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GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society
www.gos.org

President's Message

By Ed Maioriello

Dear Birders,

It is Thanksgiving weekend as I write these words, so I have decided to recall some things that I am thankful for today. I had the pleasure of a lot of family time. Last weekend, I got to spend time with my family in Augusta. We celebrated my mother's birthday while their home was being repaired after Hurricane Helene blew several trees onto the house. Thankfully, no one was injured despite being in the house when it happened. I know that many of you were impacted by the storm, so it was wonderful to see many of you at the Fall Meeting. Last week also included much time with my in-laws. I've been very fortunate to have wonderful in-laws and even more so since my brother-in-law, Joey, is also a birder. We were able to chase down a couple of Ross's Geese in Greene County, and Joey was a great sport despite having found himself standing on a fire ant mound!

I'm thankful to all the members who came down to Jekyll Island for our Fall Meeting. We had a nice turnout and many great field trips that yielded a respectable 175 species for the weekend. Our speakers, Charlie Muise and Evan Pitman on Friday and Nate Swick on Saturday, were informative and entertaining. Also entertaining, as usual, was Georgann Schmalz's presentation of the Earle Greene Awards. This year we gave the Society's highest honor to two worthy members. Sadly, Ashley Harrington's award was posthumous. I have rarely known anyone who was as universally liked and respected as Ashley was, and his

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The GOShawk is published quarterly (March, June, September, December)

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Northern Mockingbird. Photo by Jack Barbas.

Welcome, New Members!

Fledgling (Student)

Jack Barbas	Lilburn, GA
Josiah Lavender	Albuquerque, NM
Katie Pittman	Chatsworth, GA

Brown Thrasher (Individual/Family)

Dana Brooks	Atlanta, GA
Sarah Conner	Stratham, GA
Thomas Cunningham	Cherry Log, GA
Adelle Frank	Clarkston, GA
Elizabeth Freeman	Lawrenceville, GA
Bobby Lee	Jekyll Island, GA
Hellena Moon	Decatur, GA
Larry Ninas	LaGrange, GA
Rockie Rodriguez	Decatur, GA
Nate Swick	
Selma Vidrine	Atlanta, GA

Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron)

Sam Lawson	Kingsland, GA
Kelly Plasket	Kennesaw, GA

The Oriole Welcomes Submissions

The Oriole, the scientific journal of GOS, invites authors to submit general notes or research articles about Georgia bird life. We also publish book reviews. You can see examples in previous issues, which are available at the GOS website under Publications/Periodicals. Contact Jim Ferrari at jferrari@wesleyancollege.edu if you would like to discuss your ideas about a potential manuscript.

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President's Message *(continued from page 1)*

contributions to the Society and to conservation in Georgia were of epic proportions. The second award was presented to Nathan Klaus. Nathan's longtime work for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has had a significant impact on avian research and conservation, and his award was richly deserved.

Speaking of Nathan, I'm also thankful to Nathan for agreeing to take over the chair of the Bill Terrell Graduate Research Grant committee. The Terrell Graduate Research Grant is one of the things that the Society does that I'm most proud of. The list of past recipients of this grant is a who's who of individuals actively contributing to ornithology and conservation in Georgia and the nation today. Thank you, Nathan.

I'm also thankful for having gotten to meet our new *GOShawk* editor, Madeleine Moon-Chun, and her family, at the Fall Meeting. Madeleine has hit the ground running, and this will be her first newsletter in this role. She has been steadily and patiently prodding those of us who are providing content for the newsletter, and I suspect that this letter will be among the last she receives as the deadline for submissions is today. Thank you, Madeleine, for your work and your patience!

Finally, I want to express my thanks to long time GOS member and leader, Bob Sargent. Bob has had to step down from most of his roles in the Society, including chair of the Terrell Grant committee and as *GOShawk* editor, but will continue to help young birders by coordinating places for two youths to attend the Hog Island Audubon Camp this year. Bob's contributions to the Society and, in particular, to young birders cannot be overestimated. Thank you, Bob!

I will close with my hopes that the holiday season finds you all happy and health, and I hope that I will get to see many of you at our Winter Meeting on Tybee Island this upcoming President's Day weekend.

