JSe). A GREAT WHITE HERON was seen at Lake Lanier from 21 Oct. (JFly) through at least 29 Oct. (MMcS). SZ had an excellent count of 316 TURKEY VULTURES over Roswell on 30 Oct. PR reported a PEREGRINE FALCON from Kennesaw Mt. (KMT) on 12 Oct. Forty SANDHILL CRANES over North Atlanta on 27 Oct. were somewhat early (LS). Interesting shorebird sightings included two AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVERS in Forsyth Co. on 2 Oct. (JFly) and at the ELHLAF an astounding 32 AMERICAN AVOCETS on 17 Oct. (PR) plus at least one DUNLIN on 29 Oct. (JSe).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS** – A fairly late OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was seen at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) on 2 Oct. by JH et al.). PR had a YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER at the KMT on 12 Oct. The best count of PHILADELPHIA VIREOS was three on 2 Oct. at the CRNRA (JH). There were two reports of RED-BREADED NUTHATCHES with single birds in the Roswell area on 17 Oct. (PMo) and in the Stockbridge area on 24 Oct. (PR). There were five reports of SEDGE WRENS and four of MARSH WRENS with most of the sightings coming from the CRNRA. These sightings were spread out during the entire month (m.ob.).

**WARBLERS** – As many as ten OVENBIRDS and 13 TENNESSEE WARBLERS were seen during the month at the Centennial Olympic Park (COP) in downtown Atlanta (m.ob.). There were at least four sightings of NASHVILLE WARBLERS with the peak count of two at Henderson Park on 2 Oct. (JM et al.). There were four reports of single WILSON'S WARBLERS during the month from 4 Oct. through at least 19 Oct. (m.ob.).

**SPARROWS THROUGH SISKINS** – There were three reports of GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS with the highest count of three coming from Bartow Co. on 24 Oct. (JMcN). JMcN and NF had sightings of a HENSLOW'S SPARROW on 23 Oct. at the CRNRA and a NELSON'S SPARROW the same day in Bartow Co. There were at least ten reports of LINCOLN'S SPARROWS from 1 Oct. through 30 Oct. with the peak count of two coming from the CRNRA on 16 Oct. and Gwinnett Co. on 30 Oct. (m.ob.). WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were reported from three locations with the peak count of four coming both from Bartow Co. on 24 and 26 Oct. and Gwinnett Co. on 30 Oct. (m.ob.). A DICKCISSEL was seen in Bartow Co. on 24 Oct. (JMcN, NF) and the only PINE SISKINS were two at the CRNRA on 26 Oct. (JSe, BL).

## GEORGIA AREA

**DUCKS THROUGH GULLS** – SH had an impressive count of 45 BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCKS at the Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area (AWMA) near Darien on 9 Oct. Three MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRDS were seen by PA et al. at Jekyll Island on 9 Oct. MB had 18 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS at West Point Lake on 24 Oct. and JFly had 11 at the Walter F. George Dam on 31 Oct. Other interesting reports included three AMERICAN BITTERNS at the Phinizy Swamp near Augusta on 29 Oct. and 60-75 ROSEATE SPOONBILLS in the Brunswick area on 29 Oct. (SW). Two MISSISSIPPI KITES were fairly late on 4 Oct. in Burke Co. (CF). The following counts were made by TK et al. on 14 Oct. at the Little Egg Island Bar – REDDISH EGRET – 5, PEREGRINE FALCON – 9, AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – 408, LONG-BILLED CURLEW – 9, MARBLED GODWIT – 142, and COMMON TERN – 79. GB et al. had two WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS and seven BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS on Little St. Simons Island (LSSI) on 1 Oct. Three BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS were seen in Twiggs Co. on 3 Oct. (WC). Back at LSSI on 1 Oct. GB et al. had 28 STILT SANDPIPERS and five WILSON'S PHALAROPES. Interesting gull reports were a FRANKLIN'S GULL and 12 LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS both at Tybee Island on 22 Oct. (CC).

