

18th Annual
Youth Birding Competition
April 12 - April 20, 2024
Awards Ceremony: April 20



Golden Eagle, 2023 T-shirt Art Contest
winner by Kevin Lin



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Event Calendar

February - April	Team prep, birding, training and planning
February 1	Last day to submit artwork for T-shirt competition
March 31	Team registration deadline (<i>required</i>). Register at www.georgiawildlife.com/YBC
April 12	Deadline to submit photo and liability waivers (<i>required</i>)
April 12-April 20	Teams pick a 24-hour period to bird within the 9-day window
April 19	5 PM - Deadline for teams to submit their checklist digitally (tim.keyes@dnr.ga.gov)
April 20	5 PM - Turn in checklists in person at Charlie Elliott.
April 20	5:30 PM - Awards banquet begins at Charlie Elliott Center Conference Center in Mansfield, GA

Send questions and waivers to:

Tim Keyes

One Conservation Way, Brunswick GA 31520

(912) 222-0424 | Fax (912) 262-3143 | tim.keyes@dnr.ga.gov

Flexible count day – with in-person banquet

We want to continue the flexibility of last years' count, while still having an in-person awards banquet. Given this, teams will be allowed to choose a single 24-hour period between 5 PM on April 12 and 5 PM on April 20 in order to conduct their bird count. All teams must arrive at Charlie Elliott by 5 PM on Saturday, April 20, to turn in checklists and join in the banquet and awards ceremony. Lists can be turned in electronically by April 19th. After that, digital lists are unlikely to get to judges.

Event Checklist

Thank you for your interest in the 2024 Youth Birding Competition. This event will largely be returning to an in-person event following several years of remote options. To make sure you are eligible to compete, please use the following checklist to keep track of what needs to be done and when.

	DEADLINE	ITEM
_____	February 1	Last day to turn in artwork for T-shirt Art Competition.
_____	March 31	Last day to register. Carefully review rules and guidelines; register at www.georgiawildlife.com/YBC .
_____	April 12	Mail/e-mail/fax liability waiver (page 25) & photo release form (page 26) - Send to Tim Keyes (address page 2)
_____	April 12	5 PM – Start of 9-day window for teams to select a 24-hour period to conduct bird count
_____	April 19	Turn in your checklist digitally by 5pm (optional).
_____	April 20	5 PM – YBC birding window ends. All teams must turn in their checklists in person at Charlie Elliott Conference Center in Mansfield 5:30 PM – Awards ceremony at Charlie Elliott.

2024 Youth Birding T-SHIRT



ART CONTEST



HEY KIDS! Would you like **YOUR ARTWORK** to appear on the 18th Annual Youth Birding Competition T-shirt? How about winning an Amazon Gift Card?

HOW TO ENTER: All you need to do is draw or paint a **native Georgia bird*** on paper or canvas and email a **JPG** photo of it by **February 1, 2024**, to **Linda.May@dnr.ga.gov**

- When photographing your artwork, please fill the frame fully and make sure the artwork appears straight (not tilted in any direction). Please use JPG/JPEG photo files (no PDFs or HEIC files).
- In the body of the email, include your name, school, age, grade level, city of residence, phone #, email address and the species name of the bird in your artwork.



* To highlight the diversity of bird species in Georgia, artwork must depict a bird **OTHER THAN** those previously featured on a YBC T-shirt. **Species to exclude** are American kestrel, Anna's hummingbird, barn owl, blue grosbeak, blue jay, blue-gray gnatcatcher, Carolina chickadee, golden eagle, great blue heron, great horned owl, loggerhead shrike, osprey, peregrine falcon, red-breasted nuthatch, yellow-breasted chat and yellow-rumped warbler.

PRIZES: **Grand Prize Winner** will receive a \$100 Amazon Gift Card and his/her artwork will be featured on the 2024 Youth Birding Competition T-Shirt.

Three other age division winners will each receive a \$60 Amazon Gift Card.

NEW this year: *The runner-up in each age division will receive a \$40 Amazon Gift Card!* A surprise award also will be given to the best artwork by a birding participant.

- * One winner will be selected from each of the following age/grade levels: Primary (Pre-K-2nd), Elementary (3rd-5th), Middle School (6th-8th Grade) & High School (9th-12th). Then the Grand Prize Winner will be chosen from the four age category winners.

OTHER CONTEST RULES: The Youth Birding T-Shirt Art Contest is open to Georgia residents in PreK through 12th grade. Although participation in the 2024 Youth Birding Competition (YBC) in April 2024 is encouraged, it is not required in order to submit artwork. Only one entry per person is allowed, and the submission must be the child's original artwork. Tracings & computer-generated artwork are prohibited.

For more information, visit www.georgiawildlife.com/YBCtshirtArtContest.
Questions? Contact Linda May at (706) 319-0211 or Linda.May@dnr.ga.gov



Tips for 2024 Youth Birding T-Shirt Art Contest Participants

* Open to Georgia residents in Pre-K through 12th grade *



Make sure the bird species you draw or paint is native to Georgia and not previously featured on a Youth Birding Competition T-shirt.

If you're not sure if a species is native to Georgia, consult a field guide to birds of the Eastern US. The species description and range map will tell you if the bird naturally occurs in Georgia or if it is introduced or exotic. Native resident and migratory birds qualify. Artwork of domesticated birds as well as naturalized exotic species (like house sparrows, pigeons, European starlings) will be disqualified. Also, **exclude species** that have previously appeared on a YBC T-shirt (American kestrel, Anna's hummingbird, barn owl, blue grosbeak, blue jay, blue-gray gnatcatcher, Carolina chickadee, golden eagle, great blue heron, great horned owl, loggerhead shrike, osprey, peregrine falcon, red-breasted nuthatch, yellow-breasted chat & yellow-rumped warbler).

