



# The Hyla

VOL. 24, NO. 3

Fall 2008

## Critters and Choices: What to do?

by Berkeley Boone, Naturalist

Sometimes it takes me a while to come up with a topic to write about for the main article. Other times, it comes rather quickly. This is one of those quick times! Recent phone calls and drop-ins helped me to come up with this newsletter's main article: "I have a (fill in the blank here), what do I do with it, or how can I get rid of it?"

The phone calls begin in late spring, and continue on through the fall. Lots of people take a vacation in the summer months, often with their families. The beach is a popular destination- and merchants selling souvenirs know this. In beachside souvenir shops you can find all sorts of natural trinkets: shark jaws, dried starfish, shells, hermit crabs, and more recently, baby turtles. They are cute. Bright green with big yellow eyes, and a reddish orange stripe on the sides of their heads. But these are red eared sliders, and that cuteness fades as the turtle grows to potentially 10 inches in length. They are a very aggressive turtle, eating nearly anything that they can take bites of. They are very messy to keep in an aquarium, and when they start to grow the mess grows with them. Their owners grow tired of them and look for a place to take their pets. Often the callers or visitors would like to know where they can release their turtles. This is not a good idea because red eared sliders are not native to Georgia, and can really wreak havoc on an ecosystem when they are introduced.

We also get regular calls about wildlife that people find in their yard and want to keep or want to help

them 'get better'. Deer, baby raccoons and possums, baby birds, rabbits. We get asked about it all! It is against the law to keep any of those animals without special training, not to mention special permits and inspections. Those animals also do not make good pets, either. If someone finds a critter in their yard or neighborhood, usually the best course of action is to just leave it where it is. Humans have a

natural compassion for baby animals, and we want to see them do well. However, we tend to anthropomorphize them, and we don't realize they are usually quite capable of caring for themselves. Baby rabbits, even though small and fragile looking, are able to run and forage for their own food. The same goes for possums and raccoons. In fact, once we see these little guys wandering around on their own, they are fully capable of surviving away from mom.

We get calls about fawns being abandoned several times a summer. In a strong majority of the scenarios, this is not the case. Does leave their babies hidden in the grass and leaves while they go to look for something to eat. While the fawns are young, they are quite content to sit and remain in that spot. Once they get a little older and a little bigger, they start to want to wander. This is perfectly natural- mother and baby will find each other again.

If someone finds a baby bird hopping around on the ground, the best response is to very gently pick the bird up and place it in a box with some dried leaves or



SANDY CREEK NATURE CENTER  
Off of Commerce Highway, 441 North,  
1/2 mile north of the Athens bypass, on left  
phone: (706) 613-3615  
e-mail: FirstnameLastname@co.clarke.ga.us

**HOURS OF OPERATION**  
8:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. Tuesday through Saturday  
Building closed Sunday and Monday  
Trails open daily sunrise to sunset.

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**Department Director**  
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*Rhonda Smith - Admin. Secretary*  
*Janice Denney - Volunteer Coordinator*  
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*Berkeley Boone - Naturalist*  
*Jake Martin - Intern*  
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SANDY CREEK  
NATURE CENTER INC.  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
holds monthly meetings in the  
ENSAT Building of Sandy Creek Nature Center.  
The public is welcome to attend.  
Call for dates and time.

Send contributions to:  
Editors - Berkeley Boone & Kate Mowbray  
Sandy Creek Nature Center  
205 Old Commerce Road  
Athens, GA 30607

The Hyla is a seasonal publication of  
Sandy Creek Nature Center, Natural Resources  
Division of the Athens-Clarke Department of  
Leisure Services. Issues are mailed to all Nature  
Center members and are available to Sandy Creek  
visitors. Contributions, in the form of articles,  
artwork, poetry, and anecdotes on natural subjects  
are welcomed.

The Hyla is printed on recycled paper.

Masthead illustration

## Message from the Board President...

The Board of Directors of SCNC, Inc proudly announces its latest contribution to the Nature Center: a SMARTboard! For those of you unfamiliar with this 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, know that this is a BIG deal.

