



THE MARSHLANDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE OGEECHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
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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, April 17th at 7:00 PM

The Mystery of Migration

Speaker: Diana Churchill, Board Member of Ogeechee Audubon Society, author of Birders Eye View column in the Savannah Morning News and author of Birder's Eye View: Savannah and the Low Country.

For thousands of years, birds have been leaving comfortable homes in the New World tropics to make an arduous journey to the Northern Hemisphere in order to find mates, settle down, and raise families. This program will begin with a look at some of the Low Country's year-round birds, after which we'll attempt to answer a number of migration questions including: Who migrates? Why? When? Which species stay for the summer? Which ones just pass through? How spring migration is different than fall migration? The program will be rich with avian sights and sounds of spring!

**As a part of this presentation, there will be field trips to Forsyth Park for our Friday Bird Walks in the Park series. We will be looking for spring migrants.

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

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

Education Workgroup

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

Communications Workgroup

Social Media Mary Lambright
Webmaster Mary Lou Dickson
Newsletter Leslie Weichsel
Publicity Pam Smith

Conservation Workgroup

Entire Board



Field Trips

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

Friday Bird Walks in Forsyth Park with Diana Churchill

****FRI, APR 6, 13, 20, 27 & May 4:** Migratory Bird Walk in Forsyth Park. Meet by the fountain at the north end of Forsyth Park at 7:45 am. These bird walks are part of Diana's *Mystery of Migration* Presentation for April. We will wander the park in search of migratory warblers, vireos, tanagers, buntings, flycatchers and more. Leader: Diana Churchill at [912-604-7539](tel:912-604-7539) or dichurchbirds@gmail.com.

Special Field Trip

MON, APR 23 Altamaha Delta Birding Experience led by Captain Brooks Good to the Altamaha River basin a natural area that provides a major stopping point for migrating shorebirds in spring. The Altamaha Wildlife Management Area consists of 3,154 acres of managed waterfowl impoundments and some 27,000 acres of bottomland hardwoods and cypress-tupelo swamps. On this trip you will have an opportunity to observe a wide variety of local and migratory species of shorebirds, wading birds, seabirds, and waterfowl. Captain Brooks Good will lead this boat trip in the Altamaha River area. He has a BS degree in Wildlife Biology and has worked as a Biologist on the Georgia Coast with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for 14 years. **Time: 1pm to 5pm.** This is a very special opportunity to see this protected area.

Cost: Ogeechee Audubon members \$75, non-members \$80, minimum 10 for trip to go, maximum 24. OAS members will be given first preference for signing up.

Please email us at info@ogeecheeaudubon.org with your **name, phone # and email address** to let us know if you are coming and send in your check to Ogeechee Audubon Society, P.O. Box 13424, Savannah, GA 31416. Mark att. Altamaha trip. **We MUST receive your check by Friday April 13th for you to secure your reservation** - email notice will not suffice. Once we have received your check, we will provide you with the details of time and place we will be meeting for the trip.

We need at least 10 people for the trip to go.

If you have not renewed your OAS membership at this time - please include your completed membership form and dues to receive special member rate and priority in signing up for this trip.

Any questions please call Mary Sweeney-Reeves [912-844-8988](tel:912-844-8988).

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Field Trips Continued...

SUN, April 29: Webb Wildlife Management Area S.C. looking for spring migrants, red-cockaded woodpeckers, and Bachman's Sparrows and more. Meet to carpool at Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive entrance at 7 am or meet at entrance to Webb WMA at 8am. Leader: Steve Wagner at sjwgnr@hotmail.com.

