
NEMOURS GAZETTE

A publication of the Nemours Wildlife Foundation

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www.nemourswildlifefoundation.org

Volume 17 • No 1

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SPRING - SUMMER 2017

A Lifetime Love of Family, Fish, Fowl and Philanthropy



Laura duPont with son Jim Johnston and her catch at Nemours Plantation in November, 2007.

By Michele Barker

The Nemours Wildlife Foundation lost an enthusiastic supporter and a dear friend in February when Laura Peace Echols duPont, widow of Eugene duPont III, passed away peacefully at 92 in Greenville, SC.

To quote her obituary, written by granddaughter Laura Stacy, "Mrs. duPont had a deep conviction that 'Love is the most important thing. Without love, there is nothing.' Inspired by her faith and this deep conviction, Mrs. duPont had many philanthropic 'loves' including the Peace Center for the Performing Arts, Nemours Wildlife Foundation, The South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts & Humanities, St. Francis Foundation, Shriners Hospital, and MUSC Children's Hospital."

She had three sons, Jim, Ellis and Charlie Johnston, and was like a mother to her step daughter, Gigi duPont McShane, as well as to Nemours Plantation's house manager Peachie Washington. Laura

loved to entertain and was an incredible hostess, but Peachie's fried chicken, sherry cake, and expressive blessings of the meals were the stars of her gatherings at Nemours, said her son, Jim.

After family, perhaps Laura's greatest passion was the outdoors, which she pursued through hunting, fishing and wildlife conservation. "She was a great sports lady, and never missed a shot," said Gigi. What else would one expect from the former South Carolina state champion skeet shooter - for three consecutive years in the 1960s, no less! She loved hunting ducks, dove and quail and was so good at it that some fellow hunters did not want to be in the field with her because they would end up spending their afternoon picking up her birds rather than bagging their own, Jim said. Of course, she rarely adhered to the "rule" of only one box of shells per hunter as prescribed by husband, Gene. She'd carry a box to the blind and have one stashed in the boat for later!

Not only was she a superb shot, but she was none too shabby at fishing either. In 1972, she landed a world record 38-pound black marlin, the first billfish of any kind caught on a fly rod by a woman. She fished all over the U.S. and internationally. According to her family, she often said, "Women who don't fish just don't know what they're missing!"

Please see "Laura", Page 2

“Laura” continued

The legacy of Laura duPont will continue for generations to come, not only through her children, step children, seven grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren, but through her devotion to Nemours Wildlife Foundation and her other loves. Laura had a real appreciation for her husband’s vision for Nemours and supported the foundation whole heartedly, said Jim. She encouraged her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren from a young age to become interested in hunting, fishing and wildlife conservation. In an amateur naturalist book presented to great grandson Jackson she wrote, “Hoping you will always protect this God given gift.”

There is a saying that it isn’t the years in your life that count, but the life in your years. Laura duPont was blessed with both and oh what lively years they were!

A Head for Business, a Heart for the Outdoors

By Mike McShane

I met Bill Lortz when he accepted the role of a trustee for Nemours Wildlife Foundation in 2013. He immediately brought his trademark energy and warm, engaging personality to the benefit of us all. It wasn’t long before I knew I wanted to be a friend of Bill and his family, and he became a valued mentor to me. His experiences in business and other community volunteer leadership positions quickly became lessons I wanted to absorb like a sponge.

Bill had an optimism that was, and continues to be, infectious, providing a great vision of investing in educating future resource managers as well as his impeccable standards framing our financial protocols and maintaining our budgetary responsibilities.

Bill enjoyed his interactions with our students at all levels and often spent time with them in the field. We miss his intellect and wisdom and remain grateful that Bill was part of our leadership. We will continue promoting his legacy of wildlife conservation and education. He made an impact on many of us personally and I remain privileged to have benefited from his friendship.

