

EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 49, Number 6

March 2009

CALENDAR

Tue., Mar. 3, 7:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting, Pine Jog. (New time: doors open at 7, refreshments at 7:15, meeting at 7:30!)

Sat., Mar. 7., 7:30 a.m. Tropical Audubon invites you to Everglades National Park. Leader: John Boyd, TAS. Meet in parking lot of Coe Visitor Center, ENP (Main Entrance). There is a fee to enter the park. Bring lunch. To carpool from the West Palm Beach area, meet at Target Garden Center, (Boynton Beach and Hagen Ranch) at 5:30 a.m.; call Linda for more information, 561-742-7791.

Fri., Mar. 13, 10:00 a.m. Behind the scenes at Okeehchee. Clive Pinnock is giving a special tour of the raptor compound at Okeehchee Nature Center, 7715 Forest Hill Blvd, West Palm Beach. There will be a special raptor program —don't miss the painted buntings.

Sat., Mar. 14, 8 a.m. Okeehchee Park. Forest Hill Road, Lake Worth. Leader: Scott Scheinhaus

Sat., Mar. 14, 10:00 a.m. Young Naturalists. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, 10216 Lee Road, Boynton Beach. The program will explain water and explore fish in the Everglades. Call Linda at 561-742-7791 to register.

Saturday, Mar. 21, 8:00 a.m. Solid Waste Authority, 7501 North Jog Rd (take 45th St. west until it ends, Southern Entrance straight ahead) meet in parking lot. Leader: Claudine Laabs.

Tue., Mar. 24, 9 a.m. Hypoloxo Scrub, Boynton Beach. Meet in parking lot, Hypoluxo Road. Leader: Sabrina Carle

Sun., Apr. 5, SUNSET/MOONRISE Lake Worth Lagoon Cruise. For more information, call Claudine Laabs, 561-655-9779

General Membership Meeting Wild Creatures from Busch Wildlife Sanctuary Tuesday, March 3, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

David Hitzig and his staff have been providing our society with great programs for over 10 years and will be returning for our March 3rd meeting. This is always one of our most popular meetings because you never know what animals might show up: opossum? spotted skunk? red-shouldered hawk? eastern diamondback rattlesnake? Come see what our friends at Busch wildlife have in store for us this month. Established in 1983, they have expanded their focus from caring for sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals to creating outreach programs to over 50,000 people annually. Live, non-releasable wild animals play an important role in the Sanctuary's educational presentations. These animals offer the public a rare opportunity to learn from nature up close, and help create a memorable message of respect for all living creatures and their habitats.

If you've seen any of these programs you will know it is one not to be missed and if you haven't you are in for a great evening. Please join us at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center this month; doors open at 7, refreshments at 7:15, meeting begins at 7:30.

Upcoming ASE Events

March 17, 2009, 2:00 PM:

Meeting at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center

The third of ASE's Tuesday afternoon "south county" meetings at Gumbo Limbo features a talk on Green Energy for Home and Business, by Mark Takaki, The Green Power Team. Gumbo Limbo Nature Center is located at 1801 N. Ocean Boulevard, Boca Raton, FL 33432.

"The Birds of South Florida" program at the Society of the Four Arts, April 1, 2:30 PM

Claudine Laabs will present her slide program of wildlife in travelogue form, starting at Pelican Island and continuing through the peninsula to the Keys. For reservations, call (561)805-8562.

Birding Trip to Fort DeSoto, April 18-19

The trip to Fort DeSoto has been resurrected; if you are interested in going on this trip, please call Linda to reserve a spot: 561-742-7791. We need to reserve the rooms quickly, and this trip fills up fast, so please call asap.

The Everglade Kite

is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Everglades, published 11 times a year.

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<http://www.auduboneverglades.org>

Audubon Society of the Everglades, incorporated in 1966, serves communities in Palm Beach County. Our purpose is to promote the conservation of wildlife and the natural environment and to advance human understanding of our place in the total ecological system.