Follow the contest rules regarding artwork type.

Artwork must be flat (no 3D submissions) and created on paper or canvas. When photographing the artwork, please keep it straight and fill the camera frame as much as possible.

Pay attention to the bird's features. Draw or paint them accurately.

If the judges can't tell what bird species is in your artwork, the picture won't work well on a T-shirt. Body proportions, beak shape & field marks are important (especially for older art contest participants).

To show up well on a T-shirt, the bird needs to be the main focus of your artwork.

Simple backgrounds (especially species-specific habitat) are a plus, but your bird must stand out well. Put some thought into composition, context and contrasting colors.

Deep contrasting colors scan best for a T-shirt.

Keep in mind that the winning artwork will be used on a T-shirt for both boys and girls. Fill in your colors well so that the bird can be seen well from a distance. If you use colored pencils (which often appear faint), press down hard or go over your lines several times for richer colors.

**Email your artwork with the required information by the February 1st deadline to:
Linda.May@dnr.ga.gov**

In the body of your email, include your name, school, age, grade level, city of residence, phone #, e-mail address and the species name of the bird depicted in your artwork. Then attach a JPG/JPEG of your artwork (no PDFs or HEIC files please).

**For more information, visit www.georgiawildlife.com/YBCtshirtArtContest.
Questions? Contact Linda May at (706) 319-0211 or Linda.May@dnr.ga.gov**

What Is the YBC?



The Youth Birding Competition is a 24-hour birding event held during a 9-day period that coincides with peak spring migration and in which teams of 2-5 kids compete against others by age division to find the most birds in Georgia. A banquet and awards ceremony follows on April 20 at Charlie Elliott Conference Center in Mansfield, GA.

When is it?

Teams select a contiguous 24-hour period between 5 PM April 12 and 5 PM April 20 and spend the day (and night!) finding as many species as possible within Georgia.

Where is it?

Visit as much or as little of the state of Georgia as you want. There are no restrictions on where you can go birding. Just make sure you have permission, or the licenses/permits needed to access each site. Turn in checklists and enjoy the banquet at Charlie Elliott Conference Center.

Do you need to be an expert?

No! We can try to pair your team with an experienced birder (mentor) to help you learn about birds before the competition. See page 13 for details. *During the competition, only the youth participants can identify birds.*

Who does it benefit?

Your team can use the Youth Birding Competition to raise money for the Georgia Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund – the main fund for [DNR's Wildlife Conservation Section](#) – or for the conservation organization of your choice.

Are there prizes?

Of course! For each age group (K-2nd, 3-5th, 6-8th, or 9-12th) teams will compete for most birds seen, most money raised and the top first-year teams. Grand prizes include new binoculars for the team finding the most birds. There will be door prizes for almost all participants who attend the ceremony.

How much does it cost?

Participation is absolutely FREE!

How can you register? Register online by March 31 at www.georgiawildlife.com/YBC.

Competition Rules

1. All teams must have an adult chaperone/driver.
2. **Participants must identify birds on their own** - Adults must not help with finding or identifying birds.
 - a. *If the team comes to a consensus on the identification of a bird, and the adult knows it is wrong, the adult can strike the species from the list. Teams cannot count that individual bird again, although if they encounter the species again and correctly identify it, it can go on the list. This procedure helps avoid the identification becoming a "guessing game" until they hit upon the correct identification.*
 - b. *Team participants can use field guides in book form and in-phone app form to assist them with identifying birds, **but they cannot use automated bird identification tools such as Merlin's Bird ID Wizard or devices that identify species based on photos or on recordings of songs and calls.** The goals of this contest include the development of skills needed to solve a mystery: the identification of a bird species the participants might not have seen before. Those skills involve learning how to read range maps, how to recognize general habitat types, how to categorize a bird as a member of a species group such as sparrows, warblers, woodpeckers or sandpipers, and how to recognize and use field marks to single out a specific species from one of the groups. Using automated identification devices defeats the learning objective.*
3. Teams must have at least two participants and not more than five.
4. Teams must compete within the age division of their oldest participant.
5. Team members must stay within voice contact of each other at all times.
6. All birds counted must be identified by at least two team members.
7. Count only full species (as listed on official GOS State Checklist).
8. Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or sound. A bird only identified to a group (i.e., scaup, either greater or lesser) may be counted as a species if no other bird from that group appears on the list.
9. Birds counted must be alive, wild, unrestrained and within the state of Georgia.
10. Participants must follow the American Birding Association (ABA) code of Birding Ethics (pages 8-9).
Obey all access rules to public lands and acquire permission to access private land.
11. Electronic or recorded birdcalls may be used (within ABA code of birding ethics - i.e., not used with rare or endangered species, or in areas where their use is prohibited such as on national wildlife refuges).
12. Flushing birds from nests or cavities is not allowed.
13. Teams can travel as much of the state as they want.
14. Birds can only be counted during a 24-hour period selected by the team between 5 PM April 12 and 5 PM April 20. Teams can start and finish their count at any time as long as it is a single contiguous 24-hour period (ex., 5 PM to 5 PM, midnight to midnight, noon-noon, 6 AM to 6 AM, etc.).
15. The team can either submit its checklist digitally by 5 PM April 19 or in person before 5 PM April 20.
Please note the different deadlines for checklists submitted in-person at Charlie Elliott.
16. Totals are considered final once checklists are submitted.
17. The decision of the judges in all rulings is final.



