

# ***THE MARSHLANDER***

## **OGEECHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

May, 2020, Volume L, Issue III Special Edition

### ***50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of the Marshlander***



<b>Ogeechee Audubon Society Officers and Board</b>	
<b>Administrative Responsibilities</b>	
President	Leslie Weichsel
Vice President	Mary Lambright
Secretary	Marty Foxx
Treasurer	Pam Smith
<b>Education Workgroup</b>	
Education Outreach	Diana Churchill,
Sue DeRosa, Rose Talbert	
Field Trips	John Williamson
Programs	Lynn Wrenn
<b>Communications Workgroup</b>	
Social Media	Mary Lambright
Webmaster	Mary Lou Dickson
Newsletter	Leslie Weichsel
Publicity	Matt Tozar
<b>Historian</b>	
Sandy Beasley	
<b>Conservation Workgroup</b>	
Entire Board	

**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.**

### ***Ogeechee Audubon Society continues in Flockdown!***

First and foremost, we hope that each of you and your loved ones are well and staying safe during the COVID-19 Pandemic. As I am sure each of you is acutely aware, we all continue to struggle with the impact of COVID-19. Each state is beginning to lessen the stay-at-home orders and ease restrictions on businesses. In regard to Ogeechee Audubon Society our mission is to educate about birds and provide opportunities to enjoy the world around us. However, the Board believes it is a bit too soon to feel comfortable resuming any activities at least for the month of May. The Board will reevaluate the situation mid-May as we learn more about social distancing rules. We will update the membership about any plans to resume activities at that time. We miss each of you, the wonderful speakers we have had at our meetings and the opportunities to get out in the fresh air and see our friends and the birds! Your health and safety are paramount. We will bird watch together again, but let's be safe until that time. Thank you for your membership and patience.

Our April meeting is the time designated in the By Laws for our Annual Meeting and the election of officers. We are postponing the Annual Meeting until the next meeting of the membership which is to be determined based on the timeline dictated by the virus. Our By Laws do not specifically address a pandemic situation so we believe since our activities are suspended, at the first opportunity when we can safely reconvene we will have the Annual meeting and hold the elections. In the meantime, the present officers will continue to serve.

Birds are everywhere so we can continue to birdwatch from our windows at home while we shelter in place. Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones. Be safe!

-OAS Board of Directors

**Thank You to Wild Birds Unlimited for sponsoring *The Marshlander***

	<b><i>Fresh Seed NO Fillers!</i></b>	<b>Bird Feeders Birdbaths Pole Systems And The Freshest Seed in Town!</b>	8108 Abercorn Street Mon-Sat 10-6 Sunday 12-5 Next to Home Goods (912) 961-3455	
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## ***Introductions:***

We have three new Board Members who began their terms in April. I've asked each to tell you something about themselves.

### **Rose Talbert**

I grew up in Eatonton, Ga and graduated from Georgia Southern with a teaching degree. Thirty-seven years later I'm still at it. In 2015 Ogeechee Audubon sponsored two teachers to participate in a week of educator activities at Hog Island, Maine. Thus, my birding journey began. Ogeechee Audubon is responsible for "infecting" me with birding. Watching birds via the bird cams is a regular occurrence in my classroom. Kids still stop by and ask if we still watch the birds. Of course we do!

### **Matt Tozer**

I grew up in Rockland County, New York, where I began my birding career watching the chickadees and titmice visit the birdfeeder outside my living room window. Always a little nature-obsessed I wasted a great many disposable cameras taking blurry photos of distant common grackles and cottontail rabbits. But my parents were supportive and took my sister and I on many hikes and on annual trips to the nearby Hook Mountain Hawk Watch.

I attended Colby College in Maine where I majored in Biology. On graduation, the first job I was able to land involved "hazing" gulls and geese on a New York City Reservoir to avoid contamination of the water. Though I was an unenthusiastic bird harasser, I took the opportunity to get back into serious birdwatching, which I had mostly fallen out of in my late teens. Though I eventually moved on from the job, I've kept up birding ever since.

My wife, Michele, and I had long talked about finding somewhere further south than New York to live. After a few exploratory trips we settled on the greater Savannah area and really feel we made the right choice. We joined Ogeechee Audubon shortly after moving and have had a great time meeting people, attending field trips, and taking advantage of all your local knowledge. I look forward to being able to serve on the board and help to continue this great organization.