SAT, May 5: Sterling Creek Park, Elbow Swamp Road at Sterling Creek Drive, Richmond Hill GA. We will explore a new park which encompasses 187 acres of forests, wetlands, ponds, and grassland habitats. We will be looking for late migrants, warblers, wading birds and more. Meet at park entrance and gate at 8am. Leader Steve Fox at sfox01@hotmail.com

SAT, MAY 12: Savannah Wildlife Refuge field trip for the International Migratory Bird Day/Jasper County Spring count. We will be looking for buntings, eagles, egrets, and herons plus more. Meet at Laurel Hill Wildlife Dr Entrance at 8 am Leader: Mary Lou Dickson

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Other Event

SAT, APR 21: Earth Day Celebration at Forsyth Park, 11 am – 4pm. The Savannah Earth Day Festival serves as an important opportunity for local government, businesses, non-profits, and community groups to connect with the public and each other. It is the City's largest environmental outreach event of the year and

the largest educational Earth Day event in the State of Georgia. For more information go to <https://www.earthdaysavannah.org>

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Georgia Ornithological Society Spring Meeting

May 18 -20, 2018

The Ridges Resort and Marina

Hiawassee, GA

Look for meeting details and registration on gos.org

All field trips are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted! *Please be sure to check OAS website or our Facebook page prior to each field trip to be sure there are no changes to the scheduled field trip.

APRIL 17TH - Ogeechee Audubon Annual Meeting

Prior to our presentation from Diana Churchill on the *Mystery of Migration*, we will have our annual business meeting.

The agenda:

Very brief overview of the past year

Finance Report

Vote on revisions to OAS Constitution and By Laws

Election of Officers

Renew your OAS Membership

OGEECHEE AUDUBON NEEDS YOU!

IT IS THE YEAR OF THE BIRD!!

Call for Membership Renewal

During this Year of the Bird and the threats to our wildlife and the proposed changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Audubon and Ogeechee Audubon needs you more than ever! Stay connected so you can help. We are continuing to collect OAS membership dues for 2018. It is time for everyone to fill out the Membership form and pay dues for the coming year if you have not already done so. **We are hoping to finalize dues collection by the end of March.** If dues have not been paid by then you will no longer receive the newsletter and other announcements and benefits of membership. So, don't risk forgetting to pay your dues and having time go by without being linked to all the activities supported and information shared by OAS!!! **Do it for the birds!** Join all the fun too! We have had over 18 new members join since January. So, renew today, for the love of birds! You can find the membership form attached to this newsletter.

Please Welcome our Newest Ogeechee Audubon Members!!!

- 🐦 Nicholas Armstrong
- 🐦 Michael Dayoub
- 🐦 Raeta Delorme
- 🐦 Nancy Early
- 🐦 David Brooks
- 🐦 Lu Fang
- 🐦 Linda Gaines
- 🐦 Maryan Harrell
- 🐦 Charlotte Lucero
- 🐦 Arlene Mattera
- 🐦 Paul McMillan
- 🐦 Noah and Mary Rosenstein
- 🐦 George Sedberry
- 🐦 Patty Short
- 🐦 David and Jeanne Sikkema
- 🐦 Richard and Gail Wolfert



Check out our website and like us on Facebook

www.ogeecheeaudubon.org



Report from the Field

Field Trip to Superior Landfill

...by Sue DeRosa ...photos by Mary Lou Dickson



I am sure your image of a landfill is not particularly an area that is high on your bucket list of places to visit. What wet my appetite to go see the landfill, though,

was the presentation the previous Tuesday by Amanda Fairley from Superior Landfill and Stan Gray who participates in the numerous bird surveys of that area. Amanda described what an active landfill was—an area where our trash is buried, but it is more than that. A buffer zone exists around the landfill that is comprised of

wetlands, pine forests, and grassy areas which is a perfect variety of habitat for numerous species of birds and animals. She also explained the set-up of the landfill. A plastic liner, which is about ¼” thick, covers the bottom, then there are monitoring pipes to detect any leeching of water, and then the trash is added. Each person generates about 4.5 pounds per day which is covered daily with a 6” layer of soil taken from a “borrow pit” on site. A bonus of this landfill is that the company gathers the methane that is produced by decomposition and then uses it to produce energy—enough to power thousands of homes.