ABA CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.

1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from private landowners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

1(d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.

2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean, and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a group member.

4(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation, and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action, and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it, and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group Leader Responsibilities [amateur and professional trips and tours].

4(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

4(d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment and does not interfere with others using the same area.

4(e) Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practices this code.

4(f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g., no tape recorders allowed).

4(g) Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences, and submit records to appropriate organizations.

**PLEASE FOLLOW THIS CODE AND DISTRIBUTE
AND TEACH IT TO OTHERS**

(code written by American Birding Association - <http://americanbirding.org>)



YBC Birding Strategies

The main point of this competition is to have fun outside while learning about the wonderful birds of Georgia. You can count birds in your yard or traverse the state. A team that successfully identifies 20 species in their yard and has a great time is just as important as a team that drives hundreds of miles and finds 160 species or more. Because different teams will want to take different approaches, I have provided some general advice and several possible routes. None of this information should be seen as the right way to do it, as most of the fun of birding is exploring on your own and finding good places and birds.

General Strategy:

1) Birds are creatures of habitat:

The more habitats you visit, the more bird species you will find. Many species are only found in specific habitats, and if you don't visit these sites, you won't find the birds. Therefore, as you plan where to go, try to include as many different types of habitats as possible such as ponds, lakes, streams, pine forests, hardwood forests, fields, wetlands, etc. By understanding the basic habitat preferences of our birds, you will know what to expect in each habitat you visit. Edges between habitat types can be particularly good places to look for birds.

2) Birds are also creatures of habit:

It is helpful to know what to expect in spring in Georgia. Many songbirds and shorebirds will be in peak migration. A good reference is the bar chart section of Giff Beaton's [Birding Georgia](#) that shows when each species can be found in Georgia (see below).

3) The more you know, the more you will find:

It goes without saying that the more you know about the birds, the more you will find. You will learn to make identifications with just a quick look, or even by the song alone. This type of skill takes time to develop, so don't get frustrated. Instead, take advantage of your team mentor and training days designed to help you develop these skills. Just as important, get outside on your own with binoculars and a field guide, and practice. Don't stop once you have identified a bird. Studying behavior can be a great way to learn more about a bird and will help you identify it more quickly the next time you see it.

4) Take advantage of easily available birding resources:

If you plan to travel throughout the state, Giff Beaton's book [Birding Georgia](#) is invaluable. It shows more than 100 top birding sites in the state with birding strategies and species to expect. Most of the sites mentioned in this discussion are in this book, with detailed maps and directions. There are many local Audubon chapters in Georgia with expert birders and monthly meetings where you can meet and learn from other birders. www.eBird.org is also an incredible resource for learning about what birds should be around at different locations and times of year. See the Birding Resources section of this booklet (pages 19-21).

Specific Strategies:

Since different teams may approach this event with a wide range of intensity, below are three possible routes based on a mellow, intermediate or hard-core approach.

Teams take very different approaches depending on their age, experience and goals for the event. Many teams of younger birders may want to spend most of the day around their houses and local parks. More ambitious teams may want to begin in north Georgia at a migrant spot like Kennesaw Mountain, where they could luck into large numbers of migrant songbirds. The most extreme approach may be to start on the coast of Georgia and find as many coastal species as possible before working your way back toward the mountains.



Whichever approach you choose, enjoy the time outside learning about Georgia's amazing and diverse bird communities.

What to Bring on the Count Day

- Bird book
- Binoculars
- Spotting scope (optional)
- Map of Georgia
- Raincoat (check local forecasts)
- Hat
- Sun block
- Mosquito repellent
- Snacks
- Drinks
- Bird Checklist
- Pen
- Any medication required
- Smartphone, iPod, tape player, or CD player to play owl calls (optional)
- Camera/phone - we are always looking for good pictures of kids birding
- Hand sanitizer
- Masks
- Sense of humor

By 5 PM April 20 at Charlie Elliott Conference Center, please submit:

- Checklist of birds counted via eBird or email or brought in person to awards ceremony and banquet.
- Fundraising amount (if your team raised money)
- Mentor score sheet (if competing for the mentor award)



Being a YBC Mentor

What is the Youth Birding Competition (YBC)?

The YBC is a 24-hour competitive bird count where students compete against other teams to find as many birds as they can in a day in Georgia. Teams plan their own routes and kids have to locate and identify all birds on the count, but mentors can help them prepare in the months and weeks prior to the YBC.

What is a birding mentor?

A birding mentor could be a teacher, a parent or an interested birder who knows the birds well enough to help a team of students learn to identify birds. When mentors meet with their teams, a teacher or parent must be present.

What does a mentor have to do?

Mentors must commit to meeting with their teams at least 3 times before the event. This can involve helping using optics for young teams, helping with basic bird ID or habitat associations and route planning.

It is not necessary for the mentors to join the team on the day of the event, though they are welcome to. On the team's day of competition, the students cannot get any help finding or identifying birds from their chaperone/mentor.

What do mentors get?

Mentors will receive a free Youth Birding Competition T-shirt (bound to become a collector's item) and a hearty thanks from the team and YBC coordinators. The mentor who commits the most time and energy to their team will win a fantastic prize!

If these material things don't interest you, rest in the satisfaction that you are helping pass on your love of birds to the next generation.



Mentor Score Sheet

If you are a team mentor and would like to enter the competition for a top-quality prize, please fill out the following chart and return it to Tim Keyes **by 5 PM April 20**.
 Final decisions will also take into account the number of birds seen and amount of funds raised by each team.