### **John Williamson**

Born in the upstate of South Carolina, I spent my early days in a small town and surrounding farming community. Birds were a budding interest of mine at that time, including the efforts with my father to put up Eastern Bluebird houses to help a declining population. I graduated from Clemson University in 1979 and lived in Columbia, SC for the next eight years, where I worked for the SC Department of Mental Health as a Recreation Therapist. I then moved to the New York metropolitan area in the mid-eighties where I lived for the next twenty years. During that time I had various occupations including product development for American Express, Addiction Counselor, and Interventionist. One of my greatest birding regrets is that I didn't take advantage of being so near Central Park as a hotspot. Probably one of the most impactful experiences was being present for the events of 9/11. Life events brought me to Georgia in 2009, where I now work for Willingway Hospital in Statesboro. I have had various roles there including clinical, senior management, and most recently business development. My birding avocation took off like a Peregrine Falcon in 2018. Thanks to key members of the Ogeechee Audubon Group, Stan, Diana, and Pam to name a few, both my love and abilities in birding have grown. I look forward to giving back to the group as a Board Member.

**We are lucky to have such enthusiastic and talented individuals join our Board!**

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**This publication of the Marshlander will be a bit different. It is the second "Flockdown" edition! We will be presenting various stories and reports as well as activities and links to keep you connected with birds and with Ogeechee Audubon Society. I hope you enjoy it!**

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Ogeechee Audubon's Annual Meeting will be scheduled for the next public meeting. At this meeting we will elect Officers for the Board. If you have any nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer please contact the Nominating Committee (Diana Churchill, Mary Lou Dickson, Marty Foxx) at [ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com](mailto:ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com) by April 10th. Thank You.

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## *eBird Global Big Day! – Saturday, May 9, 2020 – eBird*



From eBird...

"On 9 May, birding's biggest day is back!

Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you, and this year is no different. While not everyone may be able to leave home to bird this year, Global Big Day is still an opportunity to check in with the birds in and around where you live. Join us on 9 May and be a part of a global birding community by sharing what birds you see around you with eBird.

Participating is easy. Wherever you are, you can be a part of the global community of birders on 9 May. Please remember to always put safety first and follow all local safety guidelines and closures. You can enjoy birds from inside your home and still be part of Global Big Day.

If you can spare at least 5 or 10 minutes, report your observations to eBird online or with our free eBird Mobile app. If you have more time, submit checklists of birds throughout the day at different times. Can you find more birds in the morning, or the evening? You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations through products like these [animated abundance maps](#) brought to you by eBird Science.

This year, Global Big Day will focus on the number of checklists we can collect as a global team. Last year, 35,209 eBirders from 174 countries collected an astounding 92,284 checklists [in a single day](#). Will you join us on Global Big Day to make 2020 the year that we surpass 100,000 checklists of birds in one day? Help us set a new checklist record!

### How to participate

- **Get an eBird account:** eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's sightings into a single massive Global Big Day list—while at the same time collecting the data to help scientists better understand birds. [Sign up here](#). It's 100% free from start to finish.
- **Watch birds on 9 May:** It's that simple. You don't need to be a bird expert or go out all day long, even 10 minutes in your backyard counts. Global Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. You can report what you find from anywhere in the world.
- **Enter what you see and hear in eBird:** You can enter your sightings [via our website](#) or download the [free eBird Mobile app](#), which makes adding what you see even easier. You can enter and submit lists while out birding, and the app tracks how far you've walked so you can focus on enjoying the birds. While you're downloading free apps, try out the Cornell Lab's [Merlin Bird ID](#) app for help with identification. Please enter sightings before 13 May to be included in our initial results announcement.

- **Watch the sightings roll in:** During the day, follow along with sightings from more than 170 countries in real-time on our [Global Big Day page](#).”

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## Membership

A gentle reminder to all who have yet to renew your 2020 dues. Please do so at your earliest convenience. We will be back and you do not want to miss out on what we have in store once activities resume! We have kept everyone from the 2019 membership list on the mailing list for the time being for notices and the Newsletter. However, you will not receive any further information if you do not renew your membership by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Please use the form on the last page.