William Charles Lortz, 79, of Sheldon, SC, passed away on December 21, 2016. Born in St. Louis, MO, he lived his life in St. Louis, Atlanta, GA, and at his home on Brays Island with his beloved wife, Lainey. There he embraced the beautiful splendor of the Lowcountry.



Bill Lortz “in his element”.

Bill attended St. Louis Country Day School and Vanderbilt University, and proudly served in the United States Marine Corps. After 35 years with Enterprise Rent-a-Car, he retired in 1997. In his spare time Bill enjoyed golf, traveling, hunting, fly fishing, reading, and spending time with family, friends, and his adored dogs.

He served on many charitable boards and volunteered with several organizations including the Boy Scouts of America as an adult leader; president of Cherokee Town & Country Club in Atlanta; chairman of the board of Brays Island Plantation and secretary/treasurer of the Nemours Wildlife Foundation. He is missed by all.

From the President...

By Dr. Ernie Wiggers

It has been a good spring for us, first because it has been dry and second because our students are back and things are once again very busy. The dry weather is helping us catch up on our dike maintenance and repair. The past two Octobers have been brutal for us and many others due to flooding and winds. It's good to have a chance to recover. Our long-arm track-hoe is at Nieuport where we are re-topping the perimeter dike and cross dikes. This is a large project that will last throughout the year.

Since January we have delivered educational programs to 17 groups ranging in age from kindergarten to senior citizens. In addition, our graduate students have taken a number of our 'Friends' members with them into the field to work on their research projects. Those who have participated in these exercises have provided great feedback on what a wonderful experience they had with the students and learning more about the work they do. We have many projects underway that we are involved with in different capacities.

Please see "President" on Page 4



"Butcher-Bird" Banding

By Beau Bauer

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources biologists Amy Tegeler and Lex Glover, along with Clemson University graduate student Jennifer Froehly, recently visited Nemours Wildlife Foundation to capture and band one of our most charismatic upland songbirds—the Loggerhead Shrike. The Loggerhead Shrike is an incredibly unique little bird with a fierce reputation. Shrikes feed primarily on insects; however, they are the only songbirds capable of hunting and killing vertebrate prey. Their heavy, hooked bills allow them to kill snakes, lizards, small birds, and rodents by piercing and severing the cervical vertebrae. In fact, our birds were captured using traps baited with live mice (don't worry, no mice were harmed). Shrikes are also famous for impaling their prey on branches, thorns, and even barbed wire, thereby creating a pantry that can sustain them through winter and reproduction. A well-stocked larder may also help a male attract a female mate. Unfortunately, despite their ferocity, the Loggerhead Shrike is in steep decline throughout much of its range and listed as threatened or endangered in 14 states. South Carolina has experienced a steady shrike population decline and considers these birds a species of conservation concern. This decline is attributed to habitat loss, specifically open grasslands and savannas. Thankfully, Nemours Wildlife Foundation is a 'hot-spot' for shrikes because of our savanna and grassland emphasis and we are very excited to assist SCDNR and Jennifer with their research!



Above: Nemours Wildlife Foundation intern, Amanda Williams, preparing to release a recently banded Loggerhead Shrike.

“President” continued

Just to give a brief rundown of our graduate students and their projects:

- Beau Bauer, Invertebrate communities and biomass in brackish impoundments, Clemson University
- Nick Masto, Effectiveness of aerial surveys to count waterfowl and other wetland birds, Clemson University and the Kennedy Waterfowl Center
- Katelyn Ampacher, Restoration of fox squirrels on Parris Is., Marshall University
- Mike Jungen, Survival of eastern diamondback rattlesnakes after translocation, Marshall
- Gillie Croft, Competition by black-bellied whistling ducks for wood duck boxes, Clemson
- Michael Gouin, Mapping historic ricefields in coastal SC, Clemson
- Kaylee Pollander, Movements of mottled ducks in Georgia and SC, University of Georgia
- Hillary Thompson, Winter habitat requirements for Whooping Cranes, Clemson
- Zach Ross, Eastern diamondback rattlesnake ecology, Marshall