Mentor Name _____
 E-mail Address _____
 Mentor Address _____

 YBC Team Name(s) _____

Please use the chart below to record all contact you have with your team or teams that you are mentoring.

DATE	TEAM NAME	INSIDE (✓)	OUTSIDE (✓)	HRS. PREP	HRS. WITH TEAM
TOTAL					

If you are mailing, faxing or email the scoresheet, send to:
 Tim Keyes, GA - DNR, Wildlife Section, One Conservation Way, Brunswick GA 31520, fax (912)
 262-3143 or tim.keyes@dnr.ga.gov.



Fundraising Tips

The thought of asking people for money may make you feel sick, weak in the knees and dizzy. Don't worry! Here are some tips to make the job a bit easier.

- ◆ Keep in mind that most people are happy to donate to a good cause, especially when it is connected with someone they know (you).
- ◆ People will be particularly interested in the event itself, so tell them about your plans to see as many birds as you can, where you plan to go, etc.
- ◆ The first pledge is the easiest! Donate a pledge yourself for your team.
- ◆ The most effective way to raise pledges is to ask people face-to-face. Ask parents, friends, family, teachers, neighbors, doctors, etc.
- ◆ Write a letter describing the Youth Birding Competition and the conservation organization you plan to support, and send it to friends and family asking them to pledge their support.
- ◆ Make sure you thank your sponsors. Write them a letter after the competition and tell them how it went, as well as a reminder of the amount of money they pledged, and the number of birds you saw. The sooner you contact your sponsors after the event, the better chance you will collect the pledges.
- ◆ Make sure that your sponsors send you checks made out to the conservation organization that you chose to support.
- ◆ When your pledges are all in, send them to the organization you chose to support.
- ◆ Contact Tim Keyes (tim.keyes@dnr.ga.gov) to let him know how much you collected.

Youth Birding Competition Fundraising



Atkins Anselm

Fundraising is a voluntary component of the Youth Birding Competition (YBC), but it is a great way to support valuable conservation efforts in Georgia and is also another way to win prizes for your team.

How Does YBC Fundraising Work?

1. Register your team with the Youth Birding Competition (register online at www.georgiawildlife.com/YBC).
2. Select the conservation organization you would like to support with your fundraising efforts.
 - ◆ The Georgia Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund (Supports work done by the Wildlife Conservation Section of Georgia DNR)
 - ◆ Other _____
3. Collect sponsors who will support your team with a fixed amount, or if they are courageous, with a pledge per bird species you identify during the competition (see Fundraising Tips sheet for ideas on raising money).
4. Spend one 24-hour period finding as many birds as you can in Georgia.
5. When you turn in your total bird checklist after finishing your count, also contact coordinator Tim Keyes about the amount of money pledged to your team.
6. After the competition, contact your sponsors and collect all their pledges. Have them send you checks made out to the conservation organization your team chose to support.
7. Once all your checks are in, send them to the conservation organization.
8. Contact Tim Keyes to let him know how much you collected.

Ooooooh, you said prizes?

Prize categories for each
age class:

- Most money collected for conservation
- Most species seen

2024 Sponsor Sign-up Sheet

Team Name: _____ Team Captain: _____
 E-mail: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____
 Conservation Organization you are supporting: _____

SPONSOR NAME	CONTACT INFO	PLEDGE PER SPECIE	FIXED PLEDGE	TOTAL DUE	TOTAL COLLECTE
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
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25.					
26.					
27.					
28.					
29.					
30.					
31.					
32.					
33.					
34.					
35.					
36.					
37.					
38.					
39.					
40.					
Total		\$	\$	\$	\$

Birding Resources

LOCAL AUDUBON SOCIETIES

Local Audubon chapters and other bird clubs often lead bird walks open to the public of all ages. Some also have monthly meetings with interesting speakers. Several have regular newsletters. Georgia Audubon teaches a Master Birder Class for those interested in delving more deeply into the study of birds.

- Georgia Chapters:
Birds Georgia- <https://www.birdsgeorgia.org/>
Augusta-Aiken Audubon Society - www.augustaaikenaudubon.org
Coastal Georgia Audubon Society (Brunswick) www.coastalgeorgiaaudubon.org
Columbus Audubon Society -
[https://www.facebook.com/columbusgaudubon/Ocmulgee Audubon Society \(Macon\)](https://www.facebook.com/columbusgaudubon/Ocmulgee%20Audubon%20Society%20(Macon)) - <http://ocmulgeeaudubonsociety.blogspot.com>
Oconee Rivers Audubon Society (Athens) - <http://www.oconeeriversaudubon.org>
Ogeechee Audubon Society (Savannah) - www.ogeecheeaudubon.org
Southern Wings Bird Club (Lawrenceville) -
<https://www.facebook.com/southern.wingsbc/>

For information on other birding clubs and birding in Georgia resources, visit the Georgia Ornithological Society website - www.gos.org

CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECTS

These projects generally require some basic bird identification ability, internet access, and a place to watch birds. These are all great projects to help collect data and learn the birds in your area.

- Project FeederWatch - www.feederwatch.org
- Bird Sleuth - <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/>
- Citizen Science in the Schoolyard - <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/education>
- eBird - <https://ebird.org>
- Great Backyard Bird Count - www.birdcount.org
- Celebrate Urban Birds - <https://celebrateurbanbirds.org>

*Visit <http://birds.cornell.edu> or www.birdsource.com for more details.

Breeding Bird Survey - www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs

Requires good bird identification skills by sight and sound. Contact the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division's Wildlife Conservation Section office in Forsyth for more information: (478) 994-1438.