Thank You!

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## 50 Years of Ogeechee Audubon! Wow!

**2020** marks the 50th anniversary of the Ogeechee Audubon Society! The members of the Board of Ogeechee Audubon will be planning celebratory events to mark fifty years of fulfilling our mission to educate adults and children about birds, wildlife, and the environment.

Throughout 2020 Ogeechee Audubon will look back on our history here in Savannah and the surrounding low country. Periodically we will be sharing our 50-year history by sharing from our archived documents and notes. We plan to conclude the year with a special banquet celebrating our Golden Anniversary with all who have supported us and our mission over the past 5 decades. **As such we would like to ask each of you if you have a story to share about Ogeechee Audubon from your first hand experiences?** If you remember a particular field trip, a person or a time when you spotted a sought-after life bird. Or if you have any photographs of OAS members in action, particularly from our early days. Ogeechee Audubon has a long history in our community and any anecdotes shared by folks like you will help weave a beautiful picture of the story of Ogeechee Audubon Society over these 50 years. Please send these to [ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com](mailto:ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com).

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## Reports from the Field and Stories of Interest

### **Trip to Tuckahoe WMA – ... by Matt Tozar**

I took a solo-trip out to Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area up in Screven County on April 24 to look for migrants and see if I couldn't pick-up a couple of southern specialties that have been eluding me, Kentucky Warbler and Swainson's Warbler.

I had been up here last year around the same time attempting to do the same thing without much luck. I'm pretty sure I heard a Kentucky on that trip, but wasn't able to catch a glimpse, despite stomping around a cane-break for 40 minutes or so. I do not recall hearing anything I thought could be a Swainson's, but they have given me trouble over the years. A very long time ago, I thought I heard one on a trip to North Carolina, but was never able to locate it. Maybe two years ago now, I thought I had one for sure at Webb WMA, but after a long search, found an Indigo Bunting singing a somewhat unusual song. I definitely wasn't feeling super confident after listening to some recordings last night and thinking, "that sounds a lot like a Yellow-Throated Warbler."

In any event, I got to the park and everything started to fall into place. At the first location I pulled over I had Summer Tanagers and Painted Buntings singing and offering good looks. I took a walk down a side road listening to Pine Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and a few other familiar species. Hearing an unfamiliar call, I decided to step off the road to investigate. Not five feet into the brush I flushed a Chuck-wills-widow. The bird disappeared into the woods, but glancing back to where it had popped up, I spotted two eggs lying on the bare ground. There was no nest of any kind, just a dry spot in the pine needles where the adult had blocked the rains of the previous night and day. I snapped a picture and quickly backed up the way I had come.



I continued down the main road by car stopping every so often. I managed to grab Yellow-breasted Chat and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. I finally had my long overdue first of the year (FOTY) Chimney Swifts which I've somehow been able to avoid up until now. Eventually, as I paused to listen by a section of flooded forest, I heard something that caught my ear. A little bit "water-thrushy", vaguely Yellow-throated "Warblerish", I thought it sounded good for a Swainson's Warbler. I



wasn't going to see it from the road so I ventured into the woods. The canopy was very dense and the understory was pretty thick with dwarf palms. It looked like a good place for the Swainson's to live, but not a great place to see one. I searched for a few minutes until the singing stopped. I did manage to pick up a Black-throated Blue Warbler and a Hooded Warbler, but no Swainson's. As I made my way out of the brush, I heard another unfamiliar song - "was that the same one as before?" I eventually locate the singer; it's a hooded singing a somewhat strange song variant. Doubt begins to enter the mind.

I continue on until I hit a place where a creek had overflowed its banks and is now freely flowing over the road. It might not be that deep, but the current looked pretty strong. Probably the end of the line for people driving civic sedans. I get out to

look around and I hear the song again. That *has* to be it. I follow sound until it seems I'm right underneath it. Then it stops. I can't believe it, missed it again. Just then, I catch movement in my field of vision, something dropping straight down to the forest floor maybe 20 yards in front of me. I quickly bring up the binoculars to see a remarkably drab bird calmly poking around in the leaf litter. That's it! After finally locating it, the bird acts downright friendly. It calmly forages, occasionally singing from the ground, until it eventually moves back up into the mid canopy and away. Wow, I'll take it!

