

THE MARSHLANDER

OGEECHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May - June, 2021, Volume LI, Issue III

Celebrating Over 50 Years of Birding in Savannah



Springing into Summer Edition

**Public Meeting In Person At First Presbyterian Church:
Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 7 pm**

Georgia's Barrier Islands: A Natural History
Speaker Stephanie Chewning with One Hundred Miles

Join us as we explore our beautiful barrier islands on Georgia's coast. Have you ever imagined how these islands were formed to begin with and how they benefit the plants and animals that live on them now? During this program we will learn more about the role of barrier islands on our coast, explore the forces that frequently change them, and travel back in time to how they were formed. Don't miss this chance to learn more about the mysterious and powerful forces that shape the coast we love.

There will be a limit of 25 people to allow for safe distancing and masks will be required. Please send your reservation to attend to the OAS Website. Please come and support our return to semi-normalcy and see your friends at OAS.



Ogeechee Audubon Society Officers and Board

Administrative Responsibilities

President	Leslie Weichsel
Vice President	Mary Lambright
Secretary	Marty Foxx
Treasurer	Pam Smith

Education Workgroup

Education Outreach	Diana Churchill, Sue DeRosa, and Rose Talbert
Field Trips	John Williamson
Programs	Lynn Wrenn

Communications Workgroup

Social Media	Mary Lambright
Webmaster	Mary Lou Dickson
Newsletter	Diana Churchill, Matt Tozer
Publicity	Matt Tozer

Historian

Sandy Beasley

Conservation Workgroup

Entire Board

Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop	<i>Fresh Seed NO Fillers!</i>	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	Stacks of bird seed bags in various colors (blue, orange, white).
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In honor of Ogeechee Audubon's Fifty-Year Anniversary, the Board is giving each of you a special token of remembrance. Pins will be distributed at meetings and field trips etc...

Thank You!

Field Trips – in a Pandemic World – Let's go Birding!



Ogeechee Audubon is conducting field trips.

There are required strict guidelines to keep us safe. We are all in this together as we adapt to the new "normal".

Please read the following guidelines. Everyone is expected to agree to follow these requirements in order to participate in the Field Trips.

Guidelines to participate in Field Trips by Ogeechee Audubon:

- Birding groups will be limited in numbers allowed.
- ***If you show up without a reservation you will not be allowed to join the group.***
- You MUST wear a face mask at all times and practice social distancing while on the field trip to protect yourself and others in the group.
- Do not share binoculars, scopes or other equipment.
- Carpooling with participants outside your household is strongly discouraged.
- By signing up for the field trip sponsored by Ogeechee Audubon Society, you acknowledge that these activities may be hazardous to you and your health. By attending you agree voluntarily to participate.

Field Trips – The great outdoors beckons!

Monday, May 10th – 6:30 pm – Tybee Island Shorebird Survey – Meet at Jaycee Park – Leader: Diana Churchill

We will circumambulate the North Beach of Tybee Island during the golden hours of the late afternoon/evening and census shorebirds as well as the typical aggregations of terns, gulls, and skimmers. Data will become part of the International Shorebird Survey Database. – Reserve your spot by signing up at ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com. Limit 8.

Saturday, May 29th – 8:00 am – Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge – Meet at Front Gate – Leader: Larry Carlile

We will explore the rich and varied habitats at the refuge looking for breeding birds and late migrants. The refuge is home to Georgia's largest Wood Stork rookery and nesting activity should be in full swing at the time of the trip. – Reserve your spot by signing up at ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com. Limit 10.

Saturday, June 5th – 8-30 am – Oatland Island Wildlife Center – Meet at Front Gate – Leader Eric Swanson

Site naturalist Eric Swanson will guide us through the mix of freshwater and saltwater wetlands and maritime forest that make up this interesting site. Painted Buntings, Wood Storks, Anhingas, and wading birds should be highlights. Typical admission fee will be waived for field trip participants. – Reserve your spot by signing up at ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com. Limit 8.

Survey Opportunities – Please join us!

Savannah Christian Preparatory School Surveys

Ogeechee Audubon will be continuing surveys of the school property on:

Sunday: May 23rd at 8:30 am and

Sunday: June 13th at 8:30 am

Leader: Stan Gray

Meet at the front of the school gate at 8:30 am sharp if you wish to participate. Participants are limited to 6 individuals.

In order to participate you must sign up at ogeecheeaudubon.help@gmail.com. You must also follow the guidelines for field trips as outlined above.

