

THE MARSHLANDER

OGEECHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May - June, 2023, Volume LIV, Issue III



Ogeechee Audubon Society Officers and Board	
<u>Administrative Responsibilities</u>	
President	Sue De Rosa
Vice President	Rose Talbert
Secretary	Patti Seanor
Treasurer	Pam Smith
<u>Education Workgroup</u>	
Education Outreach	Diana Churchill, Sue De Rosa, and Rose Talbert
Field Trips	Diana Churchill, Brittany Dodge, and Katie Higgins
Programs	Melanie Sparrow, and Rose Talbert
<u>Communications Workgroup</u>	
Social Media	Mary Lambright
Webmaster	Mary Lou Dickson
Newsletter	Diana Churchill and Matt Tozer
Publicity	Matt Tozer and Erine-Fay McNaught
<u>Historian</u>	
Leslie Weichsel	

Ogeechee Audubon Mission: Ogeechee Audubon educates adults and children about birds, wildlife, and the environment. We provide opportunities to enjoy the world around us, and advocate for responsible public policy and legislation for the conservation of our natural resources.

Public Meeting!

Please join us for the Public Meeting on Tuesday, June 20, 7:00pm, at the First Presbyterian Church, 520 Washington Avenue, Savannah, GA!

eBird for Beginners and Experts Yve Morrell

Whether you have been using eBird for years or are not sure about how the platform works, the June OAS public meeting is for you. Yve Morrell, from St. Simons, will be our presenter. She is an eBird reviewer for the counties south of Chatham and will dive into why one should post their sightings on eBird plus what to focus on for rare bird verifications. Additionally, being intimately aware of all the data available on eBird, Yve will show us how to access the information, how to use it when you are in unfamiliar or familiar places to locate birds, and how that data contributes to the overall understanding regarding the status of bird species. Yve did a Big Year in 2017 ending up with 813 birds in the U.S. and Canada, has travelled world-wide, and has such an enthusiasm for all birds—from the rare to the well known. Usually she is out and about catching glimpses of those feathered buddies. If you have questions about eBird before the meeting or want a topic discussed, send your queries to OAS via the help line, ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com, beforehand. Be sure to bring your laptops or tablets to the meeting so Yve can walk you through any frustrations you may be having.





**Fresh Seed
NO Fillers!**

**Bird Feeders
Birdbaths
Pole Systems
And
The Freshest
Seed in Town!**

8108 Abercorn Street
Mon-Sat 10-6
Sunday 12-5
Next to Home Goods
(912) 961-3455



Field Trips – Get out into Nature!

Field trips are planned **leader-directed** birding opportunities. A knowledgeable and experienced leader will assist in spotting and identifying birds in a precise habitat selected for that particular field trip. The habitat and target birds for the particular area will be outlined in the field trip description. Field trips provide not only a birding opportunity but present learning opportunities for all, especially beginning birders. Field trips are open to the public and birders of all skill levels and ages. Length of time 2 to 3 hours.

Saturday, May 13: Jay Wolf Nature Trail and Priests Landing 8:30am to 11:30am. Ogeechee Audubon will sponsor this walk in conjunction with World Migratory Day. We will search for summer nesting birds such as herons & egrets, summer tanagers, eastern kingbirds, yellow-throated warblers and more. Meet in the parking lot of the UGA Aquarium on Skidaway Island (**30 Ocean Science Cir, Savannah, GA 31411**) at 8:30 am. Trip rigor: Easy. Leaders Rachel Green & Harry DeLorme. delgreen@comcast.net 912-660-8217

Monday, May 15: International Shorebird Survey on Tybee Island 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Meet at the end of Polk Street at 5 pm. Be prepared to pay for parking or use the Park Tybee App. Trip Rigor: Moderate. 2-3 miles walking in soft sand. Leader Diana Churchill dichurchbirds@gmail.com 912-604-7539.

Sunday, June 4: Oatland Island Wildlife Center 9:0am to 11:30am. Activity at the pond should be hopping with nesting wood storks and egrets. Meet at the entrance gate at 9:00 am. **711 Sandtown Road Savannah, GA 31410.** Rigor: Moderate with 1-2 miles walking. Limit 25 people, please email Leader Eric Swanson to register. Eric.Swanson@sccpss.com 309-721-4357

Saturday, June 10: Sterling Creek Park 8:30am to 11:30am. We'll be searching for buntings, tanagers, kites, and more. Meet by the restroom building at 8:30 am. Rigor Moderate with 2-3 miles walking. **1700 Elbow Swamp Road, Richmond Hill GA 31324** Leader Brittany Dodge brittmarie24@gmail.com 912-800-5361

Saturday, June 24: Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge 8:00am to 11:00am. We'll take a look at the rookery at the first pond which should feature heron, egret and ibis nests with chicks approaching fledging size. Meet at the Refuge entrance at 8:00 am **Rte 278, Bluffton South Carolina 29910 (32.228562, -80.785860).** Rigor: Moderate with 1-2 miles of walking; could be hot. Leader Matt Tozer mctozer@yahoo.com 845-596-4662.

