



Bidding Adieu to Nikki Belmonte

By Dottie Head, Director of Membership and Communications

It is with both sadness and gratitude that Atlanta Audubon bids our beloved Executive Director, Nikki Belmonte, a fond farewell. Nikki will be stepping down from her role as Executive Director on September 14 to pursue new challenges and to spend more time with her family.

Nikki joined Atlanta Audubon in August 2010 as a part-time education coordinator. In 2012 she was named interim executive director following a leadership change. She applied for the job and became Atlanta Audubon's first full-time executive director in 2013.

Since then, Nikki, with full support from the Board of Directors and staff, has ushered Atlanta Audubon through an unprecedented period of growth, creating and implementing two strategic plans, building critical partnerships, and more than tripling revenue, allowing the organization to fulfill its mission of building places where birds and people thrive. "Nikki is a true leader, and she has led us with vision and skill," says Esther Stokes, Atlanta Audubon board chair. "We will miss her enormously."

"You can't do work without people," Nikki has always said. And under her leadership, Atlanta Audubon has grown its people power, going from a small organization with two part-time contractors to a large and growing chapter with nine employees, including a full-time ornithologist. Her guiding vision has enabled the organization to expand its conservation programs and put Atlanta Audubon on the national map as a hardworking, high-achieving Audubon chapter with strong standing among southeastern states. Nikki leaves Atlanta Audubon in a strong position for continued growth, and we sincerely thank her for her contribution and leadership in her time with us.

"I did not make this decision lightly, as I have a great love and passion for Atlanta Audubon and the work we do" said Nikki in an e-mail to the membership. "The work that the board, staff, and I have accomplished has elevated Atlanta Audubon to new heights and helped us earn the reputation of a solid conservation organization, building places where birds and people thrive. It is only through the loyal support of our network of members, donors, sponsors, advocates, volunteers, and partners that we have been able to achieve these successes. I would like to thank each of you personally for supporting Atlanta Audubon and believing in our vision, and I ask you to continue supporting the organization in the future. There are great things to come for Atlanta Audubon!"

The Board of Directors has empaneled a search committee with the intent of hiring a new executive director by January 1, 2020. Atlanta Audubon's work to build places where birds and people thrive will continue as a new leader is identified. Beginning September 15, Michelle Hamner, our current director of development, will step into the role of interim executive director, keeping Atlanta Audubon on track until a new executive director is in place.

Nikki's final day with Atlanta Audubon will be Saturday, September 14, where she will be in the field visiting each of the seven sites on this year's Wildlife Sanctuary Tour. If you were not able to join us at her farewell celebration at the August Monthly Meeting, we hope you will plan to attend the Sanctuary Tour to say goodbye to Nikki in person.

We wish Nikki steady winds and smooth flight as she pursues her new endeavors, and we hope to see her in the field with a pair of binoculars in her hands.



Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon's executive director, will be stepping down in September 2019. Nikki is shown here with David Ringer, National Audubon chief network officer, at the Audubon Photography Awards Exhibit last winter. Photo by Dottie Head.



Prothonotary Warbler, by Michelle Hamner.

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Wingbars is the official newsletter of Atlanta Audubon Society and is published 10 times a year. We feature news, upcoming events, meetings, field trips, and projects. We hope you will join us. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect policies of Atlanta Audubon Society.



From the Executive Director

By Nikki Belmonte

Birds and Audubon have been a constant in my life since I was a kid. My spark bird story (it was a Black-capped Chickadee) and love for nature started at a local Massachusetts Audubon sanctuary. My mom took my brother and me hiking there, where trails traversed meadows and followed the tree-lined banks of the Charles River. My parents sent me to nature camp at that sanctuary, and a birder was born—as was an insect collector, a hiker, a gardener, and so much more. I still use the Nikon binoculars my dad bought for me more than 20 years ago.

Introducing people to the outdoors is so important. I was lucky that my parents—who grew up in the city next to ocean and salt marsh—recognized this and wanted to be outside, too. Bringing people to nature at a young age is critical so that the lens through which they view the world includes nature rather than excluding it, as it feels like humankind so often does now. Our love of birds should be shared because it is a tangible way that others can put on that nature lens. Birding is as much about the birds as it is about people. I hope that my small piece of Atlanta Audubon's legacy will recognize this.

There is really no way to cover all of my feelings in this column about the years I spent with you all at Atlanta Audubon. We have done some incredible things together. You all allowed me to grow as a person in this space, and for that I am grateful. I can't wait to see what's next. See you in the field.



