



# THE MARSHLANDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE OGEECHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA  
VOL XLVII, ISSUE 6, DECEMBER, 2017  
WWW.OGEECHEEAUDUBON.ORG

### 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.*

Please Join Ogeechee Audubon Society

Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM

**Holiday Gathering**

**Refreshments\*Recognition\*Recreation  
Recruitment!**

**Please join us for an evening of  
fellowship and fun!**

**There will be bird games!**



We meet at the First Presbyterian Church,  
520 E. Washington Ave, Savannah.

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### **Ogeechee Audubon Society Officers and Board**

#### **Administrative Responsibilities**

President	Leslie Weichsel
Vice President	Mary Lambright
Secretary	Marty Foxx
Treasurer	Sandy Beasley

#### **Membership Workgroup**

Member Enrollment	Debbie Bennett
Holiday Gathering	Regi Sonen

#### **Education Workgroup**

Education Outreach	Diana Churchill, Sue DeRosa
Field Trips	Mary Sweeney-Reeves
Programs	Vacant

#### **Communications Workgroup**

Social Media	Mary Lambright
Webmaster	Mary Lou Dickson
Newsletter	Leslie Weichsel
Publicity	Regi Sonnen

#### **Conservation Workgroup**

Entire Board  
Email: [info@ogeecheeaudubon.org](mailto:info@ogeecheeaudubon.org)



## Field Trips

**BRING BINOCULARS, HAT, SUNSCREEN, BUG SPRAY, WATER AND  
SNACKS OR LUNCH FOR ALL FIELD TRIPS**

SAT, DEC 9: **Lake Mayer Christmas Bird Count Warm-up.** Meet at the east end of the main parking lot at 8:00 am. We'll be looking for a variety of ducks, wintering songbirds, grebes, anhingas, and more. Hone your bird identification skills in preparation for this year's Christmas Bird Counts. Leader: Larry Carlile, [912- 224-1796](tel:912-224-1796) or [l.carlile259@comcast.net](mailto:l.carlile259@comcast.net).

FRI, DEC 15: **Harris Neck Christmas Bird Count:** These counts occur annually at specific sites all over the United States. The data provides information on bird population trends over time. For more information contact Mary Lambright, [lambrightm@gmail.com](mailto:lambrightm@gmail.com) or go to our website [www.ogeecheeaudubon.org](http://www.ogeecheeaudubon.org) to sign up or email [info@ogeecheeaudubon.org](mailto:info@ogeecheeaudubon.org).

SAT, DEC 30: **Savannah Area Christmas Bird Count:** These counts occur annually at specific sites all over the United States. The data provides information on bird population trends over time. For more information contact Diana Churchill, [912-604-7539](tel:912-604-7539) or [dichurchbirds@gmail.com](mailto:dichurchbirds@gmail.com) or go to our website [www.ogeecheeaudubon.org](http://www.ogeecheeaudubon.org) to sign up or email [info@ogeecheeaudubon.org](mailto:info@ogeecheeaudubon.org).

SAT, JAN 6: **Ft. Pulaski National Monument.** Meet in Parking Area in front of the Guard House at 2 pm to carpool into the Fort. We will be checking for the elusive marsh sparrows, visiting the picnic area, and the beach to look for shorebirds particularly banded American Oystercatchers. Leader: Diana Churchill, [912-604-7539](tel:912-604-7539) or [dichurchbirds@gmail.com](mailto:dichurchbirds@gmail.com).

**FIELD TRIPS CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...**



## FIELD TRIPS CONTINUED...

FRI, JAN 12 – MON, JAN 15: Georgia Ornithological Society Winter meeting on Tybee Island: There will be many field trips to choose from, the public is welcome to attend see [www.gos.org](http://www.gos.org) for more information.

WED, JAN 24: Onslow Island NWR. Meet at the entrance to Onslow Island at 8:00 am to look for shorebirds, songbirds, wading birds, and more. Be prepared for lots of walking and bring your bug spray! Leader: Mary Lou Dickson, [marylou@dicksonimages.com](mailto:marylou@dicksonimages.com).

All field trips are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted!

## OGEECHEE AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP!

We have already begun to collect membership dues for 2018, but as many of you know, we use the December Meeting as a time for everyone to fill out the Membership form and pay dues for the coming year. We are hoping to finalize dues collection by the end of March. If dues have not been paid by then, we will assume folks have decided not to renew and we will drop you from the list to get the newsletter and other announcements. So don't risk forgetting to pay your dues and having time go by without being linked to all the activities supported by and information shared by OAS!!! **Come to our December holiday gathering, share in the fellowship, and pay your dues.** You can find the membership form attached to the newsletter and certainly can print and mail in if you like.

Thank You. Debbie Bennett, Membership Chair



[www.ogeecheeaudubon.org](http://www.ogeecheeaudubon.org)

Please take a minute to sign onto our website and take a look! There are many opportunities to get involved!

You will discover information about:

- Christmas Bird Count
- Winter Hummingbird Survey
- Ipswich Sparrow Project
- Great Backyard Bird Count
- Brown Headed Nuthatch
- And much more!!!

## Georgia Barrier Islands Designated as Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network 100<sup>th</sup> Site

On October 21<sup>st</sup> the WHSRN voted unanimously to approve the designation of the Georgia Barrier Islands as a Landscape of Hemispheric Importance. This designation is due to the fact that the Barrier Islands support more than 30% of the biogeographic population of Red Knots and the breeding population of Piping Plover. The area also holds more than 10% of the biogeographic populations of American Oystercatchers. We are certainly lucky to live along the Georgia coast!! Our 100 miles of coast is truly a wonder in the world!