As for the Kentucky, I was pretty sure I heard one on my way out, right around the place I thought I heard one last year. I got out and stomped around in the same cane-break. This time I managed to catch a 10 second glimpse of a yellow bird with a broken black mask - got it!



## **Nesting in full swing at Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge ...by Mary Lou Dickson**

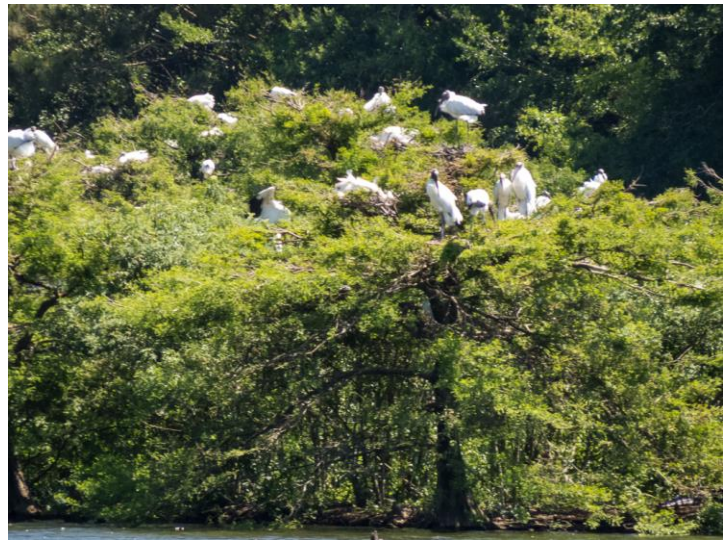
April 2020

While the majority of Americans are sheltering in place under a STAY-AT-HOME order, the wading birds of Harris Neck's Woody Pond are busily engaged with nesting season. Although the trees are filled with all sorts of wading birds, the region's signature species is the threatened Wood Stork, which nest in a large colony here. The trees are abuzz with their calls and squawks and the occasional crashing sounds when these large and gangly birds attempt all sorts of maneuvering in the trees. Nesting is serious business and there appears to be no time to waste.



To protect all the birds during nesting season, the trail around Woody Pond is closed to entry. Therefore, the only access to the area is from the Woody Pond dike. But this is not really a problem because there is easy access to this dike off the Harris Neck wildlife drive, which includes handicap parking.

Although the access is limited, there are still plenty of great views and the dike affords one the broader view of the whole spectacle.



Although as of mid-April, many birds are just starting their nests, many birds already have eggs in their nests and a few even have chicks.

If you want to check out the action at Woody Pond, Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge (as of this writing) is open normal hours (sunrise to sunset), although the Visitor Contact station is closed indefinitely. It appears many people are visiting during the shutdown, but the numbers are still quite low. If you do visit, don't forget to enjoy all the songbirds who are actively singing in the forests as well.

## [How to Make These Next Few Weeks a Little Easier, Courtesy of Birds](#)

Follow this link to a myriad of activities to do while you are social distancing and home bound:

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/how-to-make-these-next-few-weeks-a-little-easier-courtesy-of-birds>

### **Some internet sites to explore while you are home in flockdown:**

Team eBird – [ebird.org](http://ebird.org)

Cornell Ornithology Lab - [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu)

National Audubon Society – [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

Live Bird Cams – [www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/)

Bird Academy at Cornell Lab - <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/>

Savannah Coastal Refuge Complex website - <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/savannah/>

Savannah National Wildlife Refuge Friends Group – <https://www.coastalrefuges.org/>

**Audubon for Kids!** – A National Audubon Society Program — check out [www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kid](http://www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kid)



African Firefinch – Kenya – Photo, Leslie Weichsel

Contact:	
Facebook: Ogeechee Audubon	
Email: <a href="mailto:Ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com">Ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com</a>	
Website: <a href="http://www.ogeecheeaudubon.org">www.ogeecheeaudubon.org</a>	

**New Opportunity for Young Birders: Fledgling Birder age 12 years and younger. \$5 membership fee. All benefits of Adult Membership. Each Fledge will receive a special sticker.**

**Ogeechee Audubon Chapter Membership Form – 2020**

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 31<sup>st</sup>.

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.*