Yours in conservation,
Ed Maioriello
President, Georgia Ornithological Society

Mark Your Calendars Now!
GOS Winter Meeting: February 14-17, 2025

Don't miss this year's winter GOS meeting, which will be held at our regular winter meeting venue at Tybee Island. In addition to the usual four days of fabulous birding led by some of Georgia's very best, the agenda includes speakers on Friday and Saturday, and the Saturday banquet (expect the final field trip schedule and speaker details in December).

Mark Your Calendars Now! *(continued from page 3)*

Meeting Hotel Details: Hotel Tybee, 1401 Strand Ave., Tybee Island, GA 31328. Call (912) 786-7777 for reservations.

Use the group code “GOS2025” to receive discounted rates. Cutoff date for group rate is December 30, 2024.

For more details about the hotel, go to <http://www.hoteltybee.com/>

Introduction as New Editor of the GOShawk: A Tribute to Dr. Bob Sargent

By Madeleine Moon-Chun

This fall, I recently took over Dr. Bob Sargent’s place as editor of the *GOShawk*. I first met Dr. Sargent two years ago, as a freshman in high school, when I had received the GOS



Double-crested Cormorant at Murphey Candler Park, Dunwoody, GA. Photo by Madeleine Moon-Chun

scholarship to go to Camp Colorado, an opportunity I am endlessly grateful for. I also had the pleasure of meeting him the summer of 2024 when I attended Camp TALON. I was very fortunate to learn so much from him the week we spent on Georgia’s coast, abundant with birds and other wildlife. I am so lucky to have him as a mentor and role model in both the birding and editorial contexts. Dr. Sargent has done a fabulous job with the newsletters in past years, and I hope I can follow in his footsteps and continue this good work.

Sincerely,
Madeleine Moon-Chun

GOS Fall Meeting, Jekyll Island, GA, October 11–14, 2024

By Steve Wagner

Approximately 87 attendees participated in our Fall Meeting activities, which included interesting and entertaining presentations on Friday and Saturday, the banquet and field trips. For the weekend, participants found 175 species (see list below) on field trips to Altamaha Sound, Altamaha WMA, Altama Plantation WMA, Andrews Island Causeway and Disposal Site, Cannon’s Point, Clayhole Swamp WMA, Cumberland Island, Harris Neck NWR, Jekyll Island (banding station, hot spots), St. Catherines Island and Sapelo Island. As always, thanks

GOS Fall Meeting, Jekyll Island, GA, October 11–14, 2024 *(continued from page 4)*

to our field trip leaders (Kris Bisgard, Larry Carlile, Diana Churchill, Chris Depkin, Malcolm Hodges, Gene Keferl, Ed Maioriello, Patrick Maurice, Pete Moore, J.P. Moss, Evan Pittman, Ewan Pritchard, Bob Sattelmeyer, Pam Smith, Eliot VanOtteren, Dan Vickers and Steve Wagner).

Our Friday speaker, Charlie Muise, has been banding birds for over 30 years. In his Friday evening presentation, he provided an overview on the history and operations of the Jekyll Island Banding Station (JIBS).

Nate Swick, Education and Digital Content Coordinator for the ABA and the host of the ABA's American Birding Podcast, gave the Saturday Keynote address. His talk, "Birding for Life," examined the many benefits of birding. We, as birders, obviously experience the health and wellness benefits of spending time outdoors. In addition, birding helps develop skills and perspectives that are valued in our daily lives, such as humility, skepticism, and community.



Nate Swick during his keynote presentation, "Birding for Life."
Photo by Madeleine Moon-Chun.

Species List, GOS Fall Meeting, Jekyll Island, GA, October 11–14, 2024

Compiled by Steve Wagner (175 species)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Wood Duck
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Mottled Duck
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal

Ruddy Duck
Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe
Eared Grebe
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Common Ground Dove

Mourning Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Common Nighthawk
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
King Rail
Clapper Rail