In addition to the graduate students, we have welcomed four new interns. These students are either still pursuing their undergraduate degree or have finished their undergraduate degree and are deciding what their next step will be. Our interns are: David Barnes of Islandton, SC, Christine O’Connell of Spartanburg; Castles Leland of Charleston; and Amanda Williams of Bluffton. All are from Clemson University with the exception of David who is from the University of South Carolina Beaufort. Amanda has been with us since January and the others joined us in May. They have all acclimated to life outside of a classroom and seem to be enjoying the pluff mud, heat, humidity, and bugs only the Lowcountry can provide.

As I have often mentioned, it is so wonderful these young professionals have the opportunity to enhance their education and training by working at Nemours. The experiences they receive here will be unique and provide lessons they can apply throughout life.

Interacting with these young people reminds me how fortunate we are that people like Eugene and Laura duPont left this legacy of Nemours Wildlife Foundation for the benefit of others. Similarly, we are fortunate to have individuals like the late Bill Lortz who are so willing to volunteer their time, expertise, and life experiences as board members to guide this foundation. Sometimes we do not always fully appreciate how opportunities come about as they are not just random events, but occur due to the work and thoughtfulness of others.

I have always said the only thing which might rival the great natural resources of the ACE Basin is the people who support and protect it. There are no better examples of this than Laura duPont and Bill Lortz. Thank you both. You will be greatly missed.



Left: Laura duPont with Nemours Wildlife Foundation board members John Cope, Ernie Wiggers, Mike McShane and Colden Battey several years ago.

Above: Bill Lortz, the businessman.

Expected and *Unexpected* Visitors

A female Wilson's Phalarope (right) was spotted in one of our managed tidal impoundments on April 7, 2017. Although common through most of the Western U.S., this is a very rare occurrence along the Atlantic Coast—particularly in the spring. Phalaropes are type of shorebird with three species occurring in North America: Red Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope, and the Wilson's Phalarope. Phalaropes are unique among shorebirds by primarily feeding in open water by



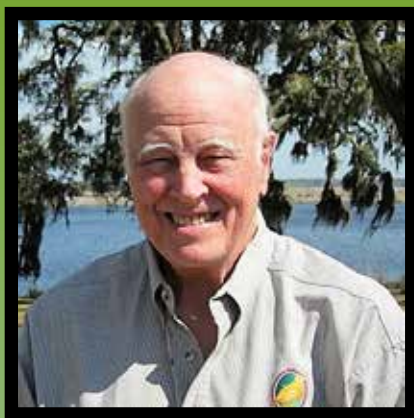
swimming in circles thereby creating a vortex that draws aquatic invertebrates to the surface. However, of the three phalarope species, the Wilson's Phalarope is the most terrestrial. Like most shorebirds, the Wilson's Phalarope is long-distance migrant. They winter in highland lakes of Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina and migrate through the intermountain region and central plains of the United States to their summer breeding grounds in the western United States and Canada. Phalaropes are also unique in their role-reversal reproductive behavior. Females exhibit the gaudier breeding plumage and compete for males. Males assume incubation and brooding after clutch completion when the female deserts the nest, often in search of another mate.



Newly hatched Killdeer (at left with adult) have been a common occurrence along the Nemours driveway this spring. Killdeer are widespread throughout North America and are the most common inland shorebird. They are seemingly unphased by human activity and are known to nest in a variety of open habitats like bare dirt, roads, parking lots, and gravel rooftops. Adults are known for their “broken-wing” behavior, where, upon feeling threatened, they imitate an injury to lure potential predators away from nests and chicks. Unlike the phalaropes, both Killdeer adults assume parental duties with nest incubation and brooding. The chicks resemble miniature versions of their parents.