After nine years with Atlanta Audubon, Nikki will step down from the executive director role on September 14. Photo by Michelle Hamner.

The North Face Awards Grant to Atlanta Audubon for Work within the HBCU System

Atlanta Audubon was recently awarded a grant from The North Face Explore Fund, which will support a program to bring conservation education, outdoor exploration, and environmental science career networking to college students in Atlanta's Historically Black College and University system. This new program will be led by Jason Ward, a longtime Atlanta Audubon field trip leader, the host of the *Birds of North America* web series and writer for National

Audubon. Jason also serves as the National Audubon Fund II Apprentice to Atlanta Audubon and our sister chapter in Birmingham, Alabama. Atlanta Audubon will partner with the Greening Youth Foundation to deliver this program on college campuses. Programming will kick off soon, as college students return to campus. We can't wait to bring a love for birds and nature to the next generation of conservation stewards.



Jason Ward, leader of a new program funded by The North Face. Photo by Jessie Parks.

Announcing the 2019 Annual Fund Master Birder Challenge Winners

Congratulations to the winning Master Birder class, whose members had the highest percentage participation in the 2019 Annual Fund. Reigning champs, the Fall 2012 class, reached 44% participation, and all Annual Fund donors in that class will receive their choice of one of our new Atlanta Audubon "Birds, Y'all!" T-shirts or a complimentary ticket to this year's Sanctuary Tour. Thank you again to the Fall 2012 donors: Linda DiSantis, Jack Fasse, Martha Fasse, Deb Jenkins, Roseanne Guerra, Shannon Fair, and Laura Northrup.

Don't Miss These Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month Events

Governor Brian Kemp recently signed a proclamation designating the month of September as Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month. A collaborative effort between Atlanta Audubon Society and the Georgia Native Plant Society, Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month celebrates Georgia's native plants and raises awareness about the key role they play for birds and other wildlife.

Registration and additional information on these events is now available at www.atlantaaudubon.org/georgia-grows-native-for-birds-month.

Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Tour, Saturday, September 14, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Headquarters site on tour day: Zonolite Park, Zonolite Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30306

The annual Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Tour will take place from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at seven locations along an eight-mile route through intown Atlanta (DeKalb and Fulton counties). See additional details and property description in the Sanctuary Tour article.

Concrete Jungle Ramble, Saturday, September 21, from 9:00 to 11:00 AM

Join Jason Ward, bird walk leader and National Audubon community relations and outreach coordinator, and representatives from Concrete Jungle, for a bird walk and tour of some of the urban trees from which Concrete Jungle harvests.

Wrecking Barn Farm Brunch with Atlanta Audubon and Georgia Organics

**Sunday, September 22, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
4000 Bushy Fork Road, NW, Loganville, GA 30052**

Join us for a farm-to-table brunch and bird walk at Wrecking Barn Farm in Loganville as we explore the relationship between sustainable agriculture, insects, and birds.

Swift Night Out at Brickworks Gallery

**Thursday, September 26, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM
686-A Greenwood Avenue, NE, Atlanta, GA 30306**

Atlanta Audubon will partner with Brickworks Gallery for a Swift Night Out to see the resident population of Chimney Swifts descend into the Brickworks Gallery chimney around dusk.

Chattahoochee Nature Center Native Plant Sale

Friday and Saturday, September 27 and 28, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM both days

9135 Willeo Road, Roswell, GA 30075

Atlanta Audubon will partner with Chattahoochee Nature Center on their fall native plant sale to help people find bird-friendly native plants for their landscapes.

Chalk Art Festival at the Exhibit at Piedmont Park

Sunday, September 29, from 1:00 to 6:00 PM

The Exhibit at Piedmont Park located in Piedmont Commons section near Monroe Drive.

Join Atlanta Audubon and Piedmont Park Conservancy for a Chalk Art Festival featuring artwork that celebrates Georgia's native plants and animals.

This year, we'll have categories for businesses and non-profit organizations, as well as for families. Participants will decorate chalk art squares during the day, and the public will view and vote on the winners in the late afternoon. Prizes will be awarded to the chalk art winners in both categories.

Atlanta Audubon wishes to thank event sponsors, Convivial Landscapes, Mount Vernon Printing, and Ellen Miller.



ASK CHIPPY

By Margaret Stephen and Jeff Kerlagon, aka Chippy



Chimney Swift, by Dan Vickers.