Sora	Black-crowned Night Heron	European Starling
Common Gallinule	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Gray Catbird
Purple Gallinule	White Ibis	Brown Thrasher
Sandhill Crane	Glossy Ibis	Northern Mockingbird
American Avocet	Roseate Spoonbill	Eastern Bluebird
American Oystercatcher	Black Vulture	Gray-cheeked Thrush
Black-bellied Plover	Turkey Vulture	Swainson's Thrush
Semipalmated Plover	Osprey	Wood Thrush
Piping Plover	Northern Harrier	House Finch
Killdeer	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Grasshopper Sparrow
Whimbrel	Cooper's Hawk	Seaside Sparrow
Long-billed Curlew	Bald Eagle	Nelson's Sparrow
Marbled Godwit	Red-shouldered Hawk	Saltmarsh Sparrow
Ruddy Turnstone	Red-tailed Hawk	Savannah Sparrow
Red Knot	Eastern Screech-Owl	Swamp Sparrow
Stilt Sandpiper	Great Horned Owl	Eastern Towhee
Sanderling	Belted Kingfisher	Boblink
Dunlin	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Eastern Meadowlark
Least Sandpiper	Red-headed Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
White-rumped Sandpiper	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Pectoral Sandpiper	Downy Woodpecker	Common Grackle
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Boat-tailed Grackle
Western Sandpiper	Hairy Woodpecker	Ovenbird
Short-billed Dowitcher	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush
Long-billed Dowitcher	Northern Flicker	Black-and-white Warbler
Wilson's Snipe	American Kestrel	Tennessee Warbler
Spotted Sandpiper	Merlin	Orange-crowned Warbler
Greater Yellowlegs	Peregrine Falcon	Common Yellowthroat
Willet	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Hooded Warbler
Lesser Yellowlegs	Hammond's Flycatcher	American Redstart
Laughing Gull	Eastern Phoebe	Cape May Warbler
Ring-billed Gull	White-eyed Vireo	Northern Parula
Herring Gull	Blue-headed Vireo	Magnolia Warbler
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Red-eyed Vireo	Bay-breasted Warbler
Gull-billed Tern	Blue Jay	Blackburnian Warbler
Caspian Tern	American Crow	Yellow Warbler
Forster's Tern	Fish Crow	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Royal Tern	Carolina Chickadee	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Sandwich Tern	Tufted Titmouse	Palm Warbler
Black Skimmer	Northern Rough-winged	Pine Warbler
Wood Stork	Swallow	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Anhinga	Tree Swallow	Yellow-throated Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Bank Swallow	Prairie Warbler
American White Pelican	Barn Swallow	Blue-throated Green Warbler
Brown Pelican	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Scarlet Tanager
Great Blue Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Cardinal
Great Egret	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Snowy Egret	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Blue Grosbeak
Little Blue Heron	House Wren	Indigo Bunting
Tricolored Heron	Sedge Wren	Painted Bunting
Cattle Egret	Marsh Wren	Dickcissel
Green Heron	Carolina Wren	

We are Better Together—Reflection on the Keynote Presentation

By Madeleine Moon-Chun

On Saturday, October 12, Mr. Nate Swick gave this year’s keynote presentation to the Georgia Ornithological Society down at Jekyll Island during the Fall Meeting. Mr. Swick began keeping his life list at thirteen—coincidentally after a trip to Jekyll Island in 1993. He called his younger self an “amateur naturalist,” since he had spent most of his childhood exploring snakes and frogs. Eventually, he turned to birds. “Why birding?” He asked his audience that night. His friend, Tom, loved birds and birding for the peace and relaxation birds and nature offered him. Tom, a talented culinary artist, taught him that there isn’t one way to get into birds and that everyone has their own path.

Mr. Swick remembers the days when birding, to him, was a sport of acquisition—it was all about the species lists and numbers. During COVID-19 and the nationwide mindset shift during the pandemic, he began to see birding as good for health. Birding—and the general act of being in nature—allegedly lowers stress levels by reducing cortisol and adrenaline. It also combats directed attention fatigue. He went on to say that being in nature reduces the feeling of loneliness through what he calls “ornitherapy.”



Ruby-throated Hummingbird.
Photo by Jack Barbas.

Mr. Swick believes that birding encourages several qualities in us, one of them being increased awareness. He made the connection between birding and PokemonGo, a popular video game. Furthermore, he believes that birding removes the blinds from one’s eyes. Birding makes people more attuned to the worlds around them, both natural and human. Additionally, he pointed out that birding rewrites the scaffolding of the brain to have better long-term memory retention, saying that it’s easier to learn new birds when you already know many of them.

One aspect of Mr. Swick’s presentation that has stayed with me was his belief that birding humbles us. He offered us an anecdote in which he remembers seeing a Great Egret flying and mistaking it for a Magnificent Frigatebird. I believe that making mistakes does not make someone any less of a birder. In fact, being honest with one’s mistakes helps to make them a more ethical person and a better birder. He went on to say that birding helps us to accept the ebbs and flows of the natural world—that nature goes about life on its own accord, and we, if patient and lucky enough, can stay quiet and observe.

