



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, February 19th at 7:00 PM

Noise Pollution and its Effects on Humans and Wildlife

Speaker: Russ Wigh

Russ has been a birder since 1979; and after retirement in 1999, and a subsequent move to The Landings in 2001, birds became all consuming. But it was trips to Costa Rica and annual get-a-way visits to remote Arizona that cemented his interest in field sound recording and an awareness of just how noisy our world is.

In this program Russ will give us an introduction to noise pollution, and its harmful impact on humans and wildlife. Human quality of life has diminished and we have been subconsciously conditioned to tolerate noise as a part of everyday life without realizing its impacts on our health and hearing.

Ecosystems and wildlife diversity in urban and suburban environments have been altered as noise averse species have declined leaving only those which can still tolerate and communicate in spite of the noise pollution.

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	Pam Smith

Membership Workgroup

Member Enrollment	Debbie Bennett
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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	Sandy Beasley

Conservation Workgroup

Entire Board	
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Field Trips

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



SAT, FEB 9: Savannah National Wildlife
Refuge - Tupelo Trail 8:00 am to 11:00

am, established in 1927, the refuge encompasses over 30,000 acres of freshwater marshes, tidal rivers and creeks, including bottomland hardwoods. Hike the lower portion of the Tupelo Trail, which travels along levee tops and affords great views of the north impoundments. We will be looking for wintering waterfowl, waders, rails, raptors and sparrows. Meet at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge Tupelo Trailhead parking lot (Across from the Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive exit). **Trip Vigor:** Moderate with a lot of walking. **Leader:** Mary Lou Dickson, 919-559-6898, marylou@dicksonimages.com.

SUN, FEB 17: The Great Backyard Bird Count field trip at
Solomon Tract 8:00 am to 12 noon.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual event to collect data about birds, to determine changes in populations, and migration trends. In celebration, we are offering a field trip at Solomon Tract. Solomon tract is a portion of the Savannah NWR. This is a heavily wooded site with upland and bottomland hardwoods, a Ducks Unlimited impoundment, and a couple of open fields. Target species include rails, bitterns, sparrows, wintering warblers, and ducks. Meet at entrance. **Trip Vigor:** Moderate, with a lot of walking on uneven ground. **Leader:** Steve Wagner, sjwgnr@hotmail.net.

SUN, FEB 24: Savannah Christian Preparatory School, 1599
Chatham Pkwy 2:30pm to 6pm.

Rusty Blackbirds have become a species of major conservation concern, as their numbers have inexplicably plummeted over the past few decades. And yet, here in Savannah, we have been identifying a growing number of locations that seemingly

harbor significant populations of these mysterious blackbirds. Join Stan Gray, who has been studying Rusties at this amazing wintering “megasite” for the past seven (7) years, as we observe what is possibly the largest population of Rusty Blackbirds frequenting the southeast coast. But that is just one aspect of these intriguing school grounds, which are surrounded by countless acres of freshwater wetlands, ponds, and hardwood forests. Welcomed by the school administration to bird this private school property on weekends, Ogeechee Audubon will explore the nature sanctuary affectionately known to the school as “Eden”. Help us look for ways to increase our partnership with SCPS, as we aim to enhance the awareness and elicit the participation of the next generation of conservationists. We hope this field trip will encourage more birders to enjoy Savannah Christian Preparatory School regularly as a birding destination, and add to our avian knowledge of it, for the school’s benefit. Meet Stan at the main entrance to SCPS, on the road just inside the new gatehouse at 2:30pm. **Trip vigor:** Moderate with a lot of walking. **Leader:** Stan Gray, graysirisgarden@comcast.net.

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.**

SAT, MAR 2: Identifying Georgia Birds through Calls and Songs – a presentation by Georgann Schmalz 2:00pm to 5:00pm This program will be at the Ashantilly Center, 1712 Bond Rd., Darian, GA. A reception will follow the presentation. \$20 donation - for non-members of the Center. This program is for anyone who is interested in learning to identify birds by songs and call notes. Georgann Schmalz is President and Ornithologist for Birding Adventures.

