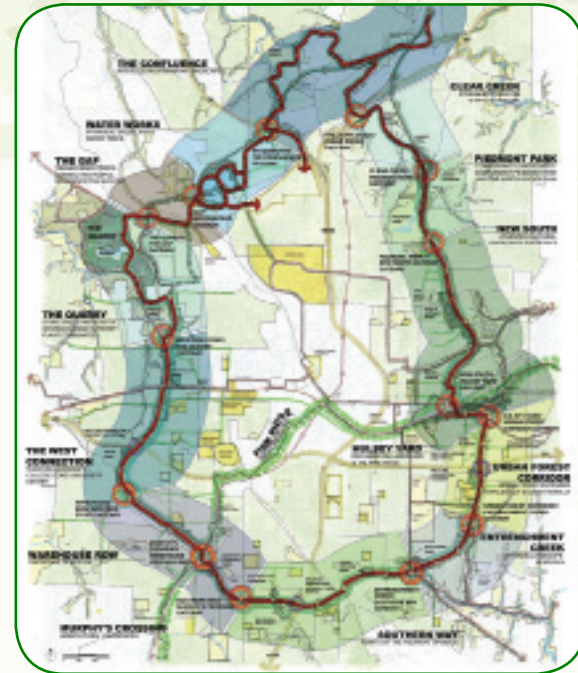


What is the Atlanta BeltLine and Arboretum?

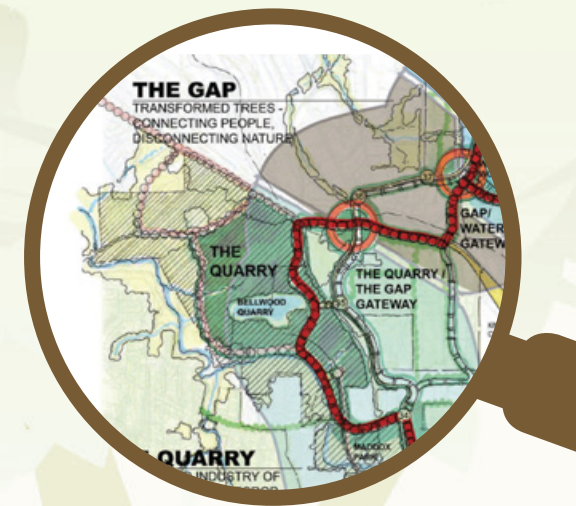


The Atlanta BeltLine is being implemented to connect 45 Atlanta neighborhoods and 40 city parks with transit,

trails, greenspace, and new development along 22 miles of historic rail segments that encircle the city's urban core. The Atlanta BeltLine is attracting and organizing some of the region's future growth around transit, trails, and parks, helping to change the pattern of regional sprawl and leading to a vibrant and livable Atlanta with an enhanced quality of life. The Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum is an outdoor, living tree museum following the path of the Atlanta BeltLine around Atlanta's city center. The Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum will include planting and care of fourteen unique tree collections; provide educational programming to all neighborhoods and constituents; and serve as a corridor of scientific research and education. Multiple sections of the Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum have opened with more to come as new parks and trails are constructed. The Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum will be a success when everyone in Atlanta can identify their neighborhood by the trees that surround them, and therefore understand the value of trees in an urban environment. www.beltline.org



Exploring YOUR Natural Neighborhood



What is Unique About The Gap Natural Neighborhood?

Railroads created Atlanta and have transformed the city and its landscape. In an effort to interpret our history, trees in this natural neighborhood represent species used for railroad materials, wood products and wood manufacturing. The Gap natural neighborhood includes Bland Town and Knight Park and is home to the King Plow Center.

This special natural neighborhood not only provides trails and an important tree canopy (see "What are the Benefits of the Trees in My Neighborhood?" inside), but also gives birds and wildlife suitable green space to thrive and flourish. Spring and fall migrant species of birds rest and refuel here before traveling on. Birds and other wildlife that make this area their home year-round will also benefit from the Gap natural neighborhood. Even though it is a highly industrialized area including the rail system, new plantings and restoration work will help wildlife. You will find many common birds here including the Tufted Titmouse, Song Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk and Mourning Dove. Other wildlife include deer, foxes, beavers, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, opossums, along with various types of reptiles and amphibians. Take a walk at different times of the day and observe wildlife and how they share your natural neighborhood.