Christmas Bird Count - <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

The longest running citizen science project in the U.S. Dates can be found at www.gos.org (website for Georgia Ornithological Society)

BIRD CURRICULA

- **Flying WILD** - <https://www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild/flying-wild>
Bird curriculum designed to help middle school students implement school bird festivals and bird conservation projects. Includes many hands-on activities and events.
- **Project WILD Activities** - <https://georgiawildlife.com/projectwild>
Use the Project WILD activities listed below (found in the Project WILD K-12 Activity Guide) for fun and educational bird programs. Each activity contains all the information needed to conduct the activity including objectives, method, background information, a list of materials needed, procedures, evaluation suggestions, recommended grade levels, subject areas, duration, group size, setting, and key terms.
 - Changing the Land
 - Changing the Land Migration Barriers (deer not birds)
 - No Water Off a Duck's Back
 - Hazardous Links, Possible Solutions
 - Birds of Prey
 - Bird Song Survey

Birds Georgia LABS- www.georgiaaudubon.org Education > For Educators > Learning About Birds curriculum

Learning About Birds activities and materials provide educators with hands-on, interactive learning about birds, habitats and conservation. The curricula consist of English/Spanish color student guides and accompanying lesson plans. All units are aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards in science and other subjects.

Create Bird Habitat at Home or School

Several organizations help schools develop wildlife habitat in schoolyards for education and conservation. These organizations offer guidelines to create water, food, shelter and space for wildlife. For funding ideas, visit Citizen Science in the Schoolyard - <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/education>

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Schoolyard Wildlife Habitat Planning Guide -

The Georgia Schoolyard Wildlife Habitat Planning Guide provides information and resources to transform barren schoolyards into vital habitat for wildlife, and vibrant places of learning for students. By creating and studying wildlife habitats on their school grounds, students get a first-hand glimpse at the natural world, and the chance to make a difference for conservation in Georgia. <https://issuu.com/deannaharris5/docs/habitatguidedefinalrgb>

BIRD CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER RESOURCES

American Bird Conservancy - www.abcbirds.org

Provides information on a wide range of conservation topics, such as the Cats Indoors Campaign. Cats kill hundreds of millions of birds each year in the U.S. alone, as well as other wildlife species.

National Audubon Society - <https://www.audubon.org/>

Partners in Flight - www.partnersinflight.org

International cooperative group of federal, state and private organizations working to protect migratory landbirds.

Hummingbirds - <http://www.hummingbirds.net>

Provides information on attracting, watching, feeding and studying North American hummingbirds, migration maps and tracking northward and southward movements.

International Migratory Bird Day - www.birdday.org

International Migratory Bird Day celebrates the incredible journeys of migratory birds between their breeding grounds in North America and their wintering grounds in Mexico, Central and South America. The event, which officially takes place on the second Saturday in May each year, encourages bird conservation and increases awareness of birds through hikes, bird watching, information about birds and migration, public events and a variety of other education programs.

Birding Georgia - A Falcon Guide (Giff Beaton, 2000)

More than 100 places in Georgia to look for birds.

Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds

Available from the Georgia Ornithological Society, www.gos.org

Handbook of Bird Biology, 3rd Edition - (Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2016) Excellent ornithology text.

The 2023 YBC

BACK IN BIRDS: YOUTH BIRDING COMPETITION DRAWS CROWD

MANSFIELD, Ga. (April 25, 2023) – From the excited hum in the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center banquet hall to children flocking to a presentation on native turtles, the Georgia Youth Birding Competition returned to full form last weekend.

After three years of COVID-forced changes, the popular Department of Natural Resources birdathon held its traditional contest-ending banquet and awards ceremony for all teams Saturday. More than 110 children and teens took part, with parents and team leaders joining them at the center near Mansfield.

The turnout had competition coordinator and founder Tim Keyes smiling. “It’s great to see everyone back at the banquet,” said Keyes, a DNR wildlife biologist. He also noted this was the first competition for almost a third of the 29 teams, two of which had moved from submitting T-shirt art contest entries to also joining the birding event. “Awesome!” Keyes said.

The Youth Birding Competition, now in its 17th year, ran April 14 through Saturday. During that nine-day span, kindergarteners through high-schoolers picked a 24-hour stretch and competed by age group to find the most bird species. Teams from Rome to Richmond Hill sported names such as Bird Dawgs, The Pike County Craniacs and Birding with Baby Yoda.

The longer timeframe for birding – organizers changed from a single 24-hour period during the pandemic – has broadened participation. But some teams also had “upped their game,” Keyes said.

Amazing Anhingas, a high school team from Glynn and DeKalb counties, won the championship for the second straight year, but with 144 species compared to 128 last year. Eleven teams had 70 or more.

The middle school team Pi-billed Grebes raised \$1,200 for wildlife conservation, the most of any team. The total for the competition, in which fundraising is a voluntary part, topped \$2,200.

Amy Alderman received the Mentor Award, spending 17 hours mentoring the St. Andrews Songbirds, a first-year team from Macon in the elementary school division.

The event also included a T-shirt art contest that drew 108 entries. Birding participants received T-shirts with a golden eagle drawn by Kevin Lin, a high school junior and student at SKA Academy of Art and Design in Duluth. As the art contest grand-prize winner, Lin received a \$100 Amazon gift card.

While DNR named most T-shirt division winners earlier this month (<https://bit.ly/43VtK6v>), art contest coordinator Linda May announced the top entry from a youth who took part in the birding competition Saturday. For the third year in a row, the honor went to Abigail Moeller, this time for her green heron drawing. The 11th-grade homeschool student from Adairsville birded with the Moeller Myrtle Warblers.