October bird was a Wilson's Snipe  
Larry Carlile and Judy Johnson won!



Guess the bird peeking out!

Submit your answers to [info@ogeecheeaudubon.org](mailto:info@ogeecheeaudubon.org)

First correct answer wins!



### Report from the Field Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens

Stan Gray led our group for a bird watching field trip plus more. Stan has been involved with the CGBG for many years and is responsible for cultivating the *River of Iris* at the garden. Our outing was delightful as we searched for birds in one of eBird's hotspots, enjoyed the beautiful gardens and searched for butterflies to boot. We spied 45 species of birds including red-bellied woodpeckers, yellow-bellied sapsucker, tree swallows, brown thrasher, rose-breasted grosbeak and many more! CGBG is a designated birding hotspot. Hotspots are public birding locations created by eBird users through analysis of the aggregated data collected of a shared location. CGBG has had 134 species seen on the property. It is always a treat to go to the gardens to bird, look for butterflies and enjoy the gardens and flowers.



## A Word About the Christmas Bird Count



Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hunters had a holiday tradition in which they would compete in a hunting match where they would hunt and the ones who brought in the biggest pile of feathered quarry won. This was known as the Christmas “Side Hunt”.

As the nation became aware of the declining bird populations, Frank Chapman proposed a new tradition – to count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them. Chapman was an early officer of the Audubon Society. This was the beginning of the Christmas Bird Count. For this first bird count on Christmas Day 1900, twenty-seven birders doing 25 counts tallied ninety species in North America. Last year the 117<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count 2,536 counts were done worldwide by 73,153 observers who identified 2,636 species! Please join fellow birders to continue this holiday tradition and sign up to help with our Christmas Bird Count.

Information taken from National Audubon

## A dose of science in birding

Last month, I was lucky enough to join a group of dedicated conservationists, the American Oystercatcher Working Group or amoywg.org, during their recent annual meeting held on Sapelo Island. Although I’m new to this group, I traveled with Diana Churchill, who’s been reporting banded oystercatchers to the group for years. Sponsored by Ogeechee Audubon (OAS), we hoped to meet some of the scientists Diana has been working with and to determine if there were broader opportunities for OAS to participate with this group’s important conservation work.

Initially, it seemed a bit odd to be attending this scientific meeting, but that feeling quickly dissipated when I starting talking to the other attendees and sitting through the group’s presentations. First, I learned the group formed about a decade ago and chose the American Oystercatcher because it’s a big, colorful shorebird that most people would be able to identify and thus help with re-sighting. Next, they proposed that conservation efforts that “would benefit American Oystercatchers would also benefit other beach nesting shorebirds.” Finally, it appears their hypothesis was correct as the group expands their banding and monitoring efforts to include more beach nesting birds.

During the two-day meeting Diana and I had many opportunities to speak with numerous individuals representing many different agencies. Repeatedly, OAS was recognized as a valuable local resource and we were thanked for attending. During one of our meetings, Tim Keyes from GA DNR proposed working directly with our group to perform an official wintering shorebird survey in the Savannah area. We are still in talks about this, but it clearly shows the value placed on Ogeechee Audubon’s expertise by these dedicated scientists and birders.

by Mary Lou Dickson



Photo: Mary Lou Dickson – Ferry to Sapelo



Photo: Mary Lou Dickson – Group work

## To Feed or Not To Feed...

40% of all Americans feed the birds regularly. Birds do not become dependent on your feeder for food. Birds visit feeders out of convenience and only 25% of their daily intake is from feeders. However during winter months feeders do become more critical for the birds food source since natural food is less. According to Daniel Becker, “feeders can bring unexpected species together”. This situation can lend itself to increased risk of sharing parasites and other pathogens between birds. The House Finch eye disease is directly linked to this phenomenon and exacerbated by feeders that are not cleaned regularly.

Feed the Birds – YES – but safely!

- ✓ Clean feeders with 10% bleach solution monthly.
- ✓ Put out suet when the weather is cooler to avoid it developing mold.
- ✓ Store seed in secure clean containers.
- ✓ Replace wet seed in feeders.
- ✓ Participate in Project Feeder Watch through Cornell Lab.

**Ogeechee Audubon Chapter Membership Form – 2018**

New membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**e-mail\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Our newsletter is delivered by e-mail**

As a member, you will be notified by e-mail about upcoming meetings, events and important conservation issues.

Please mail this form with your check to:  
**Ogeechee Audubon, att Membership, PO Box 13424,  
Savannah, GA 31416**  
*Contributions are tax deductible.*

Ogeechee Audubon-\$20.00/household \_\_\_\_\_

Includes the *Marshlander*

Senior (over 62) or Student - \$15/household \_\_\_\_\_

Includes the *Marshlander*

Special Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

Ogeechee Audubon membership is based on the calendar year – January to December.  
Send your *National Audubon membership dues* directly to National.

**OAS Chapter renewals are accepted until March 31<sup>st</sup>.**

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**\*Please help us save the trees. If you receive the Newsletter by printed mail and can receive it electronically via e-mail let Debbie Bennett (mburdsal@comcast.net) know so we no longer print it, mail it and use paper unnecessarily. Audubon cares about the environment and also about you. Therefore, if you do not have access to email we will be happy to send you a printed copy.**