“What keeps us going to the same place every day?” He asked his audience. This is a question I had pondered myself. Birding is as much about hope—wonder and amazement—as it is about checking off species and seeing new sights.

What struck me most profoundly that night was what Mr. Swick said about borders. Birds don’t see borders—they cross all throughout the Americas and other continents. Birding, therefore,

We are Better Together—Reflection on the Keynote Presentation *(continued from page 7)*

is a way for us to build bridges between communities. There should not be a separation between the human and natural worlds. We are better together. Finally, Mr. Swick brought his audience to the decrease in social intercourse, using the phrase “bowing alone” from Robert Putnam: When the dire needs of the natural world pairs with the lacuna of solidarity and the rise in social “othering,” birding is of utmost importance. Birding has the capability to mend the breaks of society and bring people closer together, thereby helping to raise awareness about the importance and beauty of the natural world and, perhaps most importantly, our role in it.

Wild Nest Bird Rehab: Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grant Received

By Nancy Eilen

Wild Nest Bird Rehab, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to rehabilitating Georgia’s injured and orphaned birds for release back to the wild and educating the public about bird conservation. This year, the Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grant allowed Wild Nest to purchase a handheld X-ray machine and additional required equipment to improve the quality of care for our injured bird patients. With approximately 1,500 bird intakes each year, we see a wide range of species and injuries, from herons tangled in fishing line to hummingbirds injured in window collisions. In 2023, we treated nearly 400 adult birds—80

different species—including migratory birds rescued through Birds Georgia’s Project Safe Flight program. Many of the victims we treat are migratory species of concern including swifts, thrushes, and nightjars.



Nancy Eilen and Larry Carlile in front of the Wild Nest Bird Rehab’s poster at the GOS Fall Meeting this past October.

When a bird is admitted to the Wild Nest clinic, internal injuries, particularly from collisions, are sometimes not obvious with a physical exam. As a valuable tool for finding fractures, dislocations, foreign bodies, joint damage, organ displacement, and sometimes disease processes, radiology equipment has significantly improved our ability to diagnose and treat patients. Not only has the technology enabled us to perform triage and treatment more quickly and precisely, but it has also enabled us to more readily determine when a bird is not a candidate for rehabilitation. It also saves us time, resources, and, more importantly, prevents unnecessary containment, stress, and suffering for injured birds. As we are a completely volunteer-led nonprofit, Wild Nest doesn’t charge a

fee for any of our services, nor do we receive funding from any municipal, state, or federal agencies. Our work is 100% supported by the generosity of people who care about birds and their conservation.

Wild Nest Bird Rehab *(continued from page 8)*

By the numbers: in 2023, Wild Nest volunteers have done the following:

- provided guidance to nearly 6,000 callers through our hotline service
- treated 1,471 birds, including 92 different species from 74 counties
- released or transferred 64% of patients that survived the first 24 hours
- increased capacity for bird rehabilitation in Georgia by offering training and mentoring programs

As part of our annual state and federal permitting process, we track data on diagnoses and outcomes for all our patients. Results, especially those related to bird collisions, will be shared with partners, including the Georgia Ornithological Society and Birds Georgia so, collectively, we can better understand and mitigate the threats to birds.

Link to Wild Nest Bird Rehab's website: <https://www.wildnestbirdrehab.org/>

Lydia Thompson Grant Goes to Birds Georgia Nightjar Study

By Sarah Manning

Thank you to the Georgia Ornithological Society for supporting our project with the Lydia Thompson grant to educate the public and partners on nightjars, their life history, and the threats they face. We worked with partners to pilot a research project using AudioMoths to assess differences in land management practices in regards to the presence of Chuck-will's-widows and other nightjar species on privately managed lands. This research will contribute towards a better understanding of these species. With the small sample size from our pilot year, our findings have not yet revealed a significance between Chuck-will's-widow presence and different habitat management strategies. Future research should focus on nest site selection, proximity to openings, and habitat connectivity and heterogeneity. However, we did reaffirm the habitat preferences of Common Nighthawks, who utilize much more open habitat than Chuck-will's-widows and favor clearcuts, recently burned areas, and open, unvegetated ground.



Common Nighthawk eggs, 22 days post-burn. Photo by Sarah Manning.