Message from Membership!










I want to thank those of you who submitted your membership dues for 2019. For those of you who wanted to wait until 1/1/19 and make it a New Year’s resolution to get your membership in, we are prepared to help you meet your goal. Please find attached at the bottom of the newsletter the membership form. You can bring it to the next meeting or mail it in to the address on the form. Just as a reminder, if we do not receive your dues by 3/31/19, we will assume you are not re-newing and will remove you

from our membership rolls which will also remove you from our list to receive newsletters and other announcements. However, we will always accept your dues anytime during the year. In addition, if you know anyone interested in joining OAS, please refer them to our website, invite them to a meeting or field trip, and share the membership form.

Thanks! Debbie Bennett, Membership Chair

Please Welcome our Newest Ogeechee Audubon Members!!!

-  Vicki C. Center
-  Marty Coolidge
-  Joe Delorme
-  Sarah Kiley and Chris Howard
-  Isaiah Scott
-  Paula Skaar
-  Hilda Sukman

PLEASE NOTE – THIS EDITION OF THE MARSLANDER IS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY ONLY. NEXT MONTH ON MARCH 1ST THE MARSLANDER WILL COVER THE SPRING MONTHS OF MARCH, APRIL AND MAY. ANY OTHER NEEDED COMMUNICATIONS WILL COME VIA EMAIL, OUR WEBSITE AND ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE.

The **Annual Meeting of Ogeechee Audubon Society** will be held on Tuesday, April 16th. No officers are due for election/re-election at this time since no one’s term has expired this year. A brief recap of our activities and accomplishments of last year will be presented as well as our finances for fiscal year 2017-18.



Check out our website and like us on Facebook

www.ogeecheeaudubon.org





Holiday Party Recap

A good time was had by all at the Ogeechee Audubon Annual Holiday Party! Everyone was greeted by longtime



Board Member, Sandy Beasley who was giving each person an Ogeechee Audubon Society bumper sticker. Diana Churchill, in addition to presenting a great review of many winter birds seen in the Low Country as a warm-up for the Christmas Bird Count, was signing and selling her new book

“hot off the presses”: Birder’s Eye View II, The Low Country. The presentation was followed with a friendly competition testing our birding knowledge and skills. A lot of fun! We had our final raffle for the benefit of Orphaned Bird Care. A total of almost \$400 was raised on the four raffles we had in honor of the Year of the Bird. Everyone enjoyed some snacks and desserts with a holiday punch as we enjoyed the company of fellow birders!



Looking forward to all the fun activities, field trips and presentations for 2019! Happy New Year and Happy Birding!

Honorary Ogeechee Audubon Society Member 2019

I would like to introduce you to Isaiah Scott, a fifteen year old South Effingham sophomore. Ogeechee Audubon Society Board offered Isaiah Scott an Honorary Membership to Ogeechee Audubon Society after the Board became aware of his love of birds and his efforts to spread the joy of birding to others by conducting his own free bird walks. Isaiah came to our attention after he was featured on both TV and in the newspaper for his birding walks, "Ike's Birding Hikes".



Isaiah was to offer his second bird walk; "Ike's Birding Hikes - Christmas Edition" on December 21st. I decided to go on his bird walk. Isaiah had advertised the walk to take place at the New Ebenezer Retreat Center. What fun I had! Isaiah had the program well organized from



greeting everyone with everything from morning juice, donuts and snacks to preparing bird identification card of birds we were expected to see. Isaiah combined his varied talents to host this second birding hike. He

reviewed the birds we might see on our walk through the use of his hand drawn bird pictures (which were highly accurate) to help with identification. We then had fun making a "bird" ornament for our tree. After the project we



ventured outside to look for birds. Isaiah lead the group of eight with adults and children alike. We heard a bird song and looked for the bird. Isaiah shared his knowledge of the bird we spotted. I so enjoyed our walk through the woods, down to the river, and by



the buildings seeking out any signs of birds. I look forward to the next Ike's Birding Hike! The Ogeechee Audubon Society is happy to welcome a young birder such as Isaiah be a part of our local birding community.



