



The Yellowthroat

*Voice of the
Oconee Rivers Audubon Society*

April 2008

Vol. 19 No. 4

**Next Meeting:
Thursday, April 3, 7:00 p.m.
Sandy Creek Nature Center**

Hans Neuhauser, executive director of the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute, will talk about “Saving the Georgia Coast's Right Whales” at the April 3 meeting of the Oconee Rivers Audubon Society. He will speak about efforts to bring the North Atlantic Right Whale back from the brink of extinction.

Right Whales are among the world's most endangered species, with fewer than 400 animals still remaining. The southeast coast has a particularly important role to play in the recovery of the right whale, for the waters off Georgia and northern Florida serve as the only known location in the world where the species gives birth to its young.

See <http://www.gpinstitute.com> for additional information.

Meetings are held...the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. To get to the Nature Center, take Highway 441, exit # 12, off the north side of the perimeter, go north on 441 approximately one mile, and turn left at the Sandy Creek Nature Center sign displaying this logo:



Go left at the end of this short road. The ENSAT building will be a short way down the road on your right.

Upcoming Spring Bird Walks

Have you heard the birds starting to sing? Time to get outdoors and join the spring bird walks, which ORAS sponsors jointly with Sandy Creek Nature Center. Whether you are an experienced birder or a beginner, come join us as we witness the miracle of the northward migration. Walks begin at 8:00 a.m. Call Ed Maioriello at 208-8504 for details.

- April 5 Whitehall Forest
- April 12 Sandy Creek Nature Center
- April 19 State Botanical Garden
- May 3 Sandy Creek Nature

Spring 2008 Field Trips

- April 26 Kennesaw Mountain
 - May 10 Cochran Shoals
 - May 24 Ivy Log Gap Road & Sosebee Cove
- Call Ed Maioriello at 208-8504 for details.

Wings over Georgia

Ken Blankenship's *Wings Over Georgia: An On-Line Guide to Birding in Georgia* provides a wealth of information for Georgia birders who want online material to supplement their books.

The stated purpose of *Wings Over Georgia* is to provide birders with

1. A database of places to bird in Georgia;
2. A library of on-line birding resources;
3. A photo gallery;
4. Guided bird trips.

Try checking out ORAS field trip destinations at http://www.wingsoverga.com/Wings_Over_Georgia.html

International Migratory Bird Day

excerpted from <http://www.birdday.org/>

The International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) Theme for 2008 is "Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats, and People." Migratory birds travel long distances between breeding and non-breeding sites throughout the Western Hemisphere. In 2008, IMBD will explore the birds that make these fantastic journeys, the habitats on which they depend, and the people who are important to the conservation of birds and their habitats along the way. International Migratory Bird Day is officially celebrated on the second Saturday in May in the U.S. and Canada.



Gulf Coast Cell Towers and Birds

A federal court of appeals has issued a ruling ordering the Federal Communications Commission to carefully evaluate the potential adverse effects of communications towers on migratory birds along the Gulf Coast, from Texas to Florida. A panel of federal judges ruled that national environmental laws like the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act require the FCC to more carefully consider these possible adverse effects in its tower permitting process.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates between five million and fifty million birds are killed each year in collisions and other accidents caused by communications towers. In its decision, the court criticized the FCC for refusing to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service when approving such towers.

You can view the full story at

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/080219.html>

Go Dark for Birds and Global Warming

Earth Hour, which originated last year in Sydney, Australia, is now a global event. For one hour on Saturday, March 29, everyone is asked to turn off their lights from 8:00-9:00 p.m. local time. Audubon is already doing its part through our Lights Out programs. Lights Out encourages building owners to turn off their lights to help birds avoid building collisions during migration, which account for millions of birds deaths each year. Saving energy and reducing greenhouse gas pollution responsible for global warming is icing on the cake.

Cities, communities, neighborhoods, and families around the world will join together in literally turning off the lights for one hour to raise awareness about global warming and to press for action and solutions now. As part of this campaign, lights will be turned off at iconic buildings and national landmarks around the world, and local businesses and restaurants are also encouraged to turn off their lights.

So, light a few candles and enjoy an hour without electric lights. For more information on how you can help us win the fight to reduce global warming pollution, contact audubonaction@audubon.org.

Red Knots Need Help

Two species of Red Knot are in serious decline and face extinction, according to a recent report from 20 shorebird biologists from around the globe. The report recommends that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reconsider its decision not to list the roseate, because of sharp declines to both populations in recent years. One reason for the decline, it says, is the insufficient supply of horseshoe crab eggs in the Delaware Bay, which the Red Knot depends on for sustenance.

"There is no question the Red Knot is in very deep trouble and needs emergency protection if it is to survive," said Betsy Loyless, Audubon's Donal O'Brien Chair for Policy and Advocacy.