Stan Gray expanded on Amanda’s talk, detailing how long the surveying has been going on, why it is important, what birds have been seen, and any changes in the species that have been noted. This monitoring can assess the efficacy of the efforts Superior Landfill is doing to lessen their impact on the area. Stan mentioned that the land fill provides a wonderful “home” to bald eagles, rusty blackbirds, warblers, gulls, and many other animals. After hearing these presentations, the members were ready to explore the area which not usually open to the general public.

Twenty-two people, Stan Gray, and Jason, the operator of the landfill, gathered by the scales on Sunday morning in February and headed down the



road into the landfill area. Venturing along, we passed a wetland to the left and wooded area to the right. Numerous warblers such as ruby-crowned kinglets, yellow rumps (yes, they are still hanging around), the usual titmice, nuthatches, and Carolina wrens called to us. Further down the road, there was a large pond that had been used as a borrow pit but now contained water and provided a habitat for herons, egrets, and ducks. The power station stood across from the pond and was a bit noisy although it didn’t seem to bother the birds. Shortly beyond the power plant, a rusty blackbird was hanging out, some vultures were passing over along with juvenile bald eagles, checking for any possible food in the area.



Rusty blackbird

Trees aren't allowed to grow on the side of the landfill since their roots may poke holes in the liner but grasses cover the area. A Wilson's snipe flew out just in front of the group, plus little brown jobbies (LBJs), or more specifically sparrows, flitted around the area. Meandering further down the road, we encountered a wetland which spanned both sides of the dirt road. Great egrets, snowy egrets, and great blue herons could be seen in the distance. The best find was seeing, and hearing, a hairy woodpecker which Larry Carlile astutely pointed out. Other woodpeckers such as red headed, red bellied, yellow bellied sapsuckers, downy, and flickers made their presence known. White eyed vireos, pine warblers, palm warblers, pipits, Northern parulas, cedar waxwings, and blue-gray gnatcatchers called out and even allowed us to see them. One small snapping turtle lay on the side of the road, snuggled under a log, trying to avoid eye contact.

Returning from the wetland, Stan excitedly encouraged us to climb up the highest point in Chatham County, the top of the landfill. What a view of the expansive area! Hundreds of ring billed gulls, a thousand or more laughing gulls, and herring gulls mixed together along with juvenile and adult bald eagles, some hawks, and vultures (both black and turkey) soaring overhead. After soaking in the sights and identifying the birds, we ventured back down, past a partially buried rubber boot, water bottles, and other refuse. While not the pristine area that OAS usually goes to, there were still a myriad of birds that have found a home at the landfill. People have become cognizant of the need to establish and maintain a diverse habitat to help offset the impact of the presence of this place which stores the castoff stuff from living the way we do.

A special thanks to Waste Management and Superior Landfill for making this trip possible and to Amanda and Jason for being such good hosts!



Ogeechee Audubon Bird Artist

Ogeechee Audubon Member Maryan Harrel is having an art show of her watercolors of birds at Dick Blick Gallery on April 5th until April 30th. There will be an artist reception on April 14th from 3 to 5 pm. Maryan is anxious to share her birds with everyone.

Welcome to our newest OAS Board Members

Lynn Wrenn

Lynn attended Armstrong State University followed by Candler Hospital School of Radiologic Technology. From

there Lynn trained and moved into Diagnostic and Vascular Sonography for several years.

After 20 years as Manager of the Imaging Services Department at St. Joseph's Hospital, Lynn retired last year.

Lynn has 2 sons and 6 grandchildren and is very involved in their lives.

One of her sons lives in Savannah and the other in Orlando.

Lynn has always been interested in birding but mainly observing and learning the birds in her backyard. After retiring, she has the time and desire to learn more about all local birds.

Lynn is also interested in Yoga and after several months of practice will be starting a rigorous 10-week course in April.

Her other hobbies are reading and anything that involves nature!