**DOVES THROUGH VIREOS** – A WHITE-WINGED DOVE was a good find on Jekyll Island on 15 Oct. (CM et al.) through at least 20 Oct. (LT). Good reports from the Macon area were a YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER on 17 Oct., a BELL'S VIREO on 1 Oct. and a WARBLING VIREO on 4 Oct. (TMcC). There were at least nine reports of PHILADELPHIA VIREOS seen during the month with the peak count of three coming from Murray Co. on 2 Oct. (JG).

**WARBLERS** – JMcN and NF had a good count of four GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS in the Athens area on 2 Oct. There were a total of six NASHVILLE WARBLER reports, all of single birds, from 1 Oct. through at least 18 Oct. (m.ob.). A CONNECTICUT WARBLER was seen on Cumberland Island on 9 Oct. (GK). The Jekyll Island Banding Station banded a total of 63 COMMON YELLOWTHROATS on 7 Oct. (EP). JMcN and NF had a very good count of 17 HOODED WARBLERS in the Athens area on 2 Oct. A YELLOW WARBLER was late in the Athens area on 25 Oct. (RH). There were a total of six reports of WILSON'S WARBLERS, all of single birds, from 2 Oct. through 20 Oct. (m.ob.).

There were a good number of CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS seen during the GOS meeting at Tybee Island with the peak count of three at the AWMA on 9 Oct. A LECONTE'S SPARROW was a good find in Taylor Co. on 16 Oct. (MM). There were three reports of LINCOLN'S SPARROWS with the peak count of three coming from the Eufaula NWR on 20 Oct. (WC). Three WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were seen in East GA on 9 Oct. (JFly). A late BLUE GROSBEAK was seen at the Silver Lake WMA on 30 Oct. (JFly). Two YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS were seen at the AWMA on 8 Oct. (JFleu).

**CONTRIBUTORS** – Patrick Addy, Michael Barrett, Mirko Basen, Giff Beaton, Brad Bergstrom, Jerry Brunner, Walt Chambers, Cameron Cox, Stan Chapman, Nathan Farnau, Chris Feeney, Bill Flatau, James Fleullan, Jim Flynn, Hugh Garrett, Johnnie Greene, Larry Gridley, Richard Hall, Allison and James Healy, Steve Holzman, Kevin Jacobson, Gene Keferl, Tim Keyes, Joe LaFleur, Carol Lambert, Bill Lotz, Jeff Madsen, Joel McNeal, Trey McCuen, Patty McLean, Mark McShane, Max Medley, Al Mercer, Kathy Miller, Peggy and Terry Moore, Charlie Muise, Evan Pitman, Paul Raney, Robert Sattelmeyer, Jeff Sewell, Linda Shipley, Lois Stacey, Ted Theus, Karen and Luke Theodorou, Lydia Thompson, Shiela Willis, Bob and Deb Zaremba and Stacey Zarpentine.

Terry Moore, 13000 Bucksport Court, Roswell, GA 30075  
email: tsmoore@bellsouth.net

## A Big Final Thank You to our 2011 Annual Fund Donors

Atlanta Audubon Society is extremely grateful to have so many wonderful supporters. Our work in the community would not be possible without you. In previous editions of Wingbars, we have recognized our 2011 Annual Fund donors. Additional supporters of our 2011 campaign included:

\$1,000 or more  
Up to \$249

Marianne H. Halle Animal Support Foundation, Inc.  
Anonymous (1), Stuart L. Arey, Jr., David Criner, Jay Davis, Virginia G. Dunbar (in memory of John Howell Cox), Janet and James Feeley, Nancy Hamilton, Carol Hassell, Ilze and Ralph Henderson, Gary Ludi, Marvin M. Peden, Esther and Jim Stokes, Victor Williams, Catherine Woodward

**Question:**  
Woody the Woodpecker is what kind of woodpecker?



See page 10 for answer





Sketch by Anne McCallum

**Field trips are open to the public and free (unless otherwise noted). We welcome everyone from beginners to advanced birders. Please check the Atlanta Audubon website ([www.atlantaaudubon.org](http://www.atlantaaudubon.org)) for additional February field trips that may be scheduled.**