Audubon, along with nine other conservation organizations, sent a letter to U.S. FWS director Dale Hall, asking for an emergency listing for the Red Knot. Local Audubon groups, including New Jersey Audubon, have been active in leading the effort to place a moratorium on harvesting horseshoe crabs on the Eastern Shore. To learn more, visit:

www.audubon.org/campaign/esa/redknot.html

Chimney Swifts

by Paul and Georgan Kyle

The first Chimney Swifts of the season have been sighted on the Gulf Coast returning from their wintering grounds in South America.

As in past years the Driftwood Wildlife Association will be plotting the swifts' movements northward over the next few months. Please let them know when you see the first ones in your area.

Learn more about Chimney Swift Conservation, and see this year's results at www.chimneyswifts.org along with past years' efforts.

UGA Library and Cornell's *Birds of North America Online*

from <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna>

Here is a good reason to visit the University of Georgia Library. It now offers access to *Birds of North America Online* to visitors to the library (and elsewhere to UGA folks who have obtained the GALILEO password for off-campus access).

In two centuries of American ornithology, *The Birds of North America* (BNA) is only the fourth comprehensive reference covering the life histories of North American birds. Following in the footsteps of Wilson, Audubon, and Bent, BNA makes a quantum leap in information beyond what these historic figures were able to provide.

The print version of BNA was completed in 2002, a joint 10 year project of the American Ornithologists' Union, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the Academy of Natural Sciences.

Now as an online project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, BNA is poised to become a living resource. Account contents are updated frequently, with online-coordinated contributions from researchers, citizen scientists, and designated reviewers and editors.

In addition, BNA Online contains image and video galleries showing behaviors, habitat, nests, eggs and nestlings, and more. And each online species account contains recordings of that bird's songs and calls, selected from the extensive collection in Cornell's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds.

Do you keep track of the activities at Sandy Creek Nature Center? Are you a member? For information, see <http://www.sandycreeknaturecenter.com/>

Mountains without Hemlocks?

summarized by Maggie Nettles

Mark Dalusky, Research Coordinator in Forest Entomology at the University of Georgia, talked at the Oconee Rivers Audubon March meeting about the "**Hemlock Woolly Adelgid in the Southern Appalachians: Who flocked all the hemlocks? (an exotic invasive insect that really sucks!)**." And while he clearly enjoyed joking, as evidenced by his title, he also brought alive to us a tragedy sweeping the mountains of the eastern United States, one that sounded as momentous in its consequences for the mountain environment as the chestnut blight was about a century ago.

Eastern and Carolina hemlock is under attack from Georgia to Maine by an exotic, invasive insect—the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). The adelgid inserts its mouthparts at the base of needles, preferably on new growth, and feeds off of storage cell contents. Infestation density develops rapidly in the South, and trees decline precipitously within three or four years.

Dalusky described hemlock mortality in the Chattooga river drainage and west to Helen with the zone of infestation extending to the Coopers Creek and Blue Ridge Wildlife Management Areas.

He explained HWA biology and its life cycle in connection with the Georgia seasons and the hemlock's own seasonal growth patterns.

He also described the insecticidal control options and their limitations. However, he said that the introduction and establishment of biocontrol agents from the pests' native range offered the only hope of any longlasting rescue for the hemlocks. The forest entomology project at UGA is participating in the lab-rearing and field release of three such agents, all of which are predatory beetles specific to the HWA.

Give the Gift of Audubon!

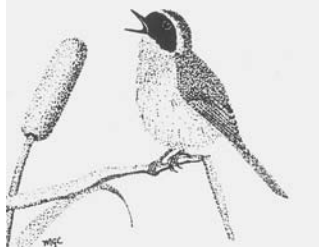
For an introductory National Audubon Society membership (which includes *Audubon* magazine, local membership, and a subscription to *The Yellowthroat*), mail this form with a \$20.00 check payable to NAS to

Oconee Rivers Audubon Society
PO Box 81082
Athens, GA 30608

Name _____
Street _____
City, State, Zip _____

Celebrate the Environment

As we enter the spring season, there are a number of conservation-themed days of importance. These celebrations are a good opportunity to get out and talk to people about the importance of conservation, birds and their habitat, and actions people can take to get involved with Audubon in our efforts to make the world a better place.



- April 22nd - Earth Day
- April 25th - Arbor Day
- April 26th - John James Audubon's Birthday
- May 10th - International Migratory Bird Day
- May 16th - Endangered Species Day

If you subscribe to *The Yellowthroat* and do not belong to National Audubon Society, you should check the renewal date on your newsletter's mailing label. Don't forget to renew your subscription!

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Oconee Rivers Audubon Society

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<http://www.oconeeriversaudubon.org/>

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