Field Notes

Fort Pulaski March 28 - by Patti Seanor

When we crossed the bridge at Fort Pulaski there were about 80 Forster's Terns along with Laughing Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls watching us from the railings. We were heading to the marsh to look for Seaside and Nelson's Sparrows. Our patience paid off as we saw both species darting in and out of the reeds. But it was worthwhile to just wait and watch, as a flock of about 150 Red-winged Blackbirds, a Common Loon, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Great Blue Herons and Brown Pelicans came in and out of view against the bright blue sky.

Continuing on we stopped to watch two Bald Eagles who seemed to be making trouble for a couple of Ospreys. There were Cedar Waxwings, Tree Swallows and Ruby-crowned Kinglets as we made our way back toward the parking lot. In all, we tallied 37 species...a successful and beautiful morning.

Webb Wildlife Center April 25 - by Mary Lou Dickson

Our early morning start at Webb Wildlife Center was greeted with singing a Bachman's Sparrow and foraging Eastern



Bluebird parents who were feeding their hungry chicks in a roadside box. The day started out rather chilly and quite gray, but Webb's oak lined road did not disappoint. From Red-headed Woodpeckers to a pair of Summer Tanagers, we moved from tree to tree as we chalked up more species. But after spending about 45 minutes just inside the entrance, we determined that we would have to search harder for the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Our small caravan moved down the road, stopping when we saw or heard something interesting. A singing Prairie Warbler here, a soaring Swallow-tailed Kite there. We finally managed our Woodpeckers after a short walk, where we watched a pair of Eastern Bluebirds check out a Woodpecker hole. But it didn't take long for the owners to make it clear that this apartment was

already rented by the Red-cockaded and for the bluebirds to move on.

We stopped at the rookery, but had to walk in as the road gate was closed. The short walk back was worth it though, as we watched male Painted Buntings and Summer Tanagers feast on newly hatched flying ants (per Mary Lambright). The rookery was in full swing, but the vegetation obscured most of the nests. Once we returned to the cars, we headed to the river area to try and pick up some of the swamp warblers. We did manage great looks at a Prothonotary Warbler but the

Hooded Warbler only sang for us. In the end, we were just too tasty for the mosquitoes to stay too long. Overall, it was a great day, picking up 60 species on the day. Thanks Steve!



Orphaned Bird Care Celebrates 20 Years *- Diana Churchill*

I first met Pat Wolters in 2001 while I was working at Wild Birds Unlimited. A petite, energetic woman of 71 years came into the shop to buy food and feeders to support her passion for tending the wild birds in her new backyard on Skidaway Island. Pat and her husband Art had just relocated to Savannah from Delaware.

In 1989, while living in Maryland, Pat had taken her love of birds to a new level by becoming a volunteer at Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research in Newark, Delaware. Her first job was doing the laundry, but she quickly moved on to other tasks, serving as Banding Chairperson, Release Chairperson, and a member of the Oil Spill Core Team.

After she moved to Savannah, Pat looked for similar volunteer opportunities and found that Savannah had almost no resources for bird and wildlife rescue. While Pat worked part-time at Wild Birds Unlimited, she was surprised by the number of people who walked into the shop with birds in a shoebox. She realized she needed to obtain the permits required to operate as a licensed rehabilitator.

Permitting from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service required that Pat pass a 100 question /1 hour timed test. In addition she and Nicole Janke, the manager of Wild Birds Unlimited, began making weekly trips to McIntosh County to work with Emmy Minor at Sanctuary on the Sapelo.

After Pat received her permits and started Orphaned Bird Care, Nicole became her assistant and chief volunteer. Working with both of them at Wild Birds Unlimited, I've had a chance to observe first-hand all the joys, challenges, and heartache that go along with a commitment to helping birds.

For starters, helping birds takes more than knowledge and a permit. You need food to feed them, baskets and cages to house them, and medicines to treat them. All of this takes money. Pat is fortunate to receive grants from Ogeechee



Audubon, Skidaway Audubon, The Landings Garden Club, the Landings Landlovers, and the Green Thumb Garden Club, as well as donations from individuals. If you find a bird and bring it to a rehabilitator, please consider making a donation, no matter how small.

I went out to Pat's house in early April to get a tour of her "facilities." Nesting season had just gotten underway so the basket on the desk in her half of the office she shares with Art was empty. It has a heating pad on the bottom, covered with a towel, a small soft substitute "nest bowl," a mirror, a branch perch, and an elastic-edged fabric screen cover. More than likely, by the time this article appears in print, the basket will house a family of hungry babies, needing to be fed at least every hour. Thankfully, the birds do not have to be fed at night.