Meet Our New Board Members

We welcomed three new members to the Nemours Wildlife Foundation Board of Directors in February. The new crew brings a wealth of varied experience and talents to the table as did their predecessors!



WILLIAM R. BARRETT, JR. (“Bill”) grew up in New Jersey. He says that after graduating from Princeton in 1966, he made two good decisions – “marrying Penny, now in our fifty-first year, and joining JP Morgan & Co.”. His 34 year career there included four years in London and another four in Tokyo.

When he retired in 1999, he made a third good decision, moving to South Carolina. “We have both come to love the Lowcountry and are committed to protecting its natural beauty and ecology” said Bill. He and Penny live on Brays Island.

In 2001, Bill was asked to join the board of Morgan Stanley Bank, and so he has continued his involvement in the world of finance. “My suspicion is that I was invited to join the Nemours Foundation board because, in addition to having some managerial and financial experience, I’m also a woodworker” he said. “My hope is that this unusual pairing of skills will advance the Foundation’s mission.”

LINDA ANNE DEMMER hails originally from Petoskey, MI, and after years of splitting her time between Michigan, Wyoming, Arizona and South Carolina, she now calls White House Plantation in Green Pond “home”.

She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Science, major/minor in Fine Arts, from Western Michigan University where she has established an Industrial Arts Program that begins in the Fall of 2017, partnering with the university’s College of Fine Arts, College of Engineering and the Haworth College of Business.

Linda’s primary interest since 1969 has been historical preservation/restoration. She has worked in Michigan with Carpenter Gothic houses from the 1860s and Frank Lloyd Wright Unison houses, in close cooperation with the FLW Building Conservancy in Chicago. She currently is restoring and creating habitats for the migratory birds, turkey, quail, and deer at White House Plantation in the Lowcountry and in the Ausable River system in Michigan.



Linda has a hot glass studio in Harbor Springs, Michigan where she works with Murano, Czechoslovakian and German glass during the summer months.

From the 1970’s to present, Linda’s artistic focus has been in lithography, historic murals and wallpapers, faux painting, theatrical set design, historical garden design. However, she has interests in architecture, wildlife and education too as evidenced by her service on the boards of Bear Trust International, The Eli and Edith Broad Museum, The South Carolina Waterfowl Association and Lansing Community College Foundation.

Linda is involved in a multitude of organizations including the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, Charleston Historical Foundation, Charleston Horticultural Society, the International Association of Glass Beadmakers, Ducks Unlimited, the Turkey Federation, Ruffed Grouse Society and Trout Unlimited. She also hunts worldwide, fly fishes and enjoys traveling. She and her husband William have five children and five grandchildren.



Gerald H. Schulze ("Jerry") was born in Germany and emigrated to the United States at age eight. He earned both a BA and MBA from Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business Administration.

Jerry began his business career with GE, but soon joined Pfizer, Inc. where he would become manager of the company's pharmaceutical operations in Canada and Germany, head its Medical Devices Division, and oversee Corporate Strategic Planning. He left Pfizer to become President/CEO of US operations of a mid-size NYSE listed British pharmaceutical company from which he retired.

Jerry has been married for 46 years to Kathryn (Missy) from Lima, Ohio. They moved from Westport, Connecticut to Beaufort in 1998 and currently live on Cat Island.

His board experience includes service as Director of Empi, Inc. (a St. Paul, MN medical device company), Beaufort Memorial Hospital (12 years, last six as Chair), Broad River Healthcare Inc., and Sea Island Rotary (President 2007-2008).

Jerry currently serves on the boards of United Way of the Lowcountry, the Beaufort/Jasper Water and Sewer Authority and now the Nemours Wildlife Foundation as Secretary/Treasurer. His hobbies include fishing, sailing, travel, photography, and Scuba. He became a Master Naturalist (Clemson Extension/ The Lowcountry Institute) in 2016.



Thank you!