*If you would like to lead a field trip, volunteer to help with the Field Trip Committee, contribute ideas for places to go, or give feedback about leaders or trips, please email Rebecca Kerimbaev, Field Trips Coordinators, at [rebecca.kerimbaev@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.kerimbaev@gmail.com).*

**Note:** For up-to-date information about field trips, go to [atlantaaudubon.org](http://atlantaaudubon.org). It is wise to check this website to make sure no changes have occurred in the schedule of trips. Frequently trips are added after the newsletter deadline has passed. All trips are open to the public. No reservations are necessary except where indicated below. The only fees that apply are those charged for entrance to any venue.

#### Saturday, Feb. 4, 8 AM

##### **Carter's Lake & Re-Regulation Lake (Murray County)**

**Leader:** Max Medley

Cell contact morning of walk: 706.618.5377

**Birding Focus:** We'll scope the Rereg Lake from the dam for waterfowl/waders and walk the Hidden Pond Trail for winter and resident woodland birds. We can also scope the lake from Powerhouse Road and bird that area as well. Duration of trip about 4-5 hours, but you may leave any time.

**Directions and Parking:** To access the area from I-75, get off at Exit 320 and head east on GA Hwy 136. When you come to the intersection of US Hwy 411 (Ralston's Corner BP gas station here), go straight across the highway, pass over a RR crossing, and 0.4 miles from the intersection you should turn left onto Old Hwy 411 (there is a brown sign here marking Coosawattee WMA). Drive 0.75 miles north on Old Hwy 411 to the parking area, which will be on your right (paved entrance) directly across from Hiwassee Road (gravel road). Turn right and go all the way to the very last parking lot (Regulatory Dam Recreation Area).

#### Saturday, Feb. 4, 8 AM

##### **Piedmont Park (Fulton County)**

**Coralee Kight and Steve Tillander (standing in for Rob McDonough)**

Cell contact morning of walk:

Coralee: 404.307.4373 Steve: 404.281.2951

**Birding Focus:** Migratory, permanent and winter residents. All levels welcome. Excellent for beginning birders or those desiring gentle terrain. Walk can last approx. 3 hours with approx. 2.5 miles on foot.

**Directions and Parking:** From 10th Street and Peachtree, travel east on 10th St. two blocks to Piedmont. Turn left (north) on Piedmont and pass 11th St. You will see Quattro's and Willy's eateries on your right. We will meet in the parking lot directly behind this building, which also houses the Piedmont Park Conservancy – the park entrance is just past these restaurants on the right. There are parking spaces in the designated lot behind the Conservancy building, but there is also parking available on 11th St. across Piedmont Ave. from the Community Center. The Atlanta Botanical Garden Parking Garage is also an option (enter from Piedmont Ave. north of the Community Center across from the Prado – fee approx. \$4 for two hours). From the Gardens, walk through Piedmont Park and around Lake Clara Meer on either side until you get to the Community Center on Piedmont Ave. across from 11th St.

#### Wednesday, Feb. 8, 8 AM

##### **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area–Cochran Shoals Unit (Cobb County)**

**Leader:** Liz Hornsby

Cell contact morning of walk: 678.761.0952

**Birding Focus:** Sparrows, woodpeckers, raptors, other winter and permanent residents, and any waterfowl and herons that might be on the river or wetland areas.

**Directions and Parking:** Take I-285 to the Northside Powers Ferry Rd. exit (#22). Going west on I-285, turn

right at the first light onto Interstate North Parkway. Stay in the middle lane of this road and go straight through the traffic light. After the road crosses the river, make an immediate right into the parking lot marked by "Cochran Shoals Unit." Meet at the trailhead near the fee machine at back of the South parking lot. There is a daily parking fee of \$3 (or \$25 annual pass). Bring cash for \$3 fee. Alternatively, you can purchase the \$25 annual pass with a credit card at the automated machine on site. Wear comfortable, waterproof footwear for walking on wet grass if desired. Going east on I-285, take the Northside-Powers Ferry Road exit (#22) on the right and stay in the left lane of the exit ramp. Go to the second light, then turn left (north). Stay in the middle lane of this road as it crosses the bridge over I-285 and veer to the right to get into the middle lane as the road bends to the left and passes through a traffic light. At this point you are on Interstate North Parkway. Continue with instructions above.