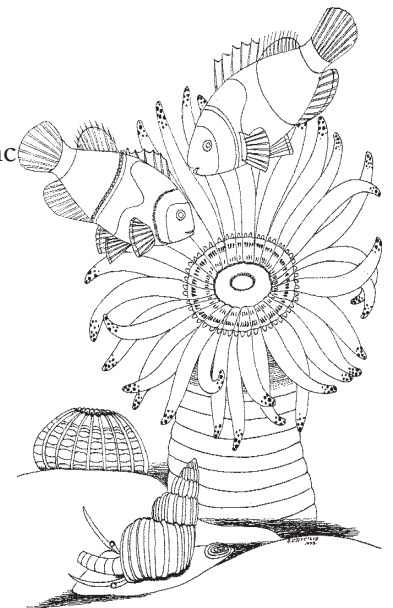
The entire system, referred to as a SMARTboard, is a combination of three integrated pieces of equipment which includes a computer loaded with the necessary software, a digital projector, and an interactive whiteboard. The SMARTboard may be used simply as a projection screen or it may become interactive. Functions can then be controlled by touching the icons appearing on the board. This affords the use of many presentation formats which can enhance classroom instruction as well as lectures and group meetings. Different teaching and learning strategies can be utilized as individuals or groups play an active role in the presentation. In addition, internet access allows for immediate interfacing with outside sources providing the opportunity to access classrooms or lectures around the world. The SCNC system uses the same software as the Clarke County School District, facilitating communication and planning between the two.

It should also be noted that files can be created and saved to document any work completed during a SMARTboard session.

The board feels this acquisition will definitely aid SCNC in the teaching and lecturing activities that take place here. As always, we are proud to be able to support this fine facility and fabulous staff who continue to provide quality programs for the community.

Jane Boyd, President  
Board of Directors,  
Sandy Creek Nature Center, Inc

*Join us for pies,  
cobblers, music and  
more on Sunday,  
Sept. 28, for our  
annual meeting.  
More information will  
be mailed out soon.*



# Creature Feature:

## Green Treefrog,

### *Hyla cinerea*

When scientists named the green treefrog- they really didn't go out on a limb (pun intended): it is a frog, it is green, and it can be found up in trees. However, there is so much more to these little frogs than it may seem.

First off, they are Georgia's "State Amphibian". Schoolchildren hoping to keep Georgia's natural environments protected offered the green treefrog as a choice for a state symbol. They reasoned that the frog, like Georgia's environments, couldn't survive with pollution. It was voted on and passed in the 2005 legislative session.

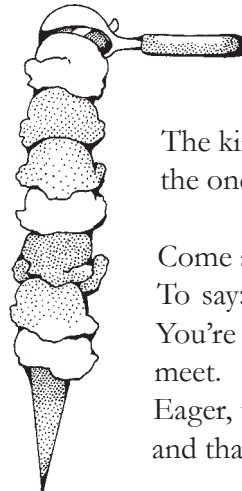
Green treefrogs have sticky toepads which allow them to walk up almost any surface- including glass. They can be seen clinging to windows and sliding glass doors during the summer months. They make their homes in our yards, particularly if there is some water nearby. In early summer, the males will gather together in the vegetation above the surface of the water and call very loudly. A single frog sounds similar to a cowbell, but an entire chorus of these calling frogs is something to behold!

During the day, they are usually found hunched over on the stems or branches of plants growing in or very near the water- hoping to remain unseen. We have several green treefrogs that can be seen on exhibit. They are in the front hallway by the back door to the garden. Come on by and see if you can spot them! 🌿



To a faithful friend at Sandy Creek Nature Center  
To a special somebody who watches everything in life;  
that is of all that nature brings  
We shall see the people who may never see the strife;  
of all creation great and small.

Some sweet day there maybe a welcoming smile,  
that tells you to be aware to see the little things that  
maybe just a little mild;  
in the things that nature brings.



Let me tell you true indeed;  
that there is a special someone  
that will see you through.

The kindness in his heart to see;  
the one who wants to share a helping hand.

Come and join the club with us  
To say: "Thank-you special friend."  
You're the kind of person that we all must  
meet.

Eager, trustworthy, and so kind;  
and that is something that can't be beat.

-Julie A. Sahrader  
Volunteer '91-'94

## Welcome, Jake!

Hello! My name is Jake Martin and I'm the new intern at Sandy Creek Nature Center. I've been at Sandy Creek for a couple months now and I could not be enjoying myself more. Originally from South Georgia, I came to Athens this summer to begin graduate school at the University of Georgia. Prior to my move to Athens, I worked as an Environmental Educator at the Jekyll Island 4-H Center.

I have already had many opportunities to meet and work with the great people at Sandy Creek, as well as the volunteers, who make every day a little easier. I particularly enjoy teaching and animal care, so the nature center has been a great fit for me so far. I also enjoy hiking, birding, and just being outdoors. I hope that my time at Sandy Creek will be a great learning experience and something that will stick with me no matter what career path I choose to pursue.

Feel free to stop by the nature center and say hello. I look forward meeting everyone! 🌿

# Volunteer Notes

by Janice Denney,  
Coordinator of Volunteer Services

Every person is a part of the puzzle. Join our community of volunteers to help with programs, events and fundraisers. We have projects big and small for adults, families and teens.