Pam Smith

Pam Vercellone-Smith has an interdisciplinary background that spans both science and engineering. She earned a Ph.D. in Microbiology from the University of Delaware, an M.S. in Microbiology and a B.S. in Biology from Virginia Tech, as well as an M.S. in Software Engineering from Penn State University. Throughout her career she's worked in a variety of research and academic roles including working as a Project Scientist in biological defense at the U.S. Army Aberdeen Proving Ground in Edgewood, MD, as adjunct faculty at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA where she taught a variety of microbiology and cell biology courses, and more recently, as an Assistant Professor of Software Engineering at Penn State Great Valley where she was employed for more than ten years prior to moving to Savannah three years ago. Pam continues to work part-time as adjunct faculty for Penn State where she teaches graduate courses in an online Data Analytics program.

In addition to her diverse scientific endeavors, Pam's passionate about the environment and has had a longstanding love of birds. Pam took her first 'Birding 101' class 28 years ago while living in Lancaster, PA and had started to attend local birding outings before her efforts were soon sidetracked as the demands of graduate school, work, and a growing family left little time for her pursue birding interests aside from backyard feeder watching. Now, nearly 30 years later, she's so grateful to finally have time to enthusiastically pursue her interest in birding – and her passion for birding continues to grow! She's really looking forward to working with the OAS board.

We are lucky to have such accomplished individuals join our Board! Please join in welcoming them!

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Save-The-Date to Celebrate...

The Year of the Bird!

June 19, 2018 – Tuesday –
7 pm

Ogeechee Audubon Society
Meeting



Celebration of the Year of the Bird
Special Program: Georgia Climate Change Education

Raffle and our OAS pins will be for sale.

*Ogeechee Audubon Society will have special surprises
in celebration of birds and birding!*

OAS Expertise in Demand

...by Mary Lou Dickson



When you promised to do a presentation and your presenter can't make it. Who you gonna call? Ogeechee Audubon!

Last month we received a special request from Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex, could someone from our club step up and take over a presentation about birding scheduled at the Coastal Discovery Museum on Hilton Head Island? The presentation has already posted on the Museum's "On Site Tours and Programs," and they already have 26 people signed up.

"Of course," responds our president, Leslie Weichsel, who jumped into action and rallied the troops. She volunteered to present, if she could find a co-presenter. She asked Diana Churchill and myself. Diana couldn't make the date, but she volunteered one of her presentations and generously walked Leslie and I through it.

On the appointed day, Leslie and I arrived at the Discovery Museum knowing we had an audience, but we really weren't expecting a full house of 60 people. Leslie opened, doing a nice job explaining the current state of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and fielded many thoughtful questions on how to get involved. Next, we moved to my rendition of Diana's birding the Savannah

National Wildlife Refuge and fielded questions from both Savannah and Pinckney Refuges.

Overall, our presentations were very well received by a very engaging audience. After the program, we were personally thanked by the Carlos Chacon, Manager of Natural History at the Museum, who organized the presentation and Monica Harris, Visitor Services Manager from the Savannah Coastal Refuges. Carlos said, "we'd be welcome back anytime."

Remembering Pat Metz

...by Diana Churchill



John Metz called me on Tuesday, February 27 with news I had been dreading but expecting. "I'm following Pat's instructions," he said,

"and calling the people she had on her list. Miz Pat flew up to heaven on Sunday night. It was very peaceful and she didn't suffer. She didn't want a memorial service. I have instructions on where to scatter her ashes."

A couple of years ago, Pat had gone in for a mammogram and found that the breast cancer she had vanquished a decade previously had recurred. In spite of her indomitable spirit and legendary sense of humor, this time the disease claimed the victory.

Pat did not want an obituary, but those of us who knew and loved her cannot allow her departure to go unremarked.

There is a lot I don't know about Pat. When I was researching, I found a wonderful article that Mary Landers wrote about her for the Savannah Morning News on January 17, 2010 – "Pat Metz, the not-so-lone ranger retires." From that article I learned that when Pat was raised in Brazil from age six to sixteen while her father, Manuel "Doc" Enos was working there for the engineering firm Stone and Webster.