#### Saturday, Feb. 11, 10 AM

##### **Panola Mountain State Park (Rockdale County)**

**Leader:** Phil Delestrez

Cell contact morning of walk: 404.218.4425

**Birding Focus:** Migratory, permanent and winter residents of wetlands and forest, including sparrows, blackbirds, woodland birds, raptors, waterfowl, and if we're lucky, American Woodcock.

**Note:** Bring \$5 cash for the daily parking fee. Alternatively, you can purchase a \$50 annual parking pass good at all State Parks. If you have a library card to any Georgia public library, you can "check out" a ParkPass ahead of time, exempting you from parking fees. For full details go to: <http://www.gastateparks.org/ThingsToKnow>

**Directions and Parking:** From I-20 East take exit 68 for Wesley Chapel Rd toward Snapfinger Rd. Turn right onto Wesley Chapel Rd. Go 0.3 miles and turn left onto Snapfinger Rd. Continue on Snapfinger Rd (which becomes GA-155 S) for 7 miles, then turn left onto Alexanders Lake Rd SW. Drive 1.9 miles and then turn left onto Flat Bridge Rd SW. Parking lot entrance will be 300 ft up Flat Bridge Rd on the right. Meet at the Alexander Lake Parking area.

#### Thursday, Feb. 16, 8 AM

##### **Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve (DeKalb County)**

**Leader:** Liz Hornsby

Cell contact morning of walk: 678.761.0952

**Birding Focus:** This is a tentative walk that will take place if water levels are high enough in the pond. The AAS website will be updated with the latest info a few days before the walk ([atlantaaudubon.org](http://atlantaaudubon.org)). Focus will be winter and permanent resident wetland and woodland birds. Duration of walk approx. 3-4 hours.

**Directions and Parking:** From I-285 N or S: Take highway 78, Stone Mt. Freeway exit west toward Decatur. Hwy 78 passes North DeKalb Mall and continues uphill past Lou Sobh Ford. At intersection of Hwy 78, North Decatur Rd, and Medlock Road, take right on Medlock Road and follow Medlock Rd 0.25 miles to Medlock Elementary School. Then

go right on Wood Trail Lane. Go through one stop sign; travel another 200 yards to Preserve entrance. Park on Pine Bluff Drive, on the street, just outside the park entrance. From I-75 – I-85 N or S: I-85 north or south take North Druid Hills exit east toward Decatur – Approx. 3 miles, go right on Hwy 78 (at North DeKalb Mall) and follow directions as above.

#### Saturday, Feb. 18, 8 AM

##### **Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve/Chicopee Lake Chicopee Woods Aquatic Center (Chicopee Lake) 2080 Calvary Church Road**

**Gainesville, GA 30507 (Hall County)**

**Leader:** Peter Gordon, Education Director, Elachee Nature Science Center

Cell contact morning of walk: 678.617.8826

**Birding Focus:** Chicopee Lake is a good spot to see wintering ducks including American Black Ducks, Gadwall, Mergansers, Mallards and Wood Ducks. Walks through the adjoining forests and wetlands should turn up raptors, herons, sparrows, woodpeckers, kinglets and other short-range wintering migrants.

**Directions and Parking:** I-85 North to I-985 North towards Gainesville. Take Exit 16 – Oakwood. Turn right off the ramp onto Hwy 53 – Mundy Mill Road/Winder Hwy. Turn Left at 2nd stoplight onto Atlanta Hwy (Hwy 13). Turn right at first stoplight – Poplar Springs Road. Turn left onto Poplar Springs Church Road. Turn left onto Calvary Church Road. The entrance into the Aquatic Studies Center will be on the left at the bottom of a hill. Watch for white fence and entrance into the parking lot. No parking fees.

