



The Yellowthroat

Voice of the

Oconee Rivers Audubon Society

March 2018

Vol. 29, No. 3

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 1, 7:00 p.m. Sandy Creek Nature Center

For the 7:00 p.m. presentation:

Christine Fortuin, Ph.D. student at UGA's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources will discuss her research on the importance of wild bees to forest health and how to identify native Georgia bees in this area.

Native and wild bees are often neglected in research but are important contributors to forest ecosystems and agriculture.

Fortuin will discuss her bee research and provide a practical guide to identifying the major groups of friendly native bees who may visit your garden.

Fortuin attended Florida International U. where she obtained her MS in Environmental Science and studied the effects of invasive Africanized honeybees on native stingless bee populations in Quintana Roo, Mexico. For twelve years, she was a Life Scientist with the US Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 Pesticides Section, where she coordinated pollinator protection and sustainable agriculture programs.

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.

Spring Bird Walks – Think Spring!

Bird walks are from **8 a.m.-11a.m. or noon**. However, attendees may leave early. Please dress for the weather, wear practical shoes, hats and bring insect repellent, snacks and water as desired. (Also, please check ORAS announcements and website for any last minute changes to this schedule).

If you have other questions please contact Ed Maioriello at: fieldtrip@oconeeriversaudubon.org

- Mar. 24: **State Botanical Garden**
- Mar. 31: **Sandy Creek Park**
- Apr. 07: **Lake Herrick/Oconee Forest Park**
- Apr. 08: **Sandy Creek Nature Center (SCNC)**
- Apr. 14: **Beech Haven**
- Apr. 15: **Whitehall Forest***
- Apr. 22: **Botanical Garden**
- Apr. 28: **SCP-Cook's Trail (clean-up)**
- Apr. 29: **ACC Landfill**
- May 06: **Hardigree Wildlife Sanctuary**

*(Attendees for the Whitehall walk must be on time).

Spring Field Trips (out of town) *

Apr. 21 6:00 a.m. Kennesaw Mountain
May 05 7:00 a.m. Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center

* Please check ORAS announcements for any late changes.

Grant Applications for Spring 2018

ORAS will accept grant applications beginning Thursday, February 1, 2018. (Grant amount: \$300 - \$600)

Application Period: February 1 - March 10, 2018

Application & Instructions: Applicants must complete the following steps:

1. Submit ORAS Conservation Grant [Application Form](#)
2. Submit an [Applicant Letter](#). Applicant Letters should be a total of three pages, and include a cover letter, budget, and CV/resume. All Applicant Letters must be mailed to president@oconeeriversaudubon.org (president "at" oconeeriversaudubon.org).
3. Have one Letter of Recommendation (1-page limit) emailed to president@oconeeriversaudubon.org (president "at" oconeeriversaudubon.org).

The links to the Application form and further instructions for the Applicant letter can be found on the ORAS website grants page: <http://www.oconeeriversaudubon.org/grant>

Eligible Applicants: Any individual wishing to conduct research or complete a project with an emphasis on bird conservation, habitat improvement, or environmental education within Georgia. Applicants must be located in the Greater Athens-Clarke County region or have a connection to the Athens-Clarke County area. This includes students and employees of UGA or other local educational institutions.

Eligible Locations: All projects must have a connection to the greater Athens-Clarke County region and be conducted within the state of Georgia.

Grantee Requirements: Grantees are required to submit an article, photos, or project update to the *Yellowthroat*, the ORAS newsletter. Some applicants may also be asked to discuss their project at one of the ORAS Monthly Meetings. An ORAS board member will be in contact with each grantee to check progress throughout the duration of the project.

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program

Become a Certified Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Homeowner by providing habitat for birds, wildlife, and native plants in our community! For more information: <http://www.oconeeriversaudubon.org/sanctuary> Or email: oconeeriversaudubonsociety@gmail.com



Photo of Black-and-white Owl by Richard Hall, Panama—December 24, 2017



Photo of Panamanian night monkeys by Richard Hall, Panama —December 24, 2017

A Charm of Goldfinches by Matt Sewell and
reviewed by Kathryn Kyker

I bought a copy of Matt Sewell's book for myself to test drive it as a potential Christmas gift for a few people on my list.

Breezing through the first few entries convinced me this was a great find, and I ordered a copy for a friend's seventy-year-old mother and another for a gifted eleven-year-old child.

Appealingly easy to read, entries are a couple of paragraphs long and have corresponding colorful drawings. I could have devoured the book in a few sittings, or on one long car trip, but Sewell's poetic phrasing caught my eye. I wanted to prolong the read, so I put the book on my bedside table where poetry goes for slow consumption. I read a page or two a night aloud to my husband.

My mouth was the first to thank me, enjoying the feel of his words and rhythm; my throat, voice, ears, and brain soon agreed; this was a delicious bedtime treat. Even his drawing of the toothy, big-eyed Crocodile inspires affection, in spite of their frequent appearances in my nightmares.

I don't know if only hearing the entries was as satisfying as reading them, but each page revealed something even my wise nature-loving husband didn't know. Sometimes it was the subjects themselves that were unknown, especially the birds, a reminder that, for many of us, our experience of nature is mostly regional and therefore narrow.