In 2025, we will be continuing this study across the state by recruiting volunteers to participate in driving surveys on bright moonlit nights from April through June. Please contact Sarah.Manning@BirdsGeorgia if you are interested!

Camp Colorado Essay

By Charlie Anderson

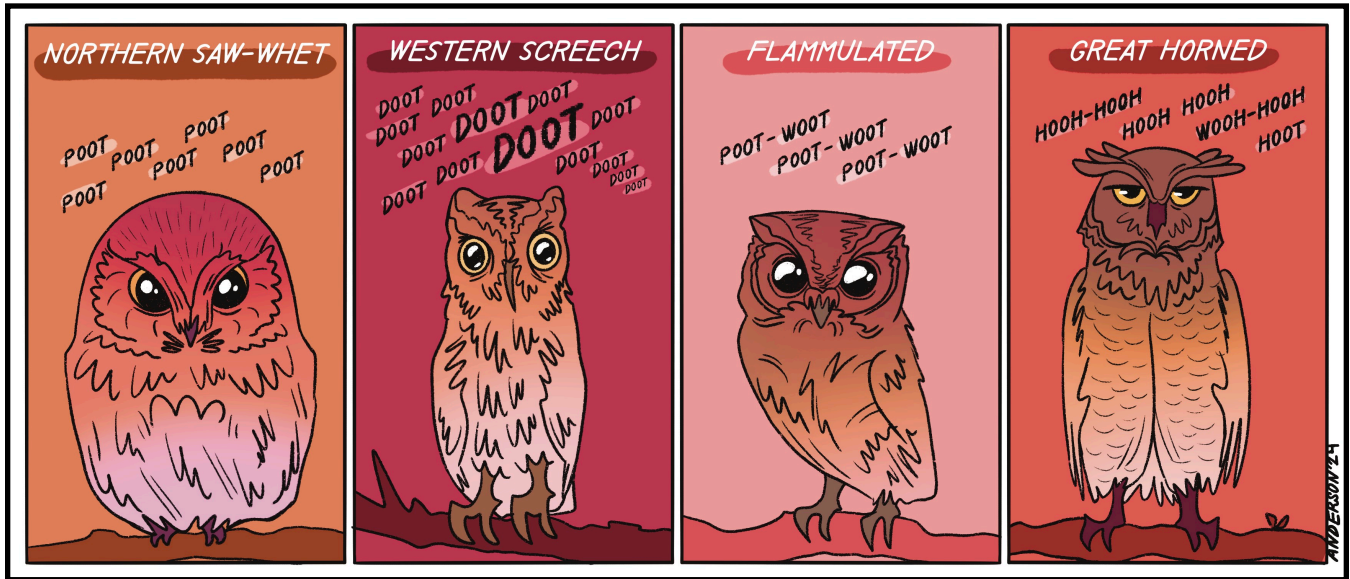
Having the opportunity to travel to Colorado for a birding camp was, without a doubt, the highlight of my year. I have spent nearly my entire life in the Southeast, so being able to see a different part of the country with entirely different environments was incredible for me. Some of the stuff I found most astonishing were the little things that locals must have been so used to, such as snow-capped mountains and drastic differences in climate and geology. I was thrilled that I could have such an experience by means of a subject that I adore—birds!

The most difficult tasks for me at Camp Colorado were accepting that I didn't know all the species of birds how I do down here in the South and choosing to let that pressure go and learn from the rest of the great birders who joined me at camp. We saw over a hundred species on our trip across the various ecosystems circa to Denver, including the Rocky Mountains and more prairie-like environments. Some of my highlight species from the trip were White-tailed Ptarmigans, Golden Eagles, Steller's Jays, Lewis' Woodpeckers, Brown-capped Rosy-Finches, Chestnut-sided Longspurs, and more. Not only were my fellow campers interested in birds, but they were also interested in wildlife. People pointed out fauna (such as Ground Squirrels, Elk, Bighorn Sheep, Yellow-bellied Marmots, Pronghorn Antelope, and even some Moose) and insects with the same enthusiasm as they would when encountering a particular species of bird. This brought me a lot of joy because I like when I can connect to other people who are as interdisciplinary in their environmental interests as I am. Everyone was extremely knowledgeable about all sorts of natural things, and I thought it was really cool how we were all able to share that knowledge when birding together.



Photo of author, Charlie Anderson.