Early on she wanted to be an artist. In fact, she and I met in the summer of 1974 while we were taking a watercolor class at Armstrong. At that time, she was Pat Young, and according to Mary's article, it was her then father-in-law who got her interested in birds.

"She'll always be Young," quipped her second husband John Metz when I spoke with him recently.

Pat began volunteering at the sadly no-longer-existence Savannah Science Museum that used to be on Paulsen Street. I have fond memories of visiting it as a kid, enjoying the exhibits and live animals.

Herpetologist Jerry Williamson pushed her to teach classes, and she began taking her students on field trips to the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. There, manager John Davis noticed her enthusiasm and eventually hired her in 1977, first for a special project, then half-time and finally full-time. Women rangers were so scarce back then that instead of a uniform, he sent her a bolt of cloth and she made her own pants!

I left Savannah in the fall of 1974 to finish college in Florida, and roamed to Boulder, Colorado, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, and up to Boston to pursue a career in Therapeutic Massage and Holistic Health. By the time I returned to Savannah at the end of 1998, Pat was divorced from her first husband, and had plucked John Metz from the pool of Refuge volunteers and married him in 1991. She was a fixture at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge complex that she would serve for 32 action-packed years.

I had gotten hooked on birds while living in Massachusetts, so when I came back to Savannah, I went on an Ogeechee Audubon field trip, and was invited to join the board of the chapter that Pat had helped found in 1970. At that time, Ogeechee Audubon was active with the Audubon Refuge Keepers program, serving as the defacto Friends Group for the Savannah Coastal Refuge Complex, so we were always in touch with Pat about something.

Pat and I always talked about going birding together, but both of us were working and more of our time together involved the projects we were embarked on. One of these was "Fish Gotta Swim," a program created while I was working for the educational non-profit Wilderness Southeast, to help middle school students learn about harbor deepening and its impact on fish, wildlife and the environment. Pat helped us secure the necessary permits, supported our grant proposals, and encouraged us with her indomitable enthusiasm.

In 2002, when avid birder and artist Lydia Thompson shared her vision for a birding festival on the Georgia coast, Pat jumped in on the planning committee to help secure funding and provide vision and leadership. She spearheaded the Refuge System's participation in the Festival for all of its seven successful seasons.

Around that time, it was announced that Savannah Refuge would finally be getting a Visitor's Center. Putting together the main exhibit room at that center became Pat's special project, and even after she retired in January of 2010, she kept going "to work" every day as a volunteer to oversee the completion of that exhibit. As her co-workers can attest, Pat was a perfectionist and insisted that anything done on her watch be accurate and completed to the highest standards.

Oh, and did I mention Christmas Bird Counts? If Pat didn't actually start the first one at Harris Neck in 1969, she was on board as compiler by 1977, based on an article

found in the November/December issue of the *Ogeechee Audubon Marshlander*. She continued to participate year after year in both the Harris Neck and later the Savannah Area Counts, even after she recruited expert birder Steve Calver to take over as compiler.

When I finally created a book based on a collection of the columns I have written for the Savannah Morning News, I asked Pat if she would write the "Foreword." She said that she'd be happy to but she thought we could find someone "better." She approached Kenn Kaufmann, who she had met at the first festival, and seen again while birding in Ohio. Kenn told her that if there were anything he could do to help birding on the Georgia coast, she should not hesitate to ask. So Pat asked Kenn if he would write the "Foreword" for "Birder's Eye View: Savannah and the Low Country." He graciously agreed.

Pat, I didn't get a chance to tell you that I've sold out of Volume 1 and I need someone to do the forward for Volume 2!

When I emailed Mary Landers to ask her permission to reference her article, she wrote back saying "of course," adding "She was a cool person wasn't she? So warm and so fierce at the same time."



Miz Pat, we will all miss you! Wherever you are, good birding!

You may make a donation to the Friends of Savannah Coastal Refuges in memory of Pat.

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 31st.

***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.**