The "season" will begin with a phone call, a story, and then a handful of gaping mouths to be fed. Nicole will walk into the shop one day with her basket, announcing, "I have dependents." The resident wrens, chickadees, bluebirds, nuthatches, woodpeckers and doves will come first, followed later by the migratory warblers, great crested flycatchers, eastern kingbirds, green herons, and chimney swifts.



Early on, Pat and Nicole developed a kind of job-sharing for tending baby birds. Nicole takes on many of the tiny nestlings that can easily be confined in baskets. When they get too big and active to be happy in a basket, they move to a cage, often at Pat's nursery. During the height of the season, the two may be tending as many as 60 to 70 nestling and fledgling birds.

Indoors, in her bird room, Pat has 2 cages, baskets, and an incubator. In the garage she has three large cages on wheels that can be moved outside during the day. They are not predator proof so must be returned to the garage at night. She also has an outdoor aviary designed by her architect son, and built with money from a Landlovers grant.

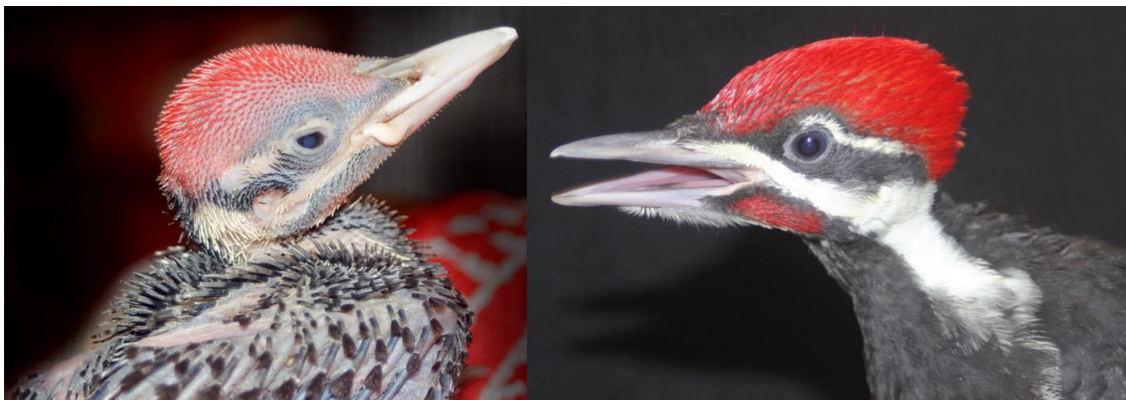
Both Pat and Nicole have a variety of feeders, birdhouses, and watering stations outside in their yards, to take care of the local birds as well as the special birds they care for and release.

Orphaned Bird Care also focuses on education. Not all baby birds need to be rescued. Parent birds can be very quick about the task of bringing in the bugs, so unless you spend thirty minutes or more watching, you might mistakenly assume that the babies are not being fed.

Helpless nestlings do need to be fed and tended, and take well to being fed by humans. Fully feathered fledglings, on the other hand, are out of the nest naturally. Their parents care for them, and teach them what they need to know to survive as a bird in a perilous world. Fledglings, when "rescued," do not take well to being fed by humans and are deprived of that period of essential learning.

When I asked Pat to tell me about one of her favorite bird friends, she immediately mentioned a pileated woodpecker. I happened to be at the shop the day a man showed up with two young woodpeckers that came from the cavity of a tree that had been cut down at Hunter Army Airfield. One bird had sustained serious injuries in the fall and did not make it, but the other grew and thrived. Nicknamed "Big Red," Pat eventually released him in her yard. He returned frequently that first year, coming to a particular tree to get his supplemental snacks, until he found a mate.

Nicole and Pat treat over 340 native birds annually. 80% of the birds they care for are released back into the wild. For more information, visit Pat's web site – orphanedbirdcare.com.



Georgia Audubon Bird Fest

Birds, y'all! As Georgia's largest bird and nature festival, Georgia Bird Fest features a full month of activities, including guided field trips to Georgia's best birding hotspots, nature-based workshops, and guest speakers. Events are tailored to all levels of bird, nature, and outdoor enthusiasts—there's something for everyone during Georgia Bird Fest!

Your participation in Georgia Bird Fest supports Georgia Audubon's conservation, education, and community engagement programming. Thank you for helping us build places where birds and people thrive!

Registration for Georgia Bird Fest 2021 will open on March 2 at 10:00 AM to current Georgia Audubon members and on March 8 at 10:00 AM to non-members.

<https://www.georgiaaudubon.org/>

Ogeechee Audubon Chapter Membership Form – 2021

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.

_____ I am interested in leading Field Trips

_____ I am interested in volunteering to help with OAS booth at events

_____ I am interested in serving on the Board

_____ I am interested in helping wherever needed