To sign up to volunteer, or for more information on any of these or other events, call or email Janice Denney at (706) 613-3615 x277 or [janicedenney@co.clarke.ga.us](mailto:janicedenney@co.clarke.ga.us)



**Saturday, October 4, 2008**  
**9am - 1pm**

Kick off and closing @ Dudley Park  
(corner of MLK Pkwy and E. Broad)  
clean-up sites around the county

Join locally to help with this statewide river clean-up to help protect Athens most valuable water source: the Oconee River and its tributaries. Individuals, families, and large groups are welcome!

- ~ Free t-shirt to the first 250 people to register
- ~ Breakfast and Lunch provided
- ~ Live music after the clean-up
- ~ Wear long pants, closed toe shoes
  - ~ Bring Gloves
  - ~ Rain or Shine
- ~ Boats are welcome to access the river

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities at the Nature Center:

### Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, September 22, 11am- Noon  
Discover the many things you can do by volunteering with the Natural Resources Division. Please tell your family and friends who may be interested in volunteering with us!

### Animal Care Orientation

Saturday, October 13, 1pm.  
Volunteer to help care for the critters at SCNC. Orientation will give volunteers a general overview of duties and will be followed by animal care training. Please call for more information.

### Scary Oozy Slimy Day

Saturday, October 25, 4 - 7pm.  
We need lots of volunteers for this once-a-year event! As a volunteer you can help with parking, the gift shop, sell concessions, or work arts and crafts or an activity booth. If you have a fun idea for your own booth, please let us know. We welcome additional crafts or activities that may help our visitors understand misunderstood creatures. Volunteers are encouraged to wear their Halloween costumes!

### Nature Center Open Houses

Saturday, September 20, 1- 3pm ~ Year of the Frog  
Saturday, November 22, 1-3pm ~ Turtles-Living Tanks  
Volunteers are needed to assist with arts, crafts, and activities for the public focusing on the topic of the day. Ideas are welcomed.

### SCNC Bird Seed Sale Delivery

Friday, October 31 (afternoon)  
Saturday, November 1, (morning)  
The annual Bird Seed Sale is an important fund raising event for SCNC Inc. Please consider volunteering to help organize bird seed orders, load orders into vehicles and make deliveries to senior citizens and customers with large orders.

## Naturalist's Notes!

*Things to look for in the great outdoors this fall season.*

As we edge into the less humid days of autumn, the environment around us prepares for the big chill. Spiders will begin to appear, as well as their webs- which sometimes makes for frustrating trail walking. Watch for the beautiful patterns of orb weaver spider webs. In the garden out back of the nature center, we have several remarkably brilliant yellow argiope spiders (also known as writing spiders). Look for them in the lantana and purple fountain grass!



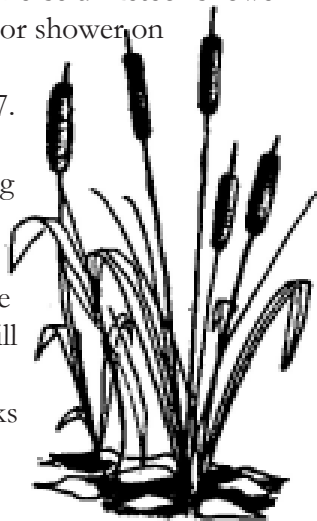
The Neotropical migrant birds will be moving through the area. Hummingbirds will all move south, but hawks and ducks will soon take their place here.

A few types of young animals will be more prevalent. Baby snakes and lizards may turn up in front of a surprised gardener doing some yardwork. Walking down trails and along creeks may reveal baby turtles out for a stroll or sitting in the sun.

Monarch butterflies will be moving into flower gardens very soon. Some of these orange beauties will be winging their way down to Mexico, others will not be making the journey, instead laying their eggs among the various milkweed plants. The black, yellow and green caterpillars start to eat as soon as they hatch and grow quickly!

Up in the sky, we will have the Perseid Meteor shower on August 12, the Orionid Meteor shower on October 21, and the Leonid Meteor shower on November 17. To see these 'showers', find a place away from other distracting lights, put down a blanket or lawn chair, and let your eyes adjust! There is a bit of patience involved though: the showers will not be shooting stars zinging by constantly, but one or two streaks per minute.

Get out and enjoy all that autumn has to offer!



## Got submissions?

Do you have something that you would like to share with other Hyla readers? A story, a natural history write-up, a poem... Or perhaps a question you would like answered by a naturalist? We accept submissions from Sandy Creek Nature Center members to include in future editions of the Hyla. Please see the inside of the front page for email or physical addresses to send submissions to, or to ask any questions that you may have. We look forward to hearing from you!