Q: For the second year we have Chimney Swifts in our Woodstock chimney. We have a split-level cedar home, and squirrels have chewed significantly large holes in the front of our chimney. Our problem is that we are soon going to be repairing and re-staining our home. I want to know what kind of opening would encourage them to come back again next year (I believe our group is larger this year! NOISIER, anyway!!). We have several large holes we need to replace in the front, but I'm hoping a small opening in the side and more out of sight would be okay. I can include a picture if that would be helpful. Any feedback would be appreciated!

A: How exciting that you have Chimney Swifts nesting in your chimney and that you want to welcome them back. Chimney Swifts are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and they are also the 2019-20 focus species of Atlanta Audubon Society. Atlanta Audubon is working to create habitat for swifts by planting native plants that feed their main food source—insects—and building Chimney Swift towers, like the one in Piedmont Park. Perhaps you've seen it?

As to the swifts in your home, if the chimney is capped, the likely entry is through the holes. If not, the more obvious route is from the top, and if that is the case, you could probably fill the holes without disturbing their activity. If they are entering through the holes and you want to prevent other creatures from entering, you can try filling the holes once the swifts leave (usually by mid-October) and then uncapping the chimney prior to nesting season, which can begin as early as March. An added benefit of the swifts: They help control your mosquito population.

—Chippy

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

On Melanie Furr

By Steve Phenicie

(This is the 38th in a series on Atlanta Audubon volunteers, board members and staff.)

Melanie Furr had to postpone the interview for this article for a few minutes so that she could finish giving fluids to a baby opossum, which should tell you something about her passion for animals.

Atlanta Audubon's director of education has volunteered at the animal rescue organization AWARE, based at Arabia Mountain in DeKalb County, for the better part of a decade and is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for small mammals and reptiles. She frequently goes on wildlife rescues and works at the center once or twice a month.

She's hoping to become an official rehabilitator for birds soon. Such titles are bestowed by the Department of Natural Resources after applicants do volunteer work and pass a state test. Melanie believes she might be the only person in the world who possesses an education hummingbird, a claim that probably will go undisputed. The bird, a Ruby-throated named Sibley, was the victim of a window collision that rendered him flightless. Melanie nursed him back to health and uses him in her educational presentations. He lives at her house, travels with her to work, and is never left alone for more than a few hours. Having a real bird often helps her make a point when she speaks to garden clubs, Boy Scouts, libraries, schools, etc. Sibley is the second of Melanie's hummingbirds, with the first being Shep, who survived for 15 months after a separate collision with a window.

As of late July, Melanie and her right-hand man, Ryan Schultz, had given or were scheduled to give 115 educational programs so far in 2019. Topics vary, but migration and common backyard birds are popular ones. Melanie can probably come up with a program on whatever bird-related topic is desired. She's especially proud of her work on a program called "Birdability," which provides birding experiences for people with mobility challenges. She was even invited to give a presentation about it at the National Audubon convention in Milwaukee in July.

Melanie took what might be called a round-about route to becoming director of education in 2014. A native of New Jersey, she graduated from the University of Vermont with a major in Russian



Melanie with AWARE Ambassador Bird Owlbert Einstein.

studies and spent a summer living in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg. When her college sweetheart (now husband) Mark, a native Atlantan, got a job in his hometown, she let love trump a career and followed him here. She harbored a dream of becoming a diplomat, but found job prospects slim in Atlanta. To get a position of her own, she got some teacher training, earning a Master of Arts for Teachers degree from Agnes Scott College. She taught high school English along with speech and debate for six years in DeKalb and Gwinnett counties.

After her daughter, Ellie, now a freshman at the University of Vermont, was born, Melanie became a stay-at-home mom for a while. Her son, Ethan, is now a junior at Tucker High School. Between the PTA, carpooling and the million and one other things that moms do, she volunteered at AWARE. One day only seven years ago, she went on her first Atlanta Audubon bird walk, which she describes as "a light bulb moment" in birding. With her teaching background and wildlife experience, she was well-positioned to become education director a couple of years later. Melanie and Mark live near Tucker. Mark, who is a mechanical engineer for Robert & Co., prefers hiking over birding.

THANK YOU!

A Million Thanks...