The Gap Symbolic Bird



American Goldfinch

The appearance of strikingly gold feathers on the male American Goldfinch, *Carduelis tristis*, at the end of winter is a telltale sign that warmer months are just around the corner. This species is the state bird of New Jersey, Iowa and Washington, and it is a favorite feeder bird in many other states, including Georgia.



American Goldfinch by Dan Vickers

In its breeding plumage, the male American Goldfinch is a brilliant yellow with a black forehead and black wings with white markings. The female is a duller yellow, but has a similar conical bill, wingbars and notched tail. When these birds find a mate, they can be heard making identical squeaky calls during flight.

This bird breeds very late during the peak growing season of thistles, asters and other summer-blooming forbes. In fact, American Goldfinches are strict vegetarians! Seeds make up the majority of both the adult diet and that of their young. Brown-headed Cowbird chicks that end up in goldfinch nests are unable to survive the vegetarian diet, and usually die after three days.

The American Goldfinch is an edge species and is found in weedy fields, overgrown areas, parks and backyards. Thanks to its seed-based diet, this bird is an important agent in the dispersal of plants seeds and the revegetation of disturbed land.



Atlanta Audubon Society

Atlanta Audubon Society is the region's primary education and conservation group dedicated to birds. Educational programs, conservation initiatives and community outreach are at the heart of the organization. Atlanta Audubon provides the community with important educational opportunities including field trips, workshops, the exclusive

Master Birder Program, birding camps for young people and scholarship programs. Individuals and communities are engaged in unique ways to directly impact the conservation of birds. Atlanta Audubon's conservation work focuses on "Creating, Promoting and Preserving Bird-Friendly Habitat," and includes overseeing the Georgia Important Bird Areas program, monitoring eastern hemlock trees to combat the hemlock woolly adelgid in the North Georgia Mountains, managing the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Certification program, and serving as the steward for a 183-acre wildlife sanctuary. Protecting the birds that we love is the most important thing we do. www.atlantaaudubon.org

- Answers: Wildlife in Your Neighborhood
1. Eastern Gray Squirrel (often raids the nests of many types of birds)
 2. Virginia Opossum (nocturnal and North America's only marsupial—mammals of which the females have a pouch)
 3. Green Tree Frog (females can lay up to 400 eggs in shallow water)
 4. Eastern Chipmunk (its diet consists of grains, nuts, birds' eggs, small frogs, fungi, worms and insects)
 5. Raccoon (walking on all four feet with an arch in its back and non-retractable claws, it uses the whole sole of the foot "heel to toe" as it walks, like humans)

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Trees Atlanta

Trees Atlanta is a nationally recognized citizens group dedicated to protecting and improving Atlanta's urban forest by planting, conserving and educating. Trees in urban areas provide a number of economic, health and social benefits and are essential for clean air, storm water management, erosion control, noise absorption, bird and wildlife habitat, and more. Since 1985, Trees Atlanta has planted and distributed 75,000 trees. Trees Atlanta programs include *NeighborWoods*, volunteer-based planting and care of trees 6-10 feet tall; *Large Trees*, planting and care of trees 10-15 feet tall; *Forest Restoration*, a program that teaches citizens about the problems of invasive species and how to evaluate, manage and improve community green spaces; *Neighborhood Arboreta*, a program that places identifying markers next to neighborhood trees along with a self-guided walking tour map of the area; and *Education*, offering programming year round to teach citizens about the importance of trees. Trees Atlanta does not just plant trees...we plant communities. www.treesatlanta.org

About the Photos

Cover: Luna Moth, Monarch Caterpillar, Monarch Butterfly and Blue Grosbeak by Dan Vickers; Bald Cypress by Steve Sanchez
Inside Left Panel: Pine and Sweetgum by Steve Sanchez; Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk, and Raccoon by Dan Vickers; Green Tree Frog by Darlene Moore
 Design by Laura Woods

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The Gap Symbolic Trees



Pine

Pine, *Pinus spp.*, grows rapidly, creating shade and adding organic matter to recently-cleared land, making it a more suitable place for young hardwoods to grow. Pines are common roosting and nesting spots for owls, hawks and other raptors. The Red Crossbill, Brown-headed Nuthatch and Red-breasted Nuthatch depend on pines for 25 to 50 percent of their dietary requirements.



