



The Yellowthroat

*Voice of the
Oconee Rivers Audubon Society*

June 2009

Vol. 20 No. 6

Potluck Picnic Thursday, June 4, **6:00** p.m. Sandy Creek Park

The June 4th Potluck Picnic will take place at Sandy Creek Park Barbecue Shelter (near the fishing pier) beginning at 6:00 p.m. Please note the time change and the location change.

To reach Sandy Creek Park, go north on Highway 441 beyond the nature center. Turn right on Bob Holman Road.

Bring a dish of your favorite recipe, and join us for an evening of socializing in the outdoors!

Election of Officers for the upcoming year will also take place during the June meeting. Following is the list of nominees:

- Vanessa Lane, President
- Edwige Damron, Vice-president
- Mary Case, Secretary
- Eugenia Thompson, Treasurer

Except for the months of June, July, and August—**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 is a short way down the road on your right.

Sightings

Reported at the May meeting:

- **Black-necked Stilt**, Vanessa Lane, Bostwick Sod Farms, 5/7/09
- **Lincoln's Sparrow, Veery, Magnolia Warblers**, Mark Freeman, Statham Recreation Area, 5/7/09
- **Bobolinks**, Carole Ludwig, Old Farmington Rd., 4/28/09
- **15 Goldfinches**, Ann Berrigan, Cedar Creek, 5/3/09
- **Osprey**, Diane Burkhard, Jackson County, 5/5/09
- **Barred Owl**, Eugenia Thompson, eastern Clarke County, 5/5/09
- **Canada Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers**, Albie Smith, Smoky Mt. Nat'l Park, 4/25/09
- **Great Crested Flycatchers**, male & female, checking out birdhouse in East Athens, Albie Smith, 5/7/09
- **Spotted Sandpiper**, Maggie Nettles, North Oconee River, 5/2/09
- **Cape May Warblers, Wood Thrush**, Gary Crider, East Athens, 4/29/09

Loggerhead Shrike Project

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

Jonathan Gray, graduate student at the University of Georgia and ORAS field trip chair, is working on a radio telemetry and nest vegetation study on local Loggerhead Shrikes.

Assisted by volunteers, he is tracking radio-tagged shrikes in the Athens area. They are also measuring vegetation characteristics at shrike nesting sites. The information will be used to determine territory sizes and habitat requirements of the Loggerhead Shrike, which has shown significant declines across its range.

Proposed "Taking" of Peregrine Falcons in Georgia - Are You For It?

From <http://www.birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/GABO.html>

Posted by Pierre Howard on GABO:

I am posting this notice with permission from GABO. The following information is based on direct conversations with Georgia DNR:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing a 1% nationwide "taking" of Peregrine Falcons by falconers.



Drawing by Steven D'Amato

I am hoping that all birders will consider whether you think it is too early after delisting for a "taking" to be allowed. The Peregrine Falcon may be doing better, but a short time ago, it was protected as "endangered" by the Endangered Species Act.

Falconers have captive breeding programs from which they can get Peregrine Falcons. They can also use other species for their pleasure. I personally oppose this proposal, but DNR will be more influenced by the general reaction of the birding community to the proposal.

If we are going to stop this thing, we are going to have to rise up. I realize that everyone may not agree with my position, but I think that you deserve to know what is being proposed.

I would suggest that if you wish to be heard on the matter, address your concerns to the officers of GOS and to our friend Jim Ozier at DNR.

posted by Pierre Howard on GABO

The number of Peregrine Falcons that would be trapped and given to falconers for the pursuit of their sport would be 36 annually nationwide. Of that number, 4 would be trapped during migration down the Georgia Coast. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources must decide whether to allow this "taking" in Georgia and the Board of Natural Resources must vote on whether to allow it to happen in Georgia.

Editor's note: The GA DNR directory is posted at <http://dnrnet.dnr.state.ga.us/pdf/prsssonel/directory.pdf> with the Nongame Conservation telephone numbers on page 36 (the last page).

Another note: Georgia Birding Online (GABO) at <http://www.birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/GABO.html> is carrying thought-provoking commentary on the peregrine issue by people like ORAS president Vanessa Lane and Georgia Important Bird Areas Coordinator Charlie Muise. People attending ORAS monthly meetings have heard both of them speak on various topics and found both of them well worth listening to. On this issue, they don't agree, and their GABO comments provide a challenge to those of us who are fence-sitters to research the subject.

Cornell's All About Birds

Have you checked out Cornell's updated All About Birds web site at <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>? It has evolved with the latest multimedia techniques available for online learning. It now provides a wealth of resources for beginning and experienced birders with videos on Birding Basics and articles from the Cornell magazine *Living Bird*

Birding Basics includes tutorials on keys to identification: Size & Shape, Color Pattern, Behavior, Habitat, Field Marks, and Songs & Calls.

An added bonus is the section called Inside Birding, which includes a series of web videos. Whether you're new to birding or a seasoned expert, interested in sharpening your identification skills or wondering how to clean your binoculars, it is a great place to start. From where and when to find birds to the clues that will help you identify them, Inside Birding provides the information that you need to take your birding to the next level.