... to departing Executive Director **Nikki Belmonte**, who has done much beyond the call of duty and is leaving Atlanta Audubon much stronger than when she started ... to **Toni Bowen** for her efforts at Endangered Species Day at the Atlanta Botanical Garden ... to **Jack and Martha Fasse, Susan Loeb, Larry Stephens, Jency Shell, Stella Wissner, and Mary Kimberly** for their help with July Peel & Stick ... to **Laura Waddick, Mary Nevil, and Sandy Miller** for helping with the Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month postcard mailing ... to **Diane Schellack and Ed McCallum** for their help with bird monitoring at our restoration sites ... to **Jeff Kerlagon and Margaret Stephen** for volunteering a Saturday for the Beecatur Festival ... to **Georgia Lamar** for certifying Pine Lake as a Wildlife Sanctuary and also to **Joy Carter and Michele Buchanan** for their work as certifiers ... to our bird walk leaders for July and August: **Jason Ward, Anne McCallum, Rob McDonough, Nathan Farnau, Jamie Vidich, and Gus Kaufman.**

Support Georgia's Birds with a Gift through Your IRA

If you are at least 70½ years of age and you're looking for a tax-wise way to support Georgia's birds and habitats, you can make a tax-free distribution from your IRA directly to Atlanta Audubon. Distributions of any size help us achieve our mission to build places where birds and people thrive, but the maximum total amount of qualified charitable distributions is \$100,000 per person each year without incurring income tax on the withdrawal.

Please reach out to your personal tax or legal adviser for more information and advice about your situation and how to properly execute a qualified charitable distribution to Atlanta Audubon. Gifts should be initiated well in advance of the end of the calendar year to ensure that they fall in the intended tax year.

If you would like to notify us of a gift you have planned, please contact Michelle Hamner, director of development, at michelle@atlantaaudubon.org or 678-973-2437. More information about qualified charitable distributions and other gift vehicles may be found at www.atlantaaudubon.org/donate.

Thank you to our 2019 Annual Fund Donors!

We are pleased to announce the generous support of our members and friends for the 2019 Annual Fund. This year, a record-breaking 187 donors flocked together to raise more than \$26,000 as of July 31. Gifts of every size combine to support our local work to build places where birds and people thrive. Donors shown represent gifts received as of July 31, 2019. If you would like to contribute to the 2019 Annual Fund, please visit www.atlantaudubon.org/donate to make an online gift or to print a gift form which can be mailed. Thank you for supporting Georgia's birds!

Every attempt has been made to include all donors and to accurately identify them. If you believe there has been an error, please contact Beverly Fooks at beverly@atlantaudubon.org or 678-973-2437 so that we can correct our records.

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Photo of the Month Winner

The Photo of the Month Winner for this month is a Red-tailed Hawk photo taken by Atlanta Audubon member Marlene Kozlowski, in Peachtree City, GA. The photo was taken with a Nikon D7200 camera set at ISO 500 and a shutter speed of 1/1250. The aperture setting was f/5.6 with no flash.

Marlene says this bird landed very close to her, playing with a chunk of wood, as though it was practicing catching prey. She took quite a few photos and had a tough time choosing which one to enter.

The Photo of the Month competition is open to anyone, and all winning submissions will be published in *Wingbars*. Ashkan Ojaghi, the volunteer coordinator of the photo contest, encourages people to resubmit photos if they do not win in a particular month. For more information or to enter the monthly competition, visit www.atlantaudubon.org/photo-of-the-month.



Red-tailed Hawk, by Marlene Kozlowski.

2019 Atlanta Audubon Sanctuary Tour

Coming September 14

By Dottie Head, Director of Membership and Communications

Don't miss the annual Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Tour on Saturday, September 14, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. This year's tour will feature seven wonderful properties located along an eight-mile route running from Virginia Highlands in the north to Ormewood Park in the south. The tour is self-guided, and guests may tour the properties in any order they choose.

Advance tickets are \$20 for Atlanta Audubon members and \$25 for non-members at www.atlantaaudubon.org/wildlife-sanctuary-tour. Online ticket sales will end on Wednesday, September 11. After that date, tickets may be purchased for \$25 for Atlanta Audubon members and \$30 for non-members on the day of the tour at any of the tour sites, using cash or check. Credit cards will be accepted only at Zonolite Park. To protect the privacy of our homeowners, private property addresses will be provided to ticket purchasers only. Ticket purchasers will receive an e-mail with property addresses and directions one week prior to the event. (Please provide us with a valid e-mail address that you check regularly.)