Mornings were early but necessary to get a fully-loaded day of birding. Some days, we had to get up at 3:45 in the morning; luckily, the two-hour time difference made this process easier for me. We would typically kick off the day with some form of breakfast (I usually went with a good ole' Pop-Tart) before heading out in the vans to our initial destination. Some of my favorite places that we went were to the waterfalls and streams in Rocky Mountain National Park, the tundra of the very top of one of the mountains, and our "Pawnee Day" which we spent down in the prairie areas looking for as many species as possible in our form of the camp "big day." After a full day of birding, the counselors would take us back to camp (located near Boulder) where we would have instructional time and hear about the work that our counselors do when not at Camp Colorado. Dinner was always delicious, and the sunsets were absolutely stunning. My favorite activity that we did after dark was when we went owling, and we heard a distant Saw-whet Owl! The stars were also unbelievable.



Owl comic strip by Charlie Anderson.

Camp Colorado Essay (continued from page 10)

My fellow campers were very pleasant, and we quickly became acquainted. So many of them were such great photographers! As a photographer myself, I was bewildered by their talent. They were also passionate and dedicated birders, which I greatly appreciated. The counselors and leaders were also very nice and knowledgeable. We faced many trials and tribulations, including a minor Covid outbreak, heat stroke incidents, and a complication with the vans getting stuck in mud during a rainstorm, but nevertheless, we persisted and the counselors addressed our issues quickly and professionally. I really enjoyed hearing all of their experiences in the birding and conservation world and how they came to be where they are today. They were all super cool and interesting people and I am highly appreciative of all the work they have put into making camp the best it can be.



Photo of 2024 Camp Colorado attendees.

Camp was an overwhelmingly positive experience, and I desperately want to go back to the Rocky Mountains someday. The whole trip was very inspiring and Colorado

itself is a beautiful state. I would like to thank the Georgia Ornithological Society as well as the American Birding Association for giving me the opportunity to have such an incredible adventure! It was a great reminder to me that there is so much more on this earth that I have yet to discover, and I look forward to exploring all of it. Thank you!

My Camp Colorado Reflection

By Gayatri Kedar

Stepping out of the Denver airport, the cool mountain air surrounded me, in sharp contrast to the humidity of Atlanta. All of the campers piled into the vans, and we set off to the Highlands Retreat Center, excitedly talking about our goals for the week. We were a diverse group from all over the country: California, New York, Wisconsin, including a student from Hungary. Despite our differences, we fell into easy conversation, working together to identify the birds at our first stop, which brought me two lifers. We continued to work our way to the retreat, stopping at promising locations until we finally arrived, meeting the rest of the campers. During introductions, we always made sure to keep one eye watching the windows, and we got many new birds added to our list, including a surprise: an American Goshawk!



Western Kingbird. Photo by Cello Caruso-Turiello.

By Thursday, I had twenty-nine lifers under my belt and as many cumulative hours of sleep that week. That day, we woke up at 5 am, and we traveled to an elevation of almost 12,000 feet to find Brown-capped Rosy-Finches and White-tailed Ptarmigans. As a bonus, a flock of Brown-capped Rosy-Finches landed thirty feet away from us at Rocky Mountain National Park's alpine visitors center, not moving for the next half hour. The mountain birding was incredible (though very cold), but we were all excited for Friday, our "Big Day." We birded from sunrise to sunset, trying to tally as many species as we could. We spent most of the day driving through the grasslands of Pawnee, seeing hundreds of Horned Larks and a few Burrowing Owls perched on

the fence posts. We ended up with a grand total of ninety-seven species, which took my personal bird count to 143 species, with forty-seven of them being lifers. We also created a new mammal count, seeing fourteen species of mammals.

Some of our most memorable events happened on the way to our birding destinations. One afternoon, as we stopped to fill our water bottles in a spring, the weather changed abruptly. It began pouring rain. One of the vans got stuck in the unevenly paved, muddy road, and it took most of the counselors, several campers, some kind strangers passing by, and at least fifteen minutes before we were able to move. We piled back into the van, soaked through and laughing about the ordeal.