Field Notes



Harris Neck Christmas Bird Count Circle Field Report

Thirty-four (34) intrepid, die-hard birders defied the ominous weather forecast to participate in the annual Harris Neck Christmas Bird Count on Friday, December 14, 2018. Faced with an all-day rain forecast, 14 teams nonetheless took to their assigned routes and made the best of a bleak situation. Two teams of boaters even spent hours in choppy, wind-blown conditions to ensure the dominant waters of the count circle were properly represented. Despite road conditions making access impossible to numerous sites, and a storm prediction which necessitated the cancellation of the late-PM roost count, the teams miraculously recorded 130 bird species, a number better than in even some good weather years. Particularly impressive were the numbers of the three species of marsh sparrows observed, and the large numbers of



shorebirds sequestered in sheltered areas. We can only imagine what this fine group of volunteers could accomplish in better conditions. Until the next count! Mark your calendars for Friday, December 20.

Stan Gray



- sit back, relax, enjoy life, and see what happens. (Although we did miss the chili lunch at the visitor center by about 30 minutes!!!)

Debbie Bennett



First hand account from the birders on the water...

Charra and Mary Sweeney-Reeves and I had been checking the weather for days (particularly me, as I did not want to be on a boat in the cold and rain!!!) as we prepared for the Harris Neck Bird Count on the water. But despite my reservations they, Mary and Charra, were excited about going in rain, sleet or snow. I think they were mail carriers in a former life!! So, we get to the Friday morning of the Harris Neck Bird Count. Well, Mary was very disappointed because she was too sick to make the trip. Fever and everything!!! So, one down. Storms still coming on the radar and supposed to be BIG, right where we were going. 100% chance of rain! But, I could not back out now. I had to go for Mary and even though Charra was going alone even if I did not go, I now had to go!! In reality I was not going to let this weather get the best of me.

Well, it was wonderful! I had all my layers on (as did Charra) and my new duck boots. The temp was really rather warm even on the boat and even though there was a light rain almost the whole time it rolled off us like water off a duck's back, or I should say water-proof pants and jacket. Unfortunately, we did not see large numbers of birds as we think they were hiding behind the drifting fog, but we spent a lot of time in and out of the marsh banks looking for sparrows, three in particular and we saw them all. Hooray!!! The Salt Marsh, the Nelson, and the Seaside. In addition, we saw about 30 other species and we had achieved our primary goal. And just in time. As we started back the rain got a little heavier, but still it was a good day. And we would be remiss if we did not thank our boat Captain, Tim Rhoad. He knew the area well and was very knowledgeable himself. The morale of this story

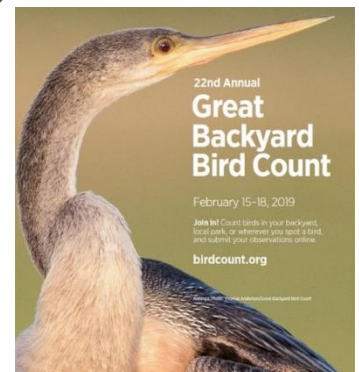
Hope to see everyone again next year on December 20, 2019. Please join us!

A Great Big Thank You to Stan Gray and Mary Lambright for organizing the Harris Neck Bird Count and to Larry Carlile and Diana Churchill for organizing the Savannah Bird Count and the Count-Down Dinner!

Please join all the members of Ogeechee Audubon Society in supporting:

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)!

It is a free, fun, and an easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.



Ogeechee Audubon Chapter Membership Form – 2019

New membership _____ Renewal _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (h) _____ (c) _____

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, Attn 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 _____

Total: _____

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.**