The awards banquet featured a live turtles program led by Linda May, T-shirt art contest coordinator and outreach leader for DNR’s Wildlife Conservation Section, and a video from competition alumnus Angus Pritchard of DeKalb County.

Pritchard is a college graduate on a year-long Thomas J. Watson Fellowship exploring bird conservation and birding culture internationally. From Argentina's Las Yungas Biosphere Reserve, he sent remarks and tips on the competition, plus encouragement for youth pursuing an interest in birds and conservation.

"You have an interest that is super unique, and that is incredibly important," Pritchard said. "It will probably pay off in ways that you can't expect right now."

The Youth Birding Competition is aimed at inspiring an awareness and appreciation of Georgia's birds and the outdoors. The birding event and T-shirt Art Contest are sponsored by DNR's Wildlife Conservation Section, The Environmental Resources Network Inc. or TERN – friends group of the Wildlife Conservation Section – and others including Georgia Ornithological Society and the Georgia and Albany Audubon societies. Visit georgiawildlife.com/YBC for more details.

The Wildlife Conservation Section conserves Georgia wildlife not legally fished for or hunted, as well as rare plants and natural habitats. The agency depends primarily on fundraisers, grants and contributions. Learn more at georgiawildlife.com/licenseplates and georgiawildlife.com/donations.

BIRDING COMPETITION RESULTS: High School Division

1. Amazing Anhingas, Glynn/DeKalb counties (144 species), and overall competition winner
2. Bufford Bluebirds, Rome (78 species)
3. The Wide-eyed Vireos, Sandy Springs (77 species)

Middle School Division

1. Awesome Anhingas, Cobb County (108 species)
2. Bold Eagles, Atlanta (98 species)
3. Blue Jays, Good Hope (93 species)

Elementary School Division

1. The Eagle Eyes, Glynn County (70 species)
2. Rome Redstarts, Rome (69 species)
3. Golden Eagles, Troup Co. (52 species)

Primary School Division

1. The Bird Squad (29 species)

Fundraising (division leaders)

- Middle: The Pi-billed Grebes, Atlanta: division and overall top fundraiser, raising \$1,200
- Elementary: Bird Dawgs, Madison – \$451
- High: Bufford Bluebirds, Rome – \$100
- Primary: The Bird Squad, Harris County – \$51

Fundraising for conservation is a voluntary part of the event.

Top first-year teams

- Primary: The Bird Squad, Harris County (29 species)
- Elementary: The Pike County Craniacs, Zebulon (50 species)
- Middle: Westminster Green, Atlanta (62 species)
- High: Early Birds – SKA, Duluth (42 species)

Mentor Award: Amy Alderman, mentoring the St. Andrews Songbirds of Macon (Elementary School Division)

Liability Waiver

Covenant not to sue or make claim, indemnification contract and release from liability. All individuals participating in or accompanying a Youth Birding Competition team must complete this form.

Team Name: _____ Mentor: _____
Name: _____ Parent: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State/Zip: _____
E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

I hereby enter into this contract with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in consideration for either I or my child participating in the Youth Birding Competition on April 12-April 20, 2024. I agree to abide by the following terms.

First, I realize that competition birding involves some risk of harm due to, among other factors, local hazards and inattention to driving and personal safety. Accordingly, I covenant not to sue or make any claim against the State of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, its officers, employees, agents, volunteers, and sponsors, or the landowners upon whose land I or my child may enter for death, personal injury, physical or mental disability, loss of income, or any other loss or damage whatsoever suffered by me or my child.

Second, I also agree to hold harmless, defend, and indemnify the State of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and its officers, employees, agents, volunteers and sponsors, the State Tort Claims Trust Fund, and the landowners upon whose lands I or my child may enter, for any trespass on property, damage to realty or personal property, wrongful death or physical injury to anyone, or any other loss or damage whatsoever caused by me or my child's activities in connection with participating in the Youth Birding Competition.

Third, I further understand that such an activity requires all participants to be in good health and I certify that I as a participant or my participating child, am/is in good health and have/has no physical limitations which would prevent me/my participating child from participating.

Fourth, I agree to abide by the rules of the competition. I agree that the decision of the judges in all rulings is final. I covenant not to sue or make any claim against the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, its officers, employees, agents or volunteers for any ruling decision.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of parent or guardian if under 18.

Date

Instructions: *This form must be completed and signed by all participants or guardians, including drivers, and be on file with event officials by April 12. Return to Tim Keyes. Georgia DNR, One Conservation Way, Brunswick GA 31520, fax to (912) 262-3142 or email to tim.keyes@dnr.ga.gov.*

Photo, Video and Audio Consent Form

The Department of Natural Resources request the right to use all photos, videos, and/or audio clips taken of program participants, programs, and activities. These may be used for promotional brochures, promotions or showcase of programs on our web sites, showcase of activities in local newspapers, and other not-for-profit purposes.

By signing this form, I consent to allow the Department of Natural Resources to use photos, videos and/or audio clips they have of me participating in the YBC.

By signing this form, I confirm that I understand and agree to the above request and conditions. I agree to give up my rights with regards to photos, videos, and/or audio clips of me. I sign this form freely and without inducement.

My Contact Information:

Name (print): _____

County: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip Code

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Signatures:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

(if under 18)

Return completed form to Tim Keyes, Georgia DNR, One Conservation Way, Brunswick GA 31520, fax to (912) 262-3142 or email to tim.keyes@dnr.ga.gov by April 14.