Sewell divides the journey into elements: Land, Air, and Water. Water is the shortest section. Air has as many entries as Land, but because Air lacks the variety of Land, it seemed longer. Birds end up dominating the book. This is not a complaint. Mr. Sewell's enthusiasm for nature is evident throughout, but it is his fondness for birds that shines a bit more brightly. His descriptions often include his personal observations stirred into the mix.

My favorite page is titled "A Murmuration of Starlings." Not only do I treasure this collective noun, (go on, murmur it), I relish this sentence: "*In the early winter at dusk, these strange birds put on a show of breathtaking delight, as huge flocks amalgamate together to create an undulating mass of one, circumvolving like shoals of fish under attack, twisting and stretching like a blazing lava lamp, with shifting tones of magnetic dust against the gloaming sky.*"

The illustrated page facing this description shows a trio of starlings on a branch, with ". . . their spotty winter coats, which are as intricate as a galaxy of stars. . ."

My enjoyment of this entry is at least in part due to shared experience. To have words that recreate the dance of starlings is a delight.

The starlings on the page radiate cheer, as do most of Sewell's subjects. He acknowledges this possible artistic flaw in "A Shiver of Sharks," in which he cautions readers of his rendering of hammerheads, not to "be misled by my bad habit of making everything look cute."

If you're annoyed by such anthropomorphic tendencies this is not the book for you. If you prefer your nature writing dense and substantial, this book may be too light a snack. My interest in words no doubt fuels my enthusiasm for his writings. Each description considers the collective noun, (assignments made in the fifteen century), in regard to the animal's traits or appearance—a sort of etymology of ethology—word play with animals.

Because it can be read straight-through, or picked up at any random page, this book is well-suited to both the busy person and person seeking distraction. Based on my experience, it is best shared aloud to savor each feathered, furry, or leathery morsel.

A Charm of Goldfinches: Ten Speed Press, 2017



Photo of American Goldfinch by Chuck Murphy, his backyard in Jackson County—May 24, 2014



Photo of American Goldfinch by Chuck Murphy, backyard in Jackson County—May 24, 2014

ORAS Members' Night Presentations

summary of the February meeting by Tammy Kemper

Thanks to Oconee Rivers Audubon Society (ORAS) members and friends who presented a variety of topics at February's general meeting. These special meetings offer short talks involving nature-related art, travel, photography, research findings, and other discoveries. (Note: "Warnell" is UGA's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources.)

Here are some highlights:

Nature and Art: Connect to Nature through Science, Photography, and Visual Arts

Presentation by **Henry Adams**, Warnell grad student

Adams showed his nature photos and the sketches he draws from them. He discussed creating and drawing as a way to study and learn how to use art to communicate conservation.

An Undergrad and a Marsh Hawk

Presentation by **Dale Hoyt**, Ph.D. in zoology

Hoyt shared a story from when he was an undergrad at the University of Kansas. He was a field assistant. One day, he was on an outing to find a marsh hawk, Northern Harrier, nest with two chicks. He described how he kept trying to keep the mother hawk away while his professor took photographs.

"Meet Your Neighbours" Photography

Presentation by **Chuck Murphy**, photographer and teacher of photography

Murphy discussed the "Meet Your Neighbours" photographic initiative dedicated to reconnecting people with the wildlife in their own backyards. He takes photos, mostly birds, for this project. Everything is shot against a white background to remove the context and focus your eyes on the bird itself. He shared how he sets up an area with a white sheet, bird food, lights, and a camera to get such striking photographs.

The Georgia Coast's Recent Designation as a "Landscape of Hemispheric Importance"

Presentation by **Abby Sterling**, Ph.D., shorebird researcher

Sterling explained that the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, WHSRN, designated the Georgia Barrier Islands as a "Landscape of Hemispheric Importance" on October 2017. It was designated due to the important habitat it provides for so many birds. The designation helps raise public awareness and promote conservation efforts. See www.whsrn.org for more information.

Iceland Photographs

Presentation by **Lauren Gingerella**, Warnell grad student

Gingerella showed photos she took during a recent trip to Iceland; some were from the Latrabjarg bird cliffs, including Arctic Terns and Atlantic Puffins. She discussed the importance of birds to Icelanders. Birds are pictured on some of their money, painted on some bathroom walls, and they post signs when birds are nesting close to the roads. They have more water birds than any other country.

Bird Photo Journal 2010-2014

Presentation by **Shannon Curry**, Ph.D.

Curry showed photos of nesting birds, desert birds, everglades birds, and wading birds. She also did a few readings from some naturalists including Craig Childs from "Animal Dialogues," Terry Tempest Williams from "Red," and Anne LaBastille from "Woodswoman."

The Birds of Kenya

Presentation by **Catie Welch**, MSc, current ORAS President

Welch shared stories and photos of birds from Kenya. Some of the birds represented were hornbills, flamingos, ibis, bee-eaters, lap wings, weaver birds along with their nests, and iridescent sun birds.

Oconee Rivers Audubon Society

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