Stop #1: Zonolite Park, Atlanta, GA

Zonolite Park will serve as the headquarters for the 2019 Wildlife Sanctuary Tour. Certified as an Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary in 2019, the park features 1.5 miles of gravel trails through 13 acres that run along the South Fork of Peachtree Creek. A pollinator garden that is resplendent with bee balm and false indigo welcomes visitors to the park. The park also includes an old-growth forest, a sunny meadow, a community garden, and a beautiful wetlands garden. Formerly a neglected industrial wasteland, Zonolite Park was restored thanks to the efforts of the South Fork Conservancy. Following an extensive waste cleanup, a complex grading and ecological restoration project was undertaken to create a sloping meadow with a pond that cleanses rainwater before it reaches the creek. The sunny meadow features an abundance of native flowers and grasses, including purple coneflower, butterfly weed, Joe Pye weed, black-eyed Susan, and blueberries. Meander down the shaded trail toward the South Fork of Peachtree Creek and you'll likely spot Ruby-throated Hummingbirds visiting the jewelweed that adorns the trail edges. Large tulip poplars and bigleaf magnolias provide shade on the trail.

Property notes: Parking and the trailhead are located on Zonolite Place, near the intersection of Johnson Road and Briarcliff in DeKalb County. This will serve as the Atlanta Audubon headquarters for the tour. Additional tour tickets, T-shirts, hats, books, shade-grown coffee, and other store items will be available for purchase at this site, using cash, check, or credit cards.

Tickets will be on sale at all tour locations for cash or check, but the Zonolite location is the only place that will accept credit cards.

Tour Stop #2: Private Home, Virginia Highlands

One of Atlanta Audubon's more recently certified properties, this garden is a true gem in Atlanta Audubon's Wildlife Sanctuary Program. Walk along the sidewalk in front of the property and marvel at the number of pollinators on the coneflowers, obedient plant, and other native flowers lining the path. The entire yard is an explosion of native plants, with only a small grassy area in back for the family pet, and the homeowner has plans for that to become a native lawn in time. Over their 14 years in the house, the homeowners have removed the original plantings and replaced them with natives purchased at plant sales and shared by friends. They are constantly moving, dividing, and expanding the native offerings to find just the right spot and then sharing their extras with friends and neighbors. As an added bonus, the homeowners have labeled many of the plants with common name and Latin name to help them keep up with what they have planted and where—sheer heaven for those still working on plant ID. The garden has a nice mix of sun and shaded areas, and they are adding a transitional rain garden to help filter water flowing off the neighbor's drive. Among the extensive list of native plants are different types of mountain mint, sunflower, aster, bee balm, goldenrod, milkweed, sedge, fern, and so much more.



The homeowners at this Virginia Highlands property have been working in their sanctuary since they moved into the house in 1978. Photo by Dottie Head.



The meadow at Tapestry features two pollinator gardens. Photo by Dottie Head.

Tour Stop #3: Private Home, Virginia Highlands

A delightful example of a mature wildlife sanctuary, this property was certified in 2007 and includes a wide array of native species that the homeowners have been incorporating into their garden since they purchased the home in 1978. A beautiful Eastern redbud tree adorns the front yard along with a sloped garden to help hold the hillside in place. Look for wild ginger and mountain mint on the bank, Virginia sweetspire and fothergilla by the house. Venture around back and you'll enter an enchanting garden filled with a variety of natives, including serviceberry, Florida leucothoe, American beautyberry, bee balm, Indian paintbrush, purple coneflower, columbine, asters, Solomon's seal, blue-eyed grass, foam flower, penstemon, wild indigo, and coral honeysuckle. There are also a few family heirlooms, including sentimental rhododendrons that were given to the homeowner by her father, who was also an avid gardener and rhododendron hybridizer. Keep your eyes open for a variety of whimsical statues and a small water feature scattered throughout the garden.

Tour Stop #4: Freedom Park Bird and Butterfly Garden

At 210+ acres, Freedom Park is one of the largest green spaces within the Atlanta area. A hidden gem located in the park at the corner of North Avenue and Candler Park Drive is the Freedom Park Bird and Butterfly Garden, a site for the reintroduction of native plants and shrubs for bird and pollinator habitat. Regular volunteer days organized by the Freedom Park Conservancy and Beech Hollow Wildflower Farms have helped to enhance the site by removing invasive species and replacing them with native species, such as native Baptisia, purple coneflower, Georgia aster, and black-eyed Susan. The garden was certified in January 2019, and it is really coming into its full beauty this summer. Among the many native plant species you'll find are goldenrod, cardinal flower, crossvine, American beautyberry, butterfly weed, milkweed, and passion flower. Be sure to make a quick stop and check out this delightful addition to Freedom Park.