YBC Checklist

	Ducks, Geese and Swans	Status			
_____	Snow Goose		_____	Wood Stork	C/CP
_____	Canada Goose		_____	Vultures	
_____	Wood Duck		_____	Black Vulture	
_____	American Wigeon		_____	Turkey Vulture	
_____	American Black Duck		_____	Raptors	
_____	Mallard		_____	Osprey	
_____	Mottled Duck	C	_____	Swallow-tailed Kite	C/CP
_____	Blue-winged Teal		_____	Mississippi Kite	C/CP
_____	Northern Shoveler		_____	Bald Eagle	
_____	Ring-necked Duck		_____	Northern Harrier	
_____	Greater Scaup		_____	Sharp-shinned Hawk	
_____	Lesser Scaup		_____	Coopers Hawk	
_____	Surf Scoter	C	_____	Red-shouldered Hawk	
_____	Black Scoter	C	_____	Broad-winged Hawk	
_____	White-winged Scoter	C	_____	Red-tailed Hawk	
_____	Bufflehead		_____	American Kestrel	
_____	Hooded Merganser		_____	Merlin	
_____	Red-breasted Merganser		_____	Peregrine Falcon	
_____	Ruddy Duck		_____	Rails, Gallinules, and Coot	
_____	Grouse and Turkeys		_____	Clapper Rail	C
_____	Ruffed Grouse	Mts	_____	King Rail	
_____	Wild Turkey		_____	Virginia Rail	
_____	Northern Bobwhite		_____	Sora	
_____	Loons and Grebes		_____	Purple Gallinule	C/CP
_____	Common Loon		_____	Common Moorhen	
_____	Pied-billed Grebe		_____	American Coot	
_____	Horned Grebe		_____	Cranes	
_____	Gannets and Pelicans		_____	Sandhill Crane	C/CP
_____	Northern Gannet	C	_____	Shorebirds	
_____	Brown Pelican	C	_____	Black-bellied Plover	C
_____	American White Pelican	C	_____	American Golden Plover	Rare
_____	Cormorants and Anhinga		_____	Wilson's Plover	C
_____	Double-crested Cormorant		_____	Semipalmated plover	C
_____	Anhinga		_____	Piping Plover	C
_____	Bitterns and Herons		_____	Killdeer	
_____	American Bittern	Rare	_____	American Oystercatcher	C
_____	Least Bittern	Rare	_____	Black-necked Stilt	C
_____	Great Blue Heron		_____	American Avocet	C
_____	Great Egret		_____	Greater Yellowlegs	
_____	Snowy Egret		_____	Lesser Yellowlegs	
_____	Little Blue Heron		_____	Solitary Sandpiper	
_____	Tricolored Heron	C/CP	_____	Willet	C
_____	Reddish Egret	C	_____	Spotted Sandpiper	
_____	Cattle Egret		_____	Upland Sandpiper	
_____	Green Heron		_____	Whimbrel	C
_____	Black-crowned Night Heron		_____	Marbled Godwit	C
_____	Yellow-crowned Night Heron		_____	Ruddy Turnstone	C
_____	Ibis, Spoonbill and Stork		_____	Red Knot	C
_____	White Ibis	C/CP	_____	Sanderling	C
_____	Glossy Ibis	C	_____	Semipalmated sandpiper	
			_____	Western Sandpiper	C

_____ White-rumped Sandpiper	Rare	_____ Hairy Woodpecker	
_____ Pectoral Sandpiper		_____ Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Rare
_____ Purple Sandpiper	C	_____ Northern Flicker	
_____ Dunlin	C	_____ Pileated Woodpecker	
_____ Stilt Sandpiper		_____ Ivory-billed Woodpecker	You Win!
_____ Short-billed Dowitcher		Flycatchers	
_____ Long-billed Dowitcher	C	_____ Eastern Wood-pewee	
_____ Wilson's Snipe		_____ Acadian Flycatcher	
_____ American Woodcock		_____ Least Flycatcher	
_____ Wilson's Phalarope	C	_____ Eastern Phoebe	
Gulls and Terns		_____ Great-crested Flycatcher	
_____ Laughing Gull	C	_____ Eastern Kingbird	
_____ Bonapart's Gull		_____ Gray Kingbird	C
_____ Ring-billed Gull		_____ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Rare
_____ Herring Gull	C	Shrike and Vireos	
_____ Lesser Black-backed Gull	C	_____ Loggerhead Shrike	
_____ Great Black-backed Gull	C	_____ White-eyed Vireo	
_____ Gull-billed Tern	C	_____ Yellow-throated Vireo	
_____ Caspian Tern	C	_____ Blue-headed Vireo	
_____ Royal Tern	C	_____ Warbling Vireo	Rare
_____ Sandwich Tern	C	_____ Philadelphia Vireo	Rare
_____ Common Tern	C	_____ Red-eyed Vireo	
_____ Forster's Tern	C	Crows and Jays	
_____ Least Tern	C	_____ Blue Jay	
_____ Black Skimmer	C	_____ American Crow	
Pigeons and Doves		_____ Fish Crow	
_____ Rock Pigeon		_____ Common Raven	Mts
_____ Eurasian Collared-dove		Larks	
_____ Mourning Dove		_____ Horned Lark	
_____ Common Ground-dove	C/CP	Swallows	
Cuckoos		_____ Purple Martin	
_____ Black-billed Cuckoo	Rare	_____ Tree Swallow	
_____ Yellow-billed Cuckoo		_____ N. Rough-winged Swallow	
Owls		_____ Bank Swallow	
_____ Barn Owl		_____ Cliff Swallow	
_____ Great-horned Owl		_____ Barn Swallow	
_____ Eastern Screech-Owl		Chickadees and Titmice	
_____ Barred Owl		_____ Carolina Chickadee	
Goatsuckers		_____ Tufted Titmouse	
_____ Common Nighthawk		Nuthatches	
_____ Chuck-will's-widow		_____ Red-breasted Nuthatch	Rare
_____ Whip-poor-will		_____ White-breasted Nuthatch	
Swifts and Hummingbirds		_____ Brown-headed Nuthatch	
_____ Chimney Swift		Creepers	
_____ Ruby-throated Hummingbird		_____ Brown Creeper	Mts
Kingfisher		Wrens	
_____ Belted Kingfisher		_____ Carolina Wren	
Woodpeckers		_____ House Wren	
_____ Red-headed Woodpecker		_____ Winter Wren	
_____ Red-bellied Woodpecker		_____ Sedge Wren	
_____ Downy Woodpecker		_____ Marsh Wren	

