



# The Yellowthroat

*Voice of the  
Oconee Rivers Audubon Society*

December 2002

Vol. 12 No. 10

## Upcoming Meetings

**Next Meeting , Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, Sandy Creek Nature Center, 7:00 p.m.**

Plans for the **Christmas Bird Count** (see below) will be discussed. **Michael J. Conroy**, Adjunct Professor at the Georgia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, will speak on how management of habitat for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers affects Wood Thrushes. Dr. Conroy teaches wildlife population dynamics and modeling for decision making. Red-cockaded Woodpecker habitat is created by thinning and burning loblolly pine plantations. Because wood thrushes nest in shrubs and small trees, Dr. Conroy conducted studies in the Piedmont National Wildlife Reserve in the 1990's to determine whether their use of the habitat was being negatively affected.

**Meetings are held...** first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. To get to the Nature Center, take the Highway 441 exit off the north side of the perimeter, go north on 441 approximately 1 mile, and turn left at the Sandy Creek Nature Center sign, displaying this logo:



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

**Oconee Rivers Webpage:** We've moved our webpage to a new location. The updated web address is—  
<http://alpha.rmy.emory.edu/~ORAS>

**December 14th Christmas Bird Count.** If you wish to participate in the Christmas Bird Count, please contact Mary Case 548-3848 or Eugenia Thompson 549-7318 by, or at, the December meeting. The count is open to everyone who would like to help regardless of birding experience. The cost for each participant who wishes to be listed in the report published by National Audubon in *American Birds* is \$5. There will be a potluck dinner for all participants and a "countdown", beginning at 7 p.m. at the ENSAT building.

**Report of the November Meeting** Our thanks to Melanie Ruhlman for her thorough discussion of the UOWN projects in the Athens-Clarke area, richly illustrated by slides and examples from projects of the Pinnacle Group. She explained the need for tangible demonstrations of preservation of streams and stream banks in the area. The two that have been initiated in Athens are at Ben Burton Park and at Johnson's Meadow. At Ben Burton Park the effort is focused on stabilization of a short stretch of bank

along the North Oconee that has undergone erosion due in part to its popular use by patrons of the park – and their dogs - for approaching the river and playing there. She described a multi-stage approach starting with placing log-like, biodegradable sediment stops at the "toe" of the slope, smoothing the present gullies, applying compost and seed, installing erosion control matting, planting of shrubs, building steps down to the water-line and placing interpretive signs. Success will be judged by follow-up inspection and monitoring. At Johnson's Meadow the situation is more complex, in part because of the need to obtain permission from the Environmental Protection Division which places certain constraints on replanting of natural streams. The project is being supported by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is cosponsored by a number of local organizations, including the ACC Commission and ORAS. It has already achieved clearing of "exotic" plants and will involve steering the present tiny stream away from a sewage line and back into its original channel before it enters the river. She finished with a spectacular example of the success of the techniques to be employed here in a similar project in South Carolina. See also a report of the Greenway Walk, below.

**Sightings:** Marianne Happek, **Great Horned Owl**, River Oak, October 25; Mary Case, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at her feeder, October 30, Judy and John Willis, **Kestrel** at Bear Creek Reservoir, October 27; Mark Freeman, **Two Common Loons**, one **Ruddy Duck** and 65 **Killdeer** at Bear Creek Reservoir, November 7; Carole Ludwig, two **Belted Kingfishers**, Old Farmington Road, November 3; Gary Crider, Maggie Nettles, Page Luttrell and Tim Holman, "hundreds" of **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, **Ravens**, and **Dark-eyed Juncos**, Mt. LeConte area in Great Smokies National Park, October 31; Linda Russel, **Shrike** Hargrove Lake Road, November 3; Steve Holzman, **Cedar Waxwings**, North High Shoals, November 1; David Galewski, **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers**, Georgia Botanical Gardens, October 14.

**Other November activities:** There will be a meeting of Audubon Chapters of Georgia on November 23 in Macon. ORAS will be represented and next month's Yellowthroat will carry a report .

Also, representatives of ORAS have been invited to a "summit" of local environmental organizations that has been called for November 17 to discuss priorities for the incoming new mayor and ACC Commission. Any interesting outcomes will be reported next month.

**Report of the Greenway Walk** (by Maggie Nettles): ORAS and UOWN hosted an introductory walk along the North Oconee River Greenway from College Avenue to Sandy Creek on November 9, with commentary provided by Dick Field and Melanie Ruhlman. Twenty-six people (11 from ORAS, 15 from the community) began the walk at 9:00, with some keeping the questions going until noon.

Dick Field, chair of the Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission, started us off with an overview of the Greenway development and, during the walk, added pointers about historical sites like the old city dump and the Sandy Creek pump station. He also outlined future possibilities for the Greenway. Of note for the immediate future, installation of the bridge crossing Sandy Creek to the Nature Center is beginning. One will then be able to travel from downtown Dudley Park to Sandy Creek Nature Center on a paved path suitable for a bicycle, hike through SCNC, and take Cook's Trail to Sandy Creek Park.

Melanie Ruhlman elaborated on her presentation to the ORAS November meeting, about the ongoing plans for stream restoration with native riparian vegetation in Johnson's Meadow. She also demonstrated biological and chemical stream testing at both Sandy Creek and Johnson's Meadow. Participants sorted through leaf debris to find numerous crayfish and the occasional other macroinvertebrate.

Thank you, Melanie and Dick, for tackling our questions.

When participants said that they hoped to see such demonstrations more often, we knew the introduction to the Greenway was a success!

See <http://www.pincongrp.com/uown/index.asp> for photos of the restoration project and details of the plan.



Melanie Ruhlman demonstrates methods of stream sampling to Greenway-walk group near Sandy Creek.



Golden-Crowned Kinglet. (M) ©Dan Sudia

Golden-Crowned Kinglet (photo by Dan Sudia from the Georgia Museum of Natural History Southeastern bird archives <http://museum.nhm.uga.edu/>)

### *The Yellowthroat*

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