**Notes:** We will bird at the lake for approximately an hour before hiking along the West Lake Trail to a bluff at the rear of the lake. The hike to the bluff and back is about 1.5 miles. Duration of walk is approx. 3 hours. There are no open restrooms on site, so please use restrooms available at fast food and convenience stores along Exit 16 prior to arrival.

#### Saturday, Feb. 18, 8 AM

##### **Sweetwater Creek State Park**

**1750 Mount Vernon Road, Lithia Springs, 30122 (Douglas County)**

**Leader:** Phil Delestrez

Cell contact morning of walk: 404.218.4425

**Birding Focus:** Migratory, permanent and winter residents of wetlands and forest, including herons, Wood Ducks, warblers, thrushes, and vireos. With its falls, overlooks, and lake, Sweetwater Creek State Park is Georgia's most-visited state park and is the closest state park to the city of Atlanta. It offers a diverse birding habitat of woodlands, streams, wetlands, grasslands and a large lake.

**Note:** Bring \$5 cash for the daily parking fee. Alternatively, you can purchase a \$50 annual parking pass good at all State Parks. If you have a library card to any Georgia public library, you can "check out" a ParkPass ahead of time, exempting you from parking fees. For full details go to: <http://www.gastateparks.org/ThingsToKnow>

**Directions and Parking:** Take I-20 west from Atlanta, to Exit #44 at Thornton Road, which is the third exit west of I-285. Turn left onto Thornton Road and go ¼ mile. Turn

*continued on next page*

# CLASSIFIEDS

Rates for 2.5" x 2.5" ads are \$20/month or \$45/quarter. Ads must be consistent with the conservation and birding mission of Atlanta Audubon Society. Ads may be accepted via email, preferably in .pdf format.

Call 678.973.2437 if you have questions.

Send payment to *Wingbars* Ads, Atlanta Audubon Society, 4055 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA 30342.

Send ads via email to Jamie Hawk, [jamie.hawk@atlantaaudubon.org](mailto:jamie.hawk@atlantaaudubon.org).

## Answer:

While Woody's look is closer to a Pileated Woodpecker, the famous character is -- according to his creator -- actually an Acorn Woodpecker who pestered him and his wife on their honeymoon.



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## Field Trips *continued from page 9*

right on Blair's Bridge Road, and after 2.1 miles at a 4-way stop, turn left on Mount Vernon Road and proceed to park. Go 1.3 miles on Mount Vernon Rd then take a left onto Factory Shoals Road. Go 0.6 miles to the end of Factory Shoals to the parking lot at the Office/Interpretive Center.

**Saturday, Feb. 25, 8 AM**

**Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area—Cochran Shoals Unit (Cobb County)**

**Leader: Herb Wollner**

Cell contact morning of walk: 770.617.1505

**Birding Focus:** Sparrows, woodland winter residents, and anything that might be on the river or wetland areas.

**Directions and Parking:** Take I-285 to the Northside Powers Ferry Rd. exit (#22). Going west on I-285, turn right at the first light onto Interstate North Parkway. Stay in the middle lane of this road and go straight through the traffic light. After the road crosses the river, make an immediate right into the parking lot marked by "Cochran Shoals Unit." Going east on I-285, take the Northside Powers Ferry Road exit (#22) on the right and stay in the left lane of the exit ramp. Go to the second light, then turn left (north). Stay in the middle lane of this road as it crosses the bridge over I-285 and veer to the right to get into the middle lane as the road bends to the left and passes through a traffic light. At this point you are on Interstate North Parkway.

Meet at the trailhead near the fee machine at back of parking lot. There is a daily parking fee of \$3 (or \$25 annual pass). Bring cash for \$3 fee. Alternatively, you can purchase the \$25 annual pass with a credit card at the automated machine on site. Wear comfortable, waterproof footwear for walking on wet grass if desired. Restrooms are in parking lot. Continue with instructions above

**Saturday, Feb. 25, 8 AM**

**Hard Labor Creek State Park**

**5 Hard Labor Creek Rd. Rutledge, 30663 (Morgan County)**

**Leader: Phil Delestrez**

Cell contact morning of walk: 404.218.4425

**Birding Focus:** Hard Labor Creek SP is the second largest acreage-wise in the GA State Park system. It boasts a variety of habitats, and has a history of birds like

Loggerhead Shrikes, American Kestrels, and a variety of waterfowl on Lake Rutledge. We'll look for woodland birds, waterfowl, gulls, and raptors.