Kinglets and Gnatcatchers

- _____ Golden-crowned Kinglet
- _____ Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- _____ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Thrushes

- _____ Eastern Bluebird
- _____ Veery
- _____ Gray-cheeked Thrush
- _____ Swainson's Thrush
- _____ Hermit Thrush
- _____ Wood Thrush
- _____ American Robin

Mimics

- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Northern Mockingbird
- _____ Brown Thrasher

Starling, Pipit and Waxwings

- _____ European Starling
- _____ American Pipit
- _____ Cedar Waxwing

Wood-warblers

- _____ Blue-winged Warbler
- _____ Golden-winged Warbler
- _____ Tennessee Warbler
- _____ Orange-crowned Warbler
- _____ Nashville Warbler
- _____ Northern Parula
- _____ Yellow Warbler
- _____ Chestnut-sided Warbler
- _____ Magnolia Warbler
- _____ Cape May Warbler
- _____ Black-throated Blue Warbler
- _____ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- _____ Black-throated Green Warbler
- _____ Blackburnian Warbler
- _____ Yellow-throated Warbler
- _____ Pine Warbler
- _____ Prairie Warbler
- _____ Palm Warbler
- _____ Bay-breasted Warbler
- _____ Blackpoll Warbler
- _____ Cerulean Warbler
- _____ Black and White Warbler
- _____ American Redstart
- _____ Prothonotary Warbler
- _____ Worm-eating Warbler
- _____ Swainson's Warbler
- _____ Ovenbird
- _____ Northern Waterthrush
- _____ Louisiana Waterthrush

- _____ Kentucky Warbler
- _____ Common Yellowthroat
- _____ Hooded Warbler
- _____ Wilson's Warbler Rare
- _____ Canada Warbler
- _____ Yellow-breasted Chat

Tanagers

- _____ Summer Tanager
- _____ Scarlet Tanager

Sparrows

- _____ Eastern Towhee
- _____ Bachman's Sparrow
- _____ Chipping Sparrow
- _____ Field Sparrow
- _____ Savannah Sparrow
- _____ Grasshopper Sparrow
- _____ Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow C
- _____ Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow C
- _____ Seaside Sparrow C
- _____ Song Sparrow
- _____ Swamp Sparrow
- _____ White-throated Sparrow
- _____ White-crowned Sparrow
- _____ Dark-eyed Junco

Cardinals and allies

- _____ Northern Cardinal
- _____ Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- _____ Blue Grosbeak
- _____ Indigo Bunting
- _____ Painted Bunting C/CP
- _____ Dickcissel

Blackbirds and Orioles

- _____ Bobolink
- _____ Red-winged Blackbird
- _____ Eastern Meadowlark
- _____ Common Grackle
- _____ Boat-tailed Grackle C
- _____ Brown-headed Cowbird
- _____ Orchard Oriole
- _____ Baltimore Oriole

Finches

- _____ House Finch
- _____ Purple Finch
- _____ Pine Siskin
- _____ American Goldfinch

Old World Sparrows

- _____ House Sparrow

Others:
PLEASE CIRCLE WHERE YOU BIRDED:
Mountains, Piedmont, Coast

Guidelines for Submitting Your Checklist

There are two options for turning in your checklist.

- 1) If you are birding early in the week, you can scan or take clear photos of the official three-page checklist and email them to tim.keyes@dnr.ga.gov **BEFORE 5 PM APRIL 19**. Please make sure your team's name is **on every page** and that the list also includes your age division, contact phone number for questions and general areas you visited (Mountains, Coast, Piedmont).
- 2) Turn in your paper checklist before 5 PM at Charlie Elliott on April 20. Please also make sure your team name and age division are on every page, and that the general birding areas are listed.

Directions to Charlie Elliott Conference Center

543 ELLIOTT TRAIL
MANSFIELD, GA 30055

<https://georgiawildlife.com/charlie-elliott-wildlife-center>

From Atlanta, take I-20 East to Exit 98 (GA Hwy. 11, Monroe-Monticello). Turn Right (follow the brown governmental "Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center" signs) travel south on Hwy. 11, crossing Hwy. 278 and Hwy. 142. Go through Mansfield and continue south for 3 miles.

You will see a large sign marking the entrance to "Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center." Turn left onto Marben Farm Road.

About 1 mile down Marben Farm Road you will see a sign pointing right for "Visitors Center;" turn right here. This is Elliott Trail and you follow it until it ends at the Conference Center. There are four separate buildings. The banquet hall is the farthest building, at the very end of Elliott Trail.

From Monticello, follow Hwy 11 north approximately 17 miles and look for signs on your right. Go to the second entrance sign (a large sign) and turn right onto Marben Farm Road to the center.

Access onto Hwy. 11 can be obtained from highways 129, 42, 83 and 212.