While we're fortunate to have some wonderful new members join the board, we will miss working with former members John Frampton, Bill Sammons and Bill Lortz. Bill Lortz passed away in December. Bills Sammons' and John Frampton's terms expired in February. Pictured here at the February board meeting, Board Chairman Colden Battey (right) presents Bill Sammons with a print by artist Bob Grenko as a token of gratitude for his service.

Below: Perfect weather and bushels of oysters greeted attendees of the **5th Annual Friends of Nemours Oyster Roast**, March 18th. Two of our graduate students updated the Friends on their projects while, for the first time ever, Friends members were invited to sign up to shadow graduate students and Nemours staff on their projects which include Fox Squirrel relocation, birding and rice trunk construction.



Avian Response to Pine Savanna Restoration

By Beau Bauer

Longleaf pine savannas were a dominant ecosystem throughout the southeastern coastal plain that once comprised an estimated 90 million acres stretching from the Carolinas to the east coast of Texas. Today, this ecosystem has been reduced to a fragmented three percent of its historical range. Nemours Wildlife Foundation began a 700 acre savanna restoration project in 2010 with selective forest thinning maintained by regimes of prescribed burning and herbicide applications. The objective of this project is to restore savanna habitat in loblolly, slash, and short-leaf pine stands while monitoring progress with vegetation and songbird surveys.

The results of these manipulations have yielded an increase in native grasses and forbs while decreasing canopy cover and woody plant densities characteristic of pine savannas. The overall response of songbirds has been a 32% increase in the number of species present (species richness) and a 40% increase in the average number of individual birds (relative abundance) counted per survey point. These values suggest the savanna restoration has had a positive impact on both diversity of birds and total number of birds using these woodlands.

As might be expected, the songbirds that have increased are those most associated with grassland/savanna habitat (fig.1). Both Eastern Kingbirds and Loggerhead Shrikes did not appear on surveys until 2014. On the other hand, a few bird species have declined including the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, which prefers more closed canopy habitats, and Eastern Towhees and White-eyed Vireos, whose preference is typically dense shrubby habitats (fig.2).

These surveys indicate our ongoing savanna restoration efforts have been effective. The key component to restoring this habitat has been reducing basal area and canopy cover, thereby encouraging native warm season grasses and wildflowers that attract those birds specializing in these habitats. Many grassland-dependent bird species, such as the Northern Bobwhite and Loggerhead Shrike, are in steep decline throughout their range. Restoration techniques as demonstrated by Nemours Wildlife Foundation are critical to sustaining healthy populations of these birds. Our research shows that through proper management, time and patience, land owners and managers can restore this habitat that was once dominant throughout the Southeastern coastal plain.