Sweetgum

Sweetgum trees, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, are known for its spiny fruit that hang in the tree like nature's Christmas ornaments. They are found in bottomlands and abandoned fields. Its speedy growth and red, purple, and orange fall colors have encouraged many fruitless varieties of this tree to be cultivated. It provides the Tufted-Titmouse, Carolina Wren and Brown-headed Nuthatch with one of their food sources. Goldfinches love the Sweetgum tree and beavers enjoy its wood.

Get Educated! Get Involved!

Making a difference for Georgia's environment, including its birds and wildlife, means becoming educated about what is happening in your special neighborhood, in your state, across the country and around the world.

Making a difference in the world begins with just one person...YOU!

Wildlife in Your Neighborhood

Here are just a few of the many amazing creatures you can find in your neighborhood.

Can you name them? Have you seen them in your natural neighborhood and do you know where they live?



What are the Benefits of the Trees in My Neighborhood?

Trees perform environmental, social, and economic services that directly benefit people and wildlife living in urban areas. They include:

- Improving air quality
- Removing chemical pollutants in the ground, water and air
- Reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere
- Cooling urban areas by providing shade and retaining moisture
- Assisting in energy conservation as trees intercept radiant heat and block the wind
- Securing or increasing water supplies by recharging our watersheds
- Increasing biodiversity by providing habitats for a diverse population of birds, mammals and insects
- Helping with noise reduction by acting as an effective buffer to screen-out urban noises
- Reducing erosion and soil loss
- Providing a valuable source of both human food and animal feed for urban households
- Calming and slowing traffic
- Reducing the extremes of flooding and drought
- Increasing property values and promoting community pride

The Importance of Green Space: What Can YOU Do to Make a Difference?

Birds and wildlife need suitable green space to thrive and flourish. In the last 20 years, much of metro-Atlanta's natural tree cover (important habitat for bird and wildlife species) has been replaced with concrete and asphalt. Habitat loss and sprawl have devastated what was once Atlanta's rich heritage of urban green spaces and is the biggest culprit for the decline of bird and wildlife species. Birds like the Brown Thrasher, Common Grackle and Northern Flicker are impacted by the loss of green space. They lose important nesting sites and areas to feed. This also greatly affects migrating birds that no longer have important sites to rest and eat.



You can make a difference for birds and wildlife in your own backyard. Finding ways to provide **food, water, shelter, and nesting sites** for breeding and raising young are critical. You may think that your yard will not make a difference in the larger scheme of things, but you can help provide important individual corridors of vital green space for birds and wildlife. Consider, for instance, planting trees with Trees Atlanta (www.treesatlanta.org) or certifying your own backyard, as a wildlife sanctuary (visit www.atlantaaudubon.org for more details). When requirements are met, homeowners receive a sign stating that their property is registered as a "wildlife sanctuary" with Atlanta Audubon Society. Creating a wildlife sanctuary in your backyard is an important way to conserve and protect our environment.

What Do the Birds and Wildlife in Your Neighborhood Need to Thrive?



Food

Feeders and plantings that offer seeds, flowers, and berries for wildlife

- Feeders placed near your home will give you many hours of enjoyment. Feeders also provide relief to birds during winter weather. Food can also come from trees and plants that produce fruit and seeds.



Water

Birdbaths, water gardens, or natural features with flowing water

- Water is essential. Water sources can be natural (like a stream) or man-made (birdbaths).
- Always provide clean water, replacing it in your birdbaths regularly to avoid disease.



Shelter

Active nesting areas or shelters that attract and protect birds and other wildlife

- Shelter is needed to protect birds and wildlife from inclement weather and from predators. Always try to keep your cat indoors, if possible. Four million birds are killed each day by cats (both domestic and feral).



Nesting Sites

Bird boxes, natural cavities, or wood piles and vine tangles

- You can provide many types of nesting sites, from piles of sticks to dense shrubs. Also, if you have a dead tree and it isn't a safety hazard for people or property, consider letting it stand. It can provide important nesting sites for many types of wildlife.



There are over 200 trees native to Georgia. Unfortunately, the most common trees planted include only a few species and many of these are exotic (non-native to our area) with fewer wildlife benefits. Exotic trees are often very beautiful, but try to add enough native trees for a minimum goal of 66 percent native species. Red Maple and River Birch are fairly common choices. Remember a diverse urban forest is a healthy urban forest.