Tour Stop #5: Private Home, Ormewood Park

This recently certified, 1/3-acre property in Ormewood Park, with its adorable home, is a delightful addition to the Atlanta Audubon network of Wildlife Sanctuaries. The homeowners have invested countless hours removing non-native plants and replacing them with native species. The plant list for

this property is extensive and includes St. John's Wort, Georgia calamint, Appalachian indigo, sweetspire, sparkleberry, bee balm, Oconee azalea, Barbara's buttons, muscadine grapes, and many more. The backyard contains the family vegetable plot as well as a delightful rain garden to help channel water runoff. Great blue lobe-lia, pawpaw, green and gold, fox sage, chokeberry, cardinal flower and many other native species may be found out back around a covered pool area. As the certifier said on her evaluation form, "This is a home that Doug Tallamy would be proud of!"



Bee Balm peeks through a fence at one of the tour properties in Ormewood Park. Photo by Dottie Head.

Tour Stop #6: Private home, Ormewood Park

Another gem in Ormewood Park, this home was only certified last year but it represents a more than 30 year labor of love for these homeowners, one of whom is an Atlanta Audubon certifier! Over the years, they have tweaked this and added that, and the result is an amazing array of natives and an envy-worthy vegetable garden. The garden surrounds all four sides of the house and includes two small ponds planted with arum, lizard's tail, and other native water plants. Wax myrtle, St. John's Wort, Georgia aster, Carolina silverbell, witch hazel, a beautiful fringe tree (also called Granny Greybeard), buckeye, swamp mallow, and so much more can be found as you meander the path around this yard. A coral honeysuckle-covered trellis marks the entrance to the extensive, enclosed vegetable garden that keeps the squirrels and chipmunks at bay and keeps the homeowners in blueberries, tomatoes, and other veggies. Don't worry, there are several blueberry bushes outside the enclosure expressly for the birds!

Tour Stop #7: Tapestry Community, Ormewood Park

You won't want to miss this stop on the 2019 tour. This more than seven acre piece of land is owned by the Tapestry Homeowners Association and runs along Stockade Creek, part of the headwaters of Intrinishment Creek. The habitat restoration project began in early 1990s, with the present goal being to plant and preserve native Piedmont species. In 2014, the riparian buffer and meadow were restored through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, with partners including the Tapestry Community, Atlanta Community Food Bank, Fulton County Master Gardeners, Atlanta Audubon, Trees Atlanta, City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management, Fulton County Adopt-A-Stream, and Elements of Land Design. The property features an amazing diversity of native plants and wildlife and includes three trails—Stream Path, Meadow Path, and Woodlands Path. The Atlanta Community Food Bank also operates an extensive garden on this site that provides fresh produce for the food bank. The Tapestry Community lives in harmony with a family of beavers that resides in the creek. The property includes a certified wetland, a dry bed pollinator garden, and a wet bed pollinator garden. A huge American elm, white oaks, alders, hickories, persimmons, and sassafras trees make up the overstory and the understory contains jewelweed, native azaleas, multiple varieties of milkweed, elderberry, beautyberry, blueberries, goldenrod, and a huge number of other native plants that provide food resources for the wide array of birds that visit this property.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit at www.atlantaudubon.org/wildlife-sanctuary-tour. or call 678.973.2437.

Introducing Gabe Andrie, Conservation Program Coordinator

Atlanta Audubon is excited to welcome Gabe Andrie as the new conservation program coordinator. Under the direction of Adam Betuel, director of conservation, Gabe will be working with our habitat-related projects, including managing the Wildlife Sanctuary Certification Program and working with the Plants for Birds Program.

A Chicago native, Gabe studied environmental science at Emory University. He most recently worked at Zoo Atlanta, where he cared for and learned about a variety of birds from around the world. During his time at Emory, Gabe conducted conservation-based research in Rwanda, Madagascar, and Peru.

Since coming to Atlanta, Gabe has volunteered and worked at Zoo Atlanta, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, and The Amphibian Foundation.

“With a growing interest in connecting people to native wildlife, I was excited to apply for the conservation program coordinator position with Atlanta Audubon,” says Gabe. “This position allows me to combine my bird knowledge with my habitat restoration and plant knowledge. I look forward to getting to know and work with the incredible Atlanta Audubon community.”



Gabe near Iquitos, Peru, in the Amazon Rainforest.

Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available

This September Atlanta Audubon presents the second Annual Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month with a series of events to highlight the importance of native plants for birds and other wildlife. Events throughout the month include our annual Wildlife Sanctuary Tour, the Chalk Art Festival in Piedmont Park, a farm-to-table brunch with our partners at Georgia Organics, our first Swift Night Out at Brickworks Gallery, and more. **We need your help!** If you or a business you know is interested in sponsoring Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month, please consider sponsoring at the individual Patron level or as a business sponsor. Sponsorships begin at \$250, and sponsors receive benefits, including complimentary Wildlife Sanctuary Tour tickets, business name/logo on promotional materials, social media recognition, and more. Contact Michelle Hamner at michelle@atlantaudubon.org with any questions, or visit our website at www.atlantaudubon.org/georgia-grows-native-for-birds-month.

SPONSOR BENEFITS

All sponsors receive recognition in all event-related press releases, promotional e-mails, *Wingbars* newsletter, social media, and on the Atlanta Audubon website.

GREAT BLUE HERON \$2,500	CHIMNEY SWIFT \$1,000	WOOD THRUSH \$500	PATRON* \$250
A 5x5 chalk art square at the Chalk Art Festival.	A 5x5 chalk art square at the Chalk Art Festival.	Two tickets to the farm-to-table brunch	Two tickets to the Wildlife Sanctuary Tour
Two tickets to the farm-to-table brunch	Two tickets to the farm-to-table brunch	Two tickets to the Wildlife Sanctuary Tour	A one-year individual or family membership to Atlanta Audubon (renewal for current members).
Four tickets to the Wildlife Sanctuary Tour	Two tickets to the Wildlife Sanctuary Tour	A one-year business or nonprofit membership to Atlanta Audubon.	*This support level is best suited for individuals and families.
A one-year business or nonprofit membership to Atlanta Audubon.	A one-year business or nonprofit membership to Atlanta Audubon.		

Early Birds Book Club

The Early Birds Book Club will meet at 2:00 PM on Sunday, September 22, at Manuel's Tavern. This month the Early Birds will host Atlanta Audubon member Kit Robey, author of *Cardinal Coat and Other Stories*. We will also hear from Anne McCallum, also an Atlanta Audubon member, about her book, *What Birds Say and Do*. Everyone is invited to share a favorite children's book about birds.

The Early Birds is a drop-in book club that meets from 2:00-3:30 PM before the Atlanta Audubon Monthly Meeting at Manuel's Tavern. There is no commitment other than to enjoy reading and sharing books about birds and birding. The group will not meet on months when there is not an Atlanta Audubon Monthly Meeting. If you wish to join the Early bird's e-mail list for announcements and reminder notices, please e-mail Mary Nevil at mbnevil@gmail.com.



FIELD TRIPS

are open to the public and free (unless otherwise noted). We welcome everyone from beginners to advanced birders. No registration is necessary except where indicated below. The only fees that apply are parking fees at some venues such as state and national parks. Any applicable fees will be listed in the field trip description on the website.

Saturday, September 7, 2019 Piedmont Park (Fulton County) 8:00 AM

Leader: Jason Ward
Cell contact morning of the walk: 404.759.7770
GPS: 33.783750, -84.379111

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 Reynolds Nature Preserve (Clayton County) 8:00 AM

Leader: Anne McCallum
Cell contact morning of the walk: 678.642.7148
GPS: 33.601464, -84.346874

Saturday, September 21, 2019 Morningside Nature Preserve 8:00 AM

Leader: Gus Kaufman and Jamie Viditch
Cell contacts morning of the walk:
404.483.7457 (Gus); 843.605.2959 (Jamie)
GPS: 33.809759, -84.352218

Saturday, September 21, 2019 Blue Heron Nature Preserve (Fulton County) 8:00 AM

Leader: Rob McDonough
Cell contact morning of walk: 404.754.8159
GPS: 33.865682, -84.380775

Saturday, September 28, 2019 Cochran Shoals CRNRA (Interstate North) 7:30 AM

Leader: Nathan Farnau
Cell contact morning of the walk: 404.849.3843
GPS: N 33 54.105 W 84 26.634.

If you would like to lead a field trip, contribute ideas for places to go, or give feedback about leaders, trips, or the field trip directions, please e-mail Jason Ward, field trips director, at jward@audubon.org.

Details about trips, including driving directions, can be found on our website: www.atlantaudubon.org/field-trips. As always, we encourage field trip participants to check the Atlanta Audubon Field Trips web page before any of these trips to check for updates, changes, typo corrections, etc., and for the most up-to-date information. Also, frequently trips are added after the newsletter deadline has passed.

LIVE and LEARN



White-throated Sparrow, by Adam Betuel.