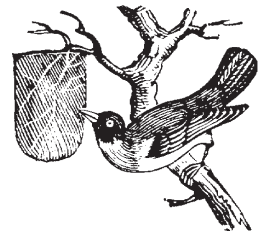
## 23rd Annual Bird Seed Sale

**Great quality, great prices**

Place orders by Oct. 23.

Sale flyers will be mailed to members and

volunteers in late September. Seed samples are on view at the Nature Center throughout October.



**No order too small  
or too big!**

Distribution will be Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. We load it into your car for you. Seniors and people with orders over \$50 can have home delivery.

For more information, call 706-613-3615 x 235 or by email [edithhollander@co.clarke.ga.us](mailto:edithhollander@co.clarke.ga.us).

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# Jack-O-Lantern Jog & Goblin Fun Run



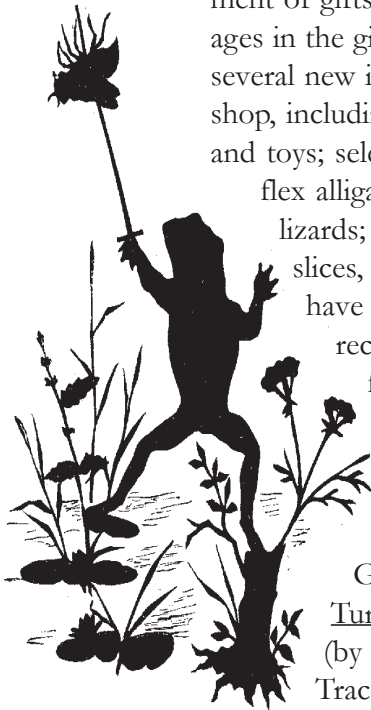
Sunday, Oct. 26, at Sandy Creek Nature Center

The 1-mile fun run starts at 2 p.m and the 4-mile run starts at 2:30 p.m. Both runs are along the beautiful Greenway on paved paths. Cost is \$15 per person and \$50 per family if registered by Oct. 18. Late registration is \$20 per person. For more information, go to [sandycreeknaturecenter.com](http://sandycreeknaturecenter.com) or call 706-613-3615 x 235 or register online with [active.com](http://active.com).

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## *Gifts from the Frog Pond Shop*

With winter holidays coming up in the not-too-distant future, Sandy Creek has a wide assortment of gifts for people of all ages in the gift shop. We've got several new items in the gift shop, including: various games and toys; selections of wooden flex alligators, dinosaurs and lizards; polished geode slices, and much more. We have several new and recently released books for sale as well, including titles like Amphibians and Reptiles of Georgia (edited by Whit Gibbons, et al) and Turtles of the Southeast (by Kurt Buhlmann, Tracey Tuberville and Whit Gibbons), and River Beds (by local author Gail Karwoski). Stop by and see what appeals to you! 🐸



-*"Critters and Choices"*, continued from page 1-  
grasses, and place the box up in a secure location off of the ground. Chances are the bird parents know that the baby is down there somewhere, and can locate it by its calls. They will be able to care for it from there.

The object of this article is not to make people feel bad, or to scare them away from wanting to help animals, but instead to let people know that the wildlife will be alright on its own. We are not trying to dissuade people from calling or stopping by the nature center with questions or with animals to identify. In fact, we are glad to see and hear from people like that. It means that they have an interest, and that is what we want to foster- that drive to learn more, and find out new information. Here at Sandy Creek, we try to provide the best information so that our guests can make the best choices, in this case for both themselves and for the wildlife involved.

In regards to what to do with the baby turtles, that's a tough one. Very few people or facilities want them once they know what they are. So the best bet is to not buy the turtles, and tell others to do the same.

So, please come see us if you have a question about our native wildlife. We'd like to help you out as best we can. We just have to remember to trust in nature, it really does know what it is doing! 🐸



# Donors and Contributors

*Thanks to all the following members who joined or renewed during this past quarter.*

## Sustaining

Will Chamberlin

## Contributing

The Boyd Family  
Larry and Gail Dendy  
Celia B. Jones  
Jean and Ken Jordan  
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Linda Ritter

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Athens Blue Print and Copy Shop

## Welcome to our new Corporate Partners:

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*Special thanks to the Junior Ladies Garden Club for becoming members of Sandy Creek Nature Center, Inc.*



## Goody bags at Sandy Creek Nature Center

Planning a birthday party at Sandy Creek Nature Center? Make it easy by ordering goody bags for all your guests. Simply order the number you need one week ahead of the party. They will be ready the morning of the birthday party. It's that easy!

The Birthday Party Goody Bags include at least four toys/games with nature themes: snakes, turtles, insects, dinosaurs, fish, and birds. Cost is \$3 (including tax). For more information, call 706-613-3615 x 0.