Fig. 1

Increased Species Abundance in Pine Savanna Restoration Habitat

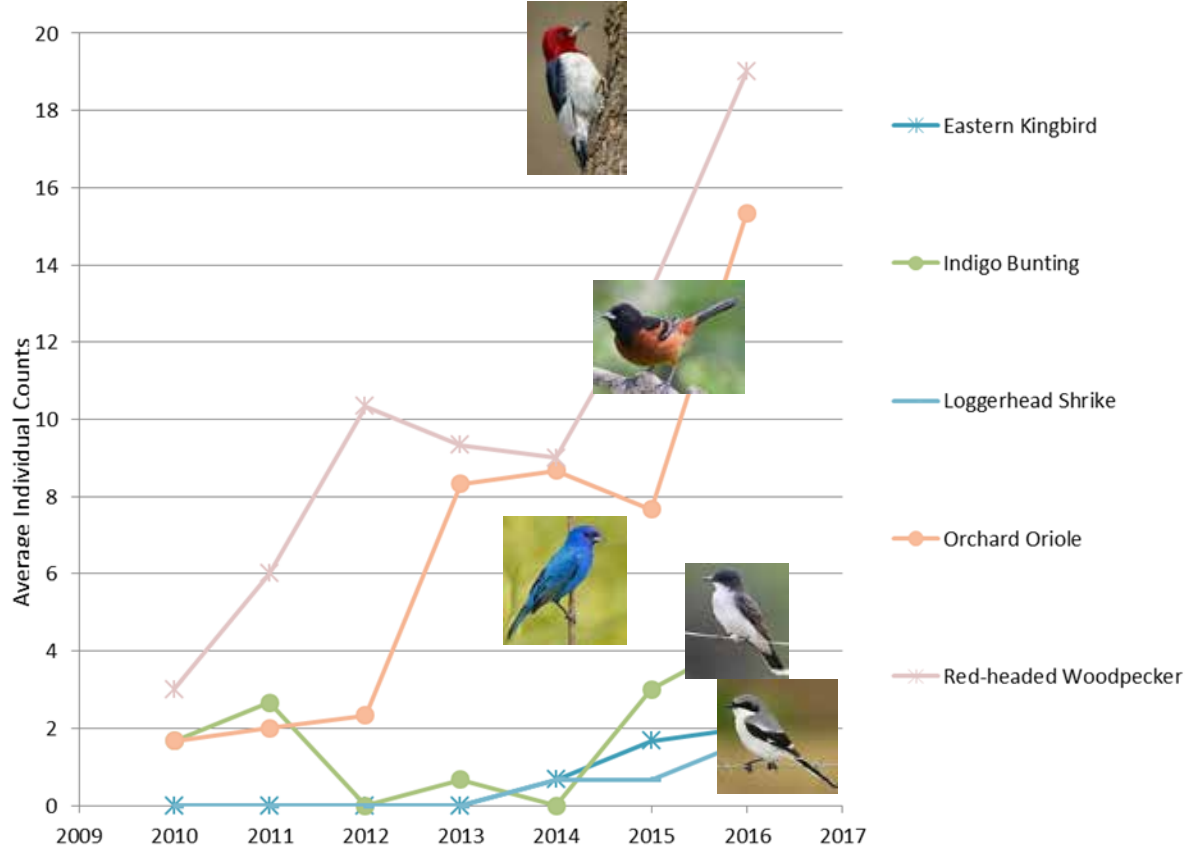
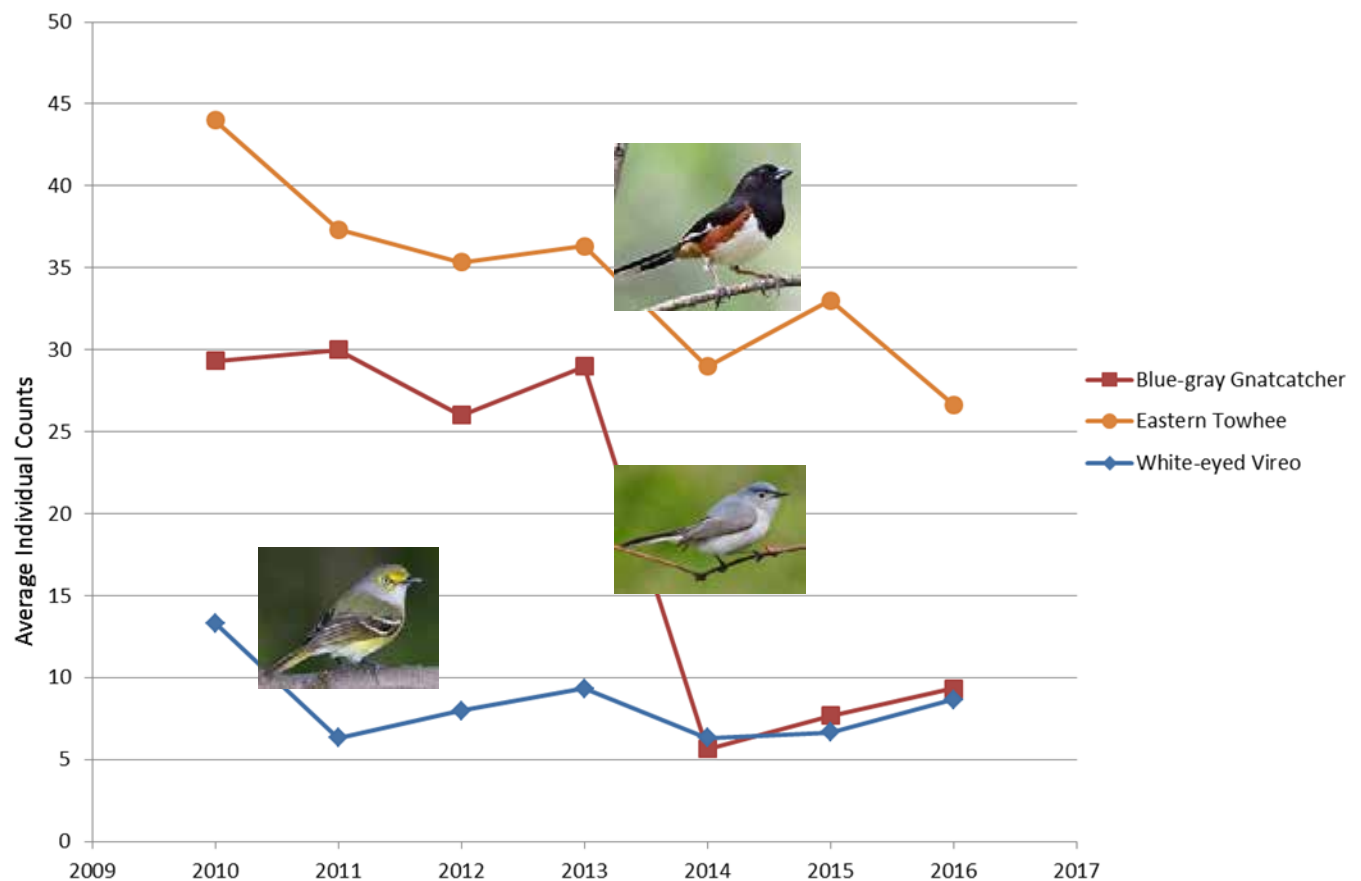