*The Winter 2019 Master Birder class following the final exam and luncheon.
Photo by Melanie Furr.*

Sparrow Identification Workshop

Classroom Session at Atlanta Audubon:

Thursday, November 21, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Field Trip: Saturday, November 23, 8:00 to 11:00 AM

Ready to sharpen your skills identifying those "little brown jobs"? Often skulking, elusive, and confusingly similar, sparrows can make fall warblers seem easy. Adam Betuel, Atlanta Audubon's director of conservation, will help participants learn more about the many sparrow species that winter in the Atlanta area. A class session held at the Atlanta Audubon office will teach participants about distinguishing field marks, foraging behaviors, flight characteristics, and vocalizations that are useful to identification and appreciation of Georgia's sparrows. Participants will then have the chance to practice their identification skills in the field with a guided trip to find and observe sparrows in their preferred habitat at a local hot spot. (Location to be determined based on eBird sightings.) Potential species include Field, Swamp, Fox, Savannah, and Vesper Sparrows, in addition to more common resident and wintering species.

To register, visit our website at www.atlantaudubon.org/adult-workshops.

Atlanta Audubon members: \$50; non-members: \$60

Master Birder in good volunteer standing: \$45

Master Birder Fall 2019

Atlanta Audubon Society is pleased to offer our popular Master Birder course again this fall. This fall's class will take place at the Newman Wetlands Center in Hampton, GA. An orientation and the first class will be held on **Saturday, October 5, from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM**. Subsequent sessions will be held on three **Saturdays, October 12, October 19, and November 17**, and on one Sunday, November 11. These sessions will be preceded by a **guided bird walk from 8:00 to 10:00 AM at a nearby hotspot** and will include a break for lunch. A final exam and graduation luncheon will occur on **Saturday, November 23, at the Atlanta Audubon office at 10:30 AM**.

The Master Birder course is an introduction to ornithology, designed to provide participants with bird identification skills and general knowledge of birds, their life histories, and habitat requirements. Course content includes classification and identification of birds, birding equipment, bird songs and calls, bird behavior, anatomy and physiology, bird ecology, flight and migration, and bird conservation. Weekend class sessions are complemented with bird walks and a graduation celebration. Upon graduation, Master Birders are encouraged to complete annual volunteer service for Atlanta Audubon and receive added membership benefits such as exclusive workshops or field trips, as well as early bird or discounted registration for workshops.

A course fee of \$425 includes classes and guided walks, course materials, and the graduation luncheon. Registration is now open at www.atlantaudubon.org/master-birder-program.



ATLANTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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678.973.2437

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September Monthly Meeting

Oaks, Inchworms and Avifauna: Ecology and Threats to Insectivorous Forest Birds
**Dr. Bob Cooper, Professor in Forestry and Natural Resources, Warnell School of Forestry
and Natural Resources, University of Georgia**

Sunday, September 22, 2019 • 3:30 to 5:30 PM • Manuel's Tavern

Recently, alarming reports of drastic declines in insect populations were published from Europe. Little comparable data exists from the United States, but long-term studies of populations of insectivorous birds may be some of the best data available if arthropods were surveyed as part of those studies. Long-term studies of this sort that Dr. Cooper's lab and others have conducted have shown (1) the importance of caterpillars in the diets of many forest-dwelling songbirds, (2) significant effects on songbird populations when caterpillar abundance was experimentally reduced, and (3) declines in songbird populations were correlated with lower caterpillar abundance, prey delivery to nests, and nestling mass in lower elevation sites in the southern Appalachians. Dr. Cooper will share the research that he and his students have conducted over a 30-plus year career, discovering the need for (1) a monitoring program for insect populations comparable to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, (2) research that compares current insect populations with those studied in the past, and (3) research that assesses the relationships between insect and bird long-term population dynamics. Recommendations for meeting those needs will be described.

Dr. Robert Cooper is Professor of Ecology and Wildlife Ecology in the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia in Athens. A Dennis and Sarah Carey Distinguished Professor, he specializes in wildlife ecology and management, nongame and endangered species (including birds), and wildlife population dynamics. He holds a B.S. and M.S. from UGA, an M.S. in statistics from the University of Wyoming, and a Ph.D. in wildlife biology from West Virginia University. Dr. Cooper currently serves as an Atlanta Audubon Adviser.



*Dr. Bob Cooper from UGA will be
the presenter at our September
Monthly Meeting.*

Manuel's Tavern is located at 602 N. Highland Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307. Our monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Free parking is readily available to the south of the building. Food and drink are available for purchase.