**Note:** Bring \$5 cash for the daily parking fee.

Alternatively, you can purchase a \$50 annual parking pass good at all State Parks. If you have a library card to any Georgia public library, you can "check out" a ParkPass ahead of time, exempting you from parking fees. For full details go to:

<http://www.gastateparks.org/ThingsToKnow>

**Directions and Parking:** From Interstate-20 going east or west, take the #105 exit north onto Newborn Rd toward Rutledge. Go about 2.1 miles to the fork with Hawkins Ave., and veer to the left to continue following Newborn Rd. Cross Atlanta Hwy. and continue until Newborn dead ends into W Dixie Hwy. Take a left on W Dixie and then an immediate right onto Fairplay St. Drive 2.6 miles on Fairplay and then take a left onto Knox Chapel Rd. Go 0.4 miles and take a right onto Hard Labor Creek Rd. The Trading Post will be about 400 feet on your right – meet there.

**Sunday, Feb. 26, 8 AM**

**Bartow County Loop**

**Leader: Ken Blankenship**

Cell phone morning of walk: 770.317.8486

**Birding Focus:** Wintering and permanent resident open grassland species and waterfowl. Sparrows (Savannah, White-crowned, Field, Vesper, etc.), ducks (Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, etc.), geese, raptors (American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk), Eastern Meadowlark, Horned Lark, blackbirds (Brewer's possible), and more.

**Notes:** Expected duration of walk is 4-5 hours, mostly car birding with little walking. We will carpool to minimize vehicles, as much of this route involves parking on the shoulder of country roads. Restrooms in McDonald's and BP while traveling. For more details on the venue/habitat/birds, go to:

<http://wingsoverga.com/BartowCountyBirdingSites.html>

**Directions and Parking:** Take I-75 to Exit 288 and turn West onto E Main St. After about 0.28 miles turn right at the McDonald's onto Canyon Parkway. Fairfield Inn lot will be 500 ft down on the left.

**Sunday, Feb. 26, 9 AM**

**Constitution Lakes**

**(DeKalb County)**

**Leaders: Joy Carter and Jay Davis**

Cell contact morning of walk:

Joy: 404.822.0030 Jay: 404.644.6798

**Birding Focus:** Winter and permanent resident woodland birds and potential waterfowl/waders/shorebirds on the wetlands.

**Directions and Parking:** From I-20 take Exit 60 going south on Moreland Ave. Drive 5.7 miles to intersection with S River Industrial Blvd SE and take a left turn. Parking lot will be all the way at the end of this road. There are no restrooms so be sure to prepare ahead of time. Meet in the gravel parking loop at the end of S River Industrial Blvd SE. This road intersects Moreland Ave. and extends on both the west and east sides of Moreland. Parking lot drive is the leg east of Moreland Ave.

**Wednesday, Feb. 29, 9 AM**

**Heritage Park, Smyrna, GA (Cobb County)**

**Leader: Marge Igyarto**

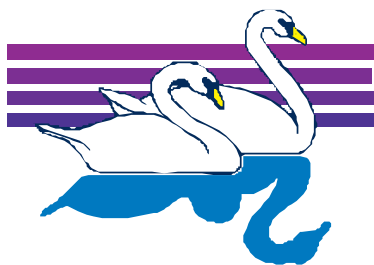
Cell phone morning of walk: 404.345.7207

**Birding Focus:** Winter and permanent resident woodland birds.

**Notes:** Heritage Park is located at the corner of Fontaine and Nickajack Roads. Its 1.7 mile walking trail has an elevated boardwalk over wetlands, travels through forests along Nickajack Creek, passes the ruins of concord woolen mills and is near the historic concord covered bridge. Heritage Park is a soft surface walking trail, essentially flat with a short hilly area by the ruins. Dress warmly and wear supportive footwear. Duration is approx. 1.5 hours. **Directions and Parking:** Take I-285 west to South Cobb Drive. Head towards Smyrna, and take the East/West Connector left. A Texaco Gas Station is an easy landmark. Go 2.3 miles to Fontaine Road. Go left and in a short distance there's a 4 way stop sign at Nickajack Rd. The park is on the right. Parking is right in the front of the park.