Fig. 2

Decreased Species Abundance in Pine Savanna Restoration Habitat



News & Notes...



Left: First Scots Presbyterian Church Kindergarten students from Charleston visited Nemours on April 3rd. At left, one of the students gets a boost to see into a duck box that contains about a dozen wood duck eggs. **Above:** Nemours Wildlife Foundation intern Amanda Williams answers question about a bald eagle skull.



Left: An episode of *Coastal Kingdom* was filmed at Nemours in January. Host Tony Mills and videographer/director Rob Lewis spent the day with Marshall University graduate student Katelyn Amspacher filming work on her Southern Fox Squirrel project. Once caught, squirrels are anesthetized and fit with radio collars which lets Katelyn track them in their new location on Parris Island. Part of her project involves attempting to restore the fox squirrel population there. *Coastal Kingdom* may be seen on The County Channel, SCETV and online at coastalkingdom.com.

Below Left: While on their tour of Nemours in March, **Senior Leadership Beaufort** participants learned about Diamond Back Rattle Snakes from Marshall University graduate student Mike Jungen.



Below Right: Members of the **Hilton Head Camera Club** stayed busy shooting during their April trip to Nemours.



Below: Members of the **Palmetto Garden Club** toured the property after a presentation by Dr. Wiggers in April. **Right:** Students and teachers from **Agape Christian Academy** in Lobeco, SC visited Nemours in January for a field trip.



Above: The Charleston Audubon Society spotted numerous bird species during their April 8th outing at Nemours, beginning with shorebirds in Manager's Pond behind our classroom.

NEMOURS WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

161 Nemours Plantation Rd, Yemassee, SC 29945

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