World Migratory Bird Day May 13, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Cost: Aquarium Admission

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day at the UGA Aquarium! Learn about the incredible diversity of birds that visit the Georgia coast each year during their migratory journeys. Bring the family for a fun day of hands-on activities and animal encounters.

Throughout the day, UGA Aquarium educators will be joined by ornithological organizations and birding experts who will have stations set up along the aquarium's picnic area and Jay Wolf Nature Trail with educational activities for all age groups.

The World Migratory Bird Day event is included with the cost of admission to the UGA Aquarium. Learn more about admission fees [here](#).

Questions? Contact Katie Higgins at kt.higgins@uga.edu

World Migratory Bird Day is an annual global campaign coordinated by Environment for the Americas that celebrates the migration of birds across countries and continents. This year's theme will focus on the topic of water and its importance for migratory birds. Learn more at <https://www.migratorybirdday.org/>

Field Notes

Ford Field & River Club, March 26, 2023 Lynn Hodgson

On March 26, 2023, 15 Ogeechee Audubon Society (OAS) members joined 12 or 13 local residents for a birding walk organized and led by Diana Churchill and Steve Fox of OAS and Ford Field & River Club staff naturalist Shannon Matzke.

This 1800+ acre property was purchased by Henry Ford in about 1927 as a winter retreat for him and his wife Clara. They completed the main house in 1939 and it is on the National Register of Historic Places. After the Ford era, the property was owned by a wealthy Arab businessman, who constructed the reflection pool and renovated the main house. The property then stood abandoned for many years. However, beginning in about 1980, the property was developed into a gated



Photo Credit Rose Talbert

residential resort with marina, event house, equestrian centers, golf course and other amenities. Excellent bird and wildlife habitats include the Ogeechee riverfront marshes and impoundments, lakes offering excellent fishing, woodlands and neighborhood savannahs of pine and live oaks, horse fields, etc.

This group met at the marina and walked along the impoundments and later the grounds of the main house. We admired multiple Osprey and eagle nests (one with eaglets!) and spotted a group of Snowy Egrets roosting (and probably beginning to nest). We nearly missed the one lone Cattle Egret among the snowys. He/she was a new bird for several participants, so was one of the trip highlights. We also saw several Green, Great Blue, Tricolored and Little Blue Herons. Swimming near the impoundments were Common Gallinules, American Coots and Pied-billed Grebes, with a few Anhingas and Double-crested Cormorants on the snags. Along the impoundments, among the invasive (but admittedly pretty) Chinese tallow and Chinaberry trees, we heard and/or saw Blue-grey Gnatcatchers, Northern Cardinals, a few late-leaving Yellow-rumped Warblers, Grey Catbirds, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice. Overhead we were treated to Tree and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Turkey Vultures, and the marsh-ubiquitous Red-winged Blackbirds and Boat-tailed Grackles. Occasional small flocks of Laughing Gulls competed with the Common Gallinules for most entertaining laughter (the gallinules won). Heading back, we were treated to an intently fishing belted kingfisher – the high point of the trip for several participants. Back in the woods near the marina, we heard mockingbirds, Northern Parulas and Yellow-throated Warblers singing, and Blue Jays – well what do you call all those silly noises they make?! This is not a complete list, which totaled 38 species for the day. More important than the number of species was the quality of the sightings, especially through Diana's and Steve's spotting scopes. Thanks to all who helped carry them. And thanks to Diana, Steve, and Shannon for organizing such a fun day.

Adding to the beautiful waterfront scenery were some beautiful spring flowers (blue flag iris, spiderwort, sundrops, etc.). Adding to the Lowcountry ambience was a roaring alligator. As always, so many interested fellow birders and naturalists make any day in the field a delight.