# Swan Love

By Linda Freedom



A spectacular encounter happened about three years ago. I was driving on a very familiar road to and from work every day. With nothing much to see on either side of the road, the worst part of this commute were the eight traffic lights in the less than one mile stretch. While stopping at the last light, I heard a flock of Canada Geese overhead. "There must be a lake inside!" a quick thought jumped out of my brain. As traffic started moving, I went through the light and made a U-turn to come back to see the geese which are popular in the area. You can always see them near water or on a golf course.

This is a well-known neighborhood with tall stone walls along the sides of the front entrance, but you wouldn't notice it if you didn't live there. Passing over a small hill, I made a right turn and the first thing that came into my view was a large man-made lake with a beautiful fountain in the middle. Canada Geese were already

scattered all over the lake. What caught my attention even more was seeing two large white spots at the far end of the lake. I was thinking they might just be two domestic white ducks since swan of any kind is considered to be rare and Mute Swan are not allowed (or encouraged, I should say) to be reported on eBird because they are considered a pest in most states. I parked my car, went to the trunk, got my camera and binoculars, and walked along the gravel path to the lake. By that time, though, it was too dark for me to identify the white birds, so I decided to make a trip the next day.

I arrived at the lake at around eight o'clock, hoping that I might catch them for their first meal of the day. However, I saw nothing. It was just a quiet and misty morning. A little disappointed, I figured the overcast was a factor.

On my way home and again nothing. I shook my head and told myself they might just be two common ducks. Still, the questions surfaced in my mind. Would they come back? Were they just passing by?

*continued on next page*

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*Swan Love* continued from previous page

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On the weekend, I swung by the lake after a morning field trip to see if I could see anything unusual or surprising. Without my binoculars, even before pulling in the parking lot, I was sure they were two Mute Swans. Overjoyed, I snapped a lot of shots, good and bad, and just wanted to make sure I had solid images in my camera. For the next three years, visiting swan lake became my weekly routine whenever I had a chance. Strangely though, this pair had not reproduced.

Mute Swan originated in Europe and Asia. They were introduced to North America to grace the ponds and lakes of some estate homes. Some escaped from captivity and became aggressive towards other native waterfowl. Others are of the opinion that Mute Swan's long neck allows it to pull up a lot of aquatic vegetation while stirring the bottom of the lake that other waterfowl might find difficult to reach. I prefer the latter because the Mallards and White-fronted Geese I saw were perfectly compatible with this pair around them. Another interesting fact that makes Mute Swan a symbol of "True Love" is that Mute Swan are reported to be monogamous. A swan will remate only if his or her mate dies. A male swan normally mates with older females and will go to her territory; and if a younger female mates with an older male, she then will go to his territory. Though they are not sexually dimorphic, males (12 to 15 kg) are about 25 percent larger than females (9 to 12 kg). I often see them eat together, splash and swim together and when they are in a romantic mood, they will entangle their long necks for a brief second. They are not very vocal – thus their name – but when they fly, their wings make a unique vibrant sound which can be heard from almost a mile away. If there are foreign avian visitors stopping by the lake, the male raises both his wings and speedily swims to chase them away. He is very territorial and always on alert. Often these two swans swim close by each other, bringing peace and tranquility to this lake.

A few neighborhood residents told me, before this area was developed, some 20 years ago, two lovers came to this lake, consummated their love under a starry night. Their marriage was disapproved of by their families. Later, the young lovers were reported missing. No one can prove the factuality of their story, but two swans have been spotted since then.