Going Green for the Birds!

ORAS has shopping bags for sale at \$8.00 each. You can buy them at the monthly meetings or at Nature's Outpost.

Each bag is made of five recycled two-liter bottles. Help the environment by carrying a bag made from trashed soda bottles that would otherwise end up in a landfill.



Sigrid Sanders' Birding Notes

by Sigrid Sanders, from "birdingnotes.com"

Pileated Woodpecker – Listening?

This afternoon a male Pileated Woodpecker flew into the lower part of a tall pine on the edge of the woods. After waiting for a few quiet, still minutes, he hitched up the trunk, making scratching sounds as he went, then suddenly let out a loud, startling trumpeted call. He attacked a small, thin dead stub, splitting it open, seemed to find nothing of interest there and moved further on up the trunk.

He paused, clinging to the bark and staring at the trunk, turning his head only slightly one way, then another, then staring at the trunk again. He scratched the side of his head with a foot, then rubbed one cheek against the trunk. I thought it interesting how much time he – and other Pileated Woodpeckers I've watched – spent apparently doing nothing. Just being there. Though I suspect he is doing something, and I just don't know what it is. I wondered if he could be listening for the sounds of insects under the bark?

In a quick search, I did not find many references to this possibility. *The Birdwatcher's Companion to North American Birdlife* (by Christopher W. Leahy, page 384) notes, "there is some evidence . . . that woodpeckers can hear grubs and other wood-inhabiting insects moving in bark and trunks."

And I found this more specific account on a Texas Parks and Wildlife website (http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/nonpwdpubs/introducing_birds/woodpeckers/):

"The evidence of [a woodpecker's excellent hearing] can be seen in the following account by a forester. 'I once saw a pileated woodpecker fly to a tough old hickory tree in which ants were using a little knothole as their entrance. The bird didn't drill in this obvious place. Instead, it circled the trunk, gently tapping, then pausing. Finally it proceeded to whack into the very heart of the ant nest – five feet below the knothole.'

"We do not know whether the bird heard the movements of the disturbed insects or was able to distinguish subtle differences in the tapping sound caused by the ants' hollowed-out tunnels and nest. However, we do know that something pinpointed the spot where further investigation was needed and, since the bird cannot boast x-ray vision, it is fairly safe to assume that the woodpecker's hearing played a major role in locating the ant nest."

Avian Salmonellosis

summarized by Maggie Nettles

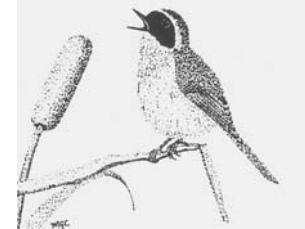
Dr. Kevin Keel, research scientist at the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, provided a wake-up call for sanitation at bird feeders in his talk about salmonella at the May ORAS meeting. If we feed birds, he said, we need to avoid setting up a cycle of salmonella infection that involves birds gathering in high densities and shedding the bacteria in their feces, thereby contaminating both feeders and seed.

One, we should avoid platform feeders because they encourage fecal contamination of seed. Two, we should discard leftover birdseed in garbage so that birds won't eat it, clean feeders with a 10% bleach solution, and rinse thoroughly. Three, we should take feeders down during an outbreak. We should always remember that avian salmonella can make us sick!

Keel said that *Salmonella typhimurium* is common in blackbirds, especially Red-winged Blackbirds, but this winter showed up in Cardinals at bird feeders, and then in Goldfinches and peaked in Pine Siskins with their irruption south this year. Sick birds look listless and fluffed up and can be easily approached.

Many questions, said Keel, still need to be studied. Why are certain species affected in outbreaks? Are certain strains of the bacteria host adapted? Who are the carriers? How long does the bacteria persist at feeders? Are people being exposed? What is the pathogenicity of infection in birds, and especially why is the esophagus so often affected? Is it passed through the eggs?

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 _____

Bird Banding Opportunities

Charlie Muise, Georgia's Important Bird Area Coordinator, has opportunities for volunteers to learn how to mist net, measure, and band birds. Charlie runs two MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) stations in the Atlanta area, including Panola State Park near Conyers and Joe Kurz Wildlife Management Area. For additional information, see <http://www.atlantaudubon.org/iba/>

To learn about MAPS protocol, check out the Institute for Bird Populations at <http://www.birdpop.org/index.html>

If you would like to participate, contact Charlie Muise at ccbirds@yahoo.com or 678-967-9924.

*******REMEMBER: The June 4th Potluck Picnic will take place at Sandy Creek Park at 6:00 p.m.**

Oconee Rivers Audubon Society

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Submit information to the address above or by e-mail to yellowthroat@oconeeriversaudubon.org. Articles, artwork, notices, and sighting reports welcomed. The deadline for submissions is the first Thursday of each month. All articles and artwork are copyrighted, and all rights are reserved by the authors. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views of Oconee Rivers Audubon Society.

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