Wormsloe Plantation, April 8, 2023

John Cassell

On April 8th it was chilly with light rain, so it was a perfect day to go exploring. Members of the Ogeechee Audubon Society, Friends of Wormsloe, and volunteers at the historic site led 3 groups of people to enjoy nature before it opened to the public. Before groups dispersed we were reminded how unique this location sits in Savannah. Not only does it attract tourists from around the globe, but many migratory birds utilize its various marshy habitats. Within the first 50 feet of walking our group was hearing the chirps of nuthatches, warblers, and flycatchers as they sought out insect prey. But by the shores of the tabby house we encountered egrets, Clapper Rails, and a Forster's tern. This wide diversity of birds was great for our newest members in the group. They had heard a few of these birds by name only. Being able to stand still for a few moments and watch them methodically look for food and make their iconic calls is a great way for new bird watchers to appreciate them. Our more experienced members also took time to point out some of the cool plants we find around coastal Georgia. Cedar trees are great for songbirds, while the woodpeckers love the dead oak branches. We had a very determined pileated woodpecker just going at it on one. It did not care that we got right underneath. It just wanted whatever food was probably in that tree. In total we had over 30 birds in just under 2 hours of walking; not a bad day to enjoy a quiet morning before the tourists flock into the scene.

Webb Wildlife Management Area, April 23, 2023

Ruth Tobin

My name is Ruth Tobin and my husband, Mitch and I have come to love birding in Tennessee. We drove down to Savannah to visit with our friend, Judy Johnson, who is an avid birder.

Judy suggested a birding trip for us to the Webb WMA which was scheduled on Sunday, April 23rd, with the Ogeechee Audubon. Our guide was Steve Wagner. Steve gave the group an overview of the area and told us that we were hoping to see the Bachman Sparrow and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker which were likely to be in this area at this time of year.

Although, Mitch and I did not see the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, to our delight, we saw a Red-headed

Woodpecker – our first ever! Happily, it was not long before we searched out and found a Bachman's Sparrow singing its little heart out on a branch in a wooded area close to the entrance. What a joy!



Bachman's Sparrow
Photo Credit Diana Churchill

As we all walked together, Steve helped Mitch and I try and view the White-eyed Vireo despite its elusive antics.

As the group moved through the park, we saw so many colorful birds which Mitch and I had never seen; Painted Bunting, Indigo Bunting, but by far the most stunning for me was the Yellow-breasted Chat, sitting in the sunshine singing its song.

As we walked down a path, we saw a well camouflaged Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest which would have been impossible to find if Steve had not seen the little bird fly into the nest! Great find!

At the Rookery, we saw nesting Anhinga, Little Blue Herons, and believe it or not, a rat snake inside a Wood Duck box eating the duck eggs!



Yellow-breasted Chat
Photo Credit Diana Churchill

Two Eastern Kingbirds sitting on a fence along with Eastern Bluebirds were such a delight to see.

The last location we visited was a swampy area at the far end of the park where we saw an Acadian Flycatcher and we heard the hooting of two Barred Owls at 1 p.m. in the afternoon.

Mitch and I spent a wonderful five hours with the local birding group, who were so kind to us, answering our questions and sharing their knowledge of the area and the birds. What a pleasure for us to spend a beautiful Sunday morning with bird loving ladies and gentlemen.

Many thanks to everyone who was on the

adventure with us.

Memorial Park Bluebird Trail

Connor Stille



My name is Connor Stille and I live on Tybee island. On February 3rd, I helped the Tybee Beautification Association (TBA) put up five bluebird boxes throughout Memorial Park on Tybee Island. These boxes were placed in Memorial Park because a few months earlier I noticed that around Jaycee Park, on Tybee Island there were a lot of Eastern Bluebirds that like to hang around the park. I also noticed that there were a lot of bluebird boxes in that same park. There were very few Eastern Bluebirds around the Memorial Park and there were no bluebird boxes.

TBA received a grant from the City of Tybee Island for the purchase & installation of 5 bluebird Nesting Boxes in Memorial Park. Since these bluebird boxes were installed there have been a significant amount of bluebird activity around Memorial Park, and a full nest that has four Eastern Bluebird chicks and one egg which is in nesting box #5. There is also one other nest that has a full nest in it with 5 Carolina Chickadee eggs. This is a great result for them being put in about nesting season time.



Ogeechee Audubon Chapter Membership Form – 2023

New membership _____ Renewal _____

Membership – please check level of membership

_____ Individual Adult older than 18 years - \$20

_____ Household/Family - \$20

_____ Senior – individual (62 and older) - \$15

_____ Student – individual (13 years old to 18 years old) - \$15

_____ Fledgling Birder – individual (12 years old and younger) - \$5

Additional contribution: \$ _____

Name: _____

If household or family, additional names: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: (home) _____ (mobile) _____

Email: _____

Ogeechee Audubon membership is for a calendar year – January to December. OAS Chapter renewals are accepted until March 31st.

All meeting information, events and important conservation issues will be communicated by email.

Ogeechee Audubon Newsletter – The *Marshlander* is sent by email to individual or household/family.

Please mail this form with your check to:

Ogeechee Audubon, Attn Membership

PO Box 13424,

Savannah, GA 31416

Contributions are tax deductible.