Though the birding was spectacular, Camp Colorado was truly made by the people. Our counselors were not just incredible birders; they were also kind and helpful. They planned our trips, meals, and workshops and took care of every detail. I'm a vegetarian, and they always ensured that I would have food, going as far as to separate my meals from the meat options. Halfway through the week, we had a COVID outbreak. A new counselor was testing positive

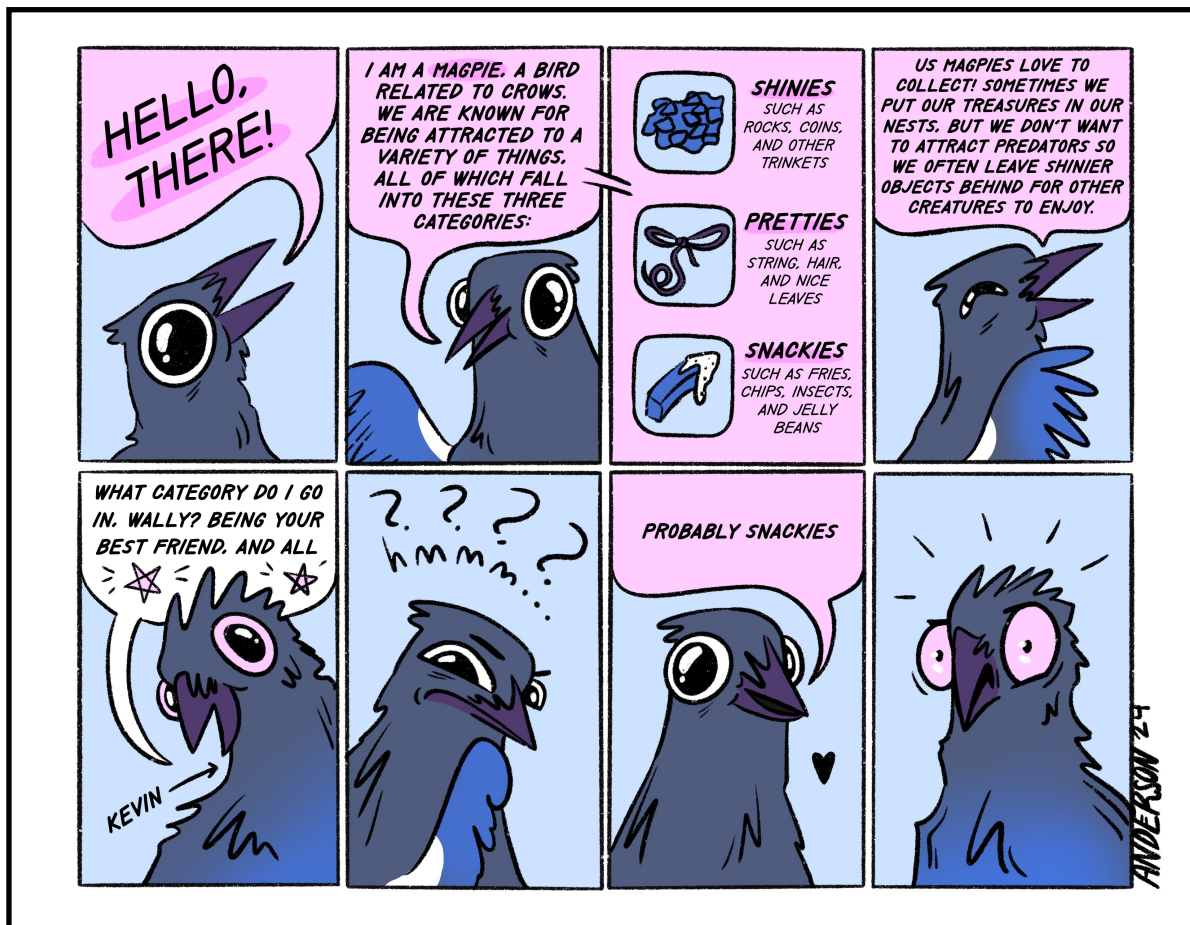
My Camp Colorado Reflection (continued from page 12)

daily, but the remaining counselors made sure our birding trips continued, adapting to the situation quickly.

At Camp Colorado, I formed lasting friendships and memories. Four months later, we continue to text daily in our group chat. The experiences we had will stay with each of us for the rest of our lives—the people we encountered, the funny stories and inside jokes we shared, and, of course, the incredible birding. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience where sixteen sleep-deprived teenagers and six counselors came together from across the country to create something magical. Thank you to the Georgia Ornithological Society for giving me this incredible opportunity.



Campers in front of sunset.
Photo by Jennie Duberstein.



Comic strip by Charlie Anderson.

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