Bird of the Month: Burrowing Owl

The Bird of the Month for February is our very own Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia*. Bring pictures to the meeting; come and hear special information about this charming bird. Is there any special bird you have been wondering about? Call Linda or email hlindaase@aol.com with your ideas.

President's Perspective

Linda Humphries

I seem to procrastinate at times. Sometimes I don't want to try something new because it might be too complicated. Since I am now President I figured it was time I tried to figure out how the Backyard Bird Count really works. Well it was so easy—I am ashamed that I didn't do it the last few years. I went out and walked around my area (I live near the Mangrove Park in Boynton Beach, off of Federal Hwy). I saw 17 species in a half hour. I then came in the house and logged the information into the Backyard Bird Count website and sent it off. It was not a hard process at all. You did not need to be a computer genius to do it. A couple of members called me with their list which I put in the computer and sent in to the website. It was really very simple and did not take up very much time. As I did my walk I was surprised to see a Belted Kingfisher and a Prairie Warbler. I realized I don't take enough time out of my day to go and look and see what is around me. I always think tomorrow I will take that walk.

If you didn't participate in the Backyard Bird Count this year, make the time to try it next year, it is a lot of fun! If you find yourself saying I will walk tomorrow, as I do, try to make time and go outside for just 10 minutes, you might be amazed at what you see. As I am writing this article I heard what sounded like a screech owl. I have been hearing it for a couple of weeks. Following my new plan, I quit typing, looked for a flashlight and my Birdsong Identifier (it plays a screech owl) and went outside. I am so excited; a screech owl landed on a chain link fence within arm's length of me!! I talked to it for a few minutes and then came back inside; I didn't want to disturb it any more. The lesson I learned this week is to take a few extra minutes to enjoy nature: my heart is still pounding from my screech owl experience! Good luck and happy birding!

TogetherGreen Grant Project Progresses

The demonstration native plant landscape to be installed at Pine Jog is well into development. The grant awarded ASE from National Audubon in conjunction with Toyota will fund planting, signage and pamphlets. This garden will be used to teach members of the community how to use natives, adapt for conditions and save money on watering. Land Design South has done a landscape design plan pro bono. Native plants will be shown in different landscape designs from casual to formal. Rainwater harvesting will be used almost exclusively. Plants will be matched to appropriate conditions of wet/dry and salt/cold tolerant. With proper planting, PBC residents can make a difference for birds and butterflies while decreasing watering costs!

Green Energy Conference Coming to Palm Beach County

The South Florida Green, Energy, and Climate Conference/Expo takes place March 9–11 in Palm Beach County; workshops and presentations from representative of government and industry will explore the challenges and opportunities of green work. For more information or to register, visit <http://floridagreenconference.com>.

Christmas Count: fewer birds, more birders

The number of species and total number of birds seen were down this year on the West Palm Beach Christmas Bird Count. But it was not for lack of effort. Fifteen team captains led 54 birders into the field on count day, an increase in both categories over last year. Unfortunately, finding birds seems to be increasingly more difficult in our paved-over and still hurricane-damaged count circle.

The teams recorded 136 countable species this year. That figure is aided by three more species now considered "countable." Excluding those three, to compare to last year: we had 133, versus 139 a year ago. We tallied nearly 18,000 birds altogether.

This year's highlights include a Dickcissel, seen by Carl Edwards. It's only the second time this species has been reported on our count. Another second-time species: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, registered by Linda McCandless' team. Two groups had Peregrine Falcon, always a treat to see and only the tenth time on West Palm CBC. Brian Hope had Yellow-breasted Chat, a tough bird in our area and a miss on our count the past nine years.

We registered highest-ever numbers for several species on our CBC. These include Brown Pelican and Great Black-backed Gull. Glaring misses this year were Robin and Ovenbird. And we had just 65 Fish Crows.

I want to thank all participants for their incredible effort. Every team provided critical numbers for one species or another. Many species were recorded as single individuals or seen by only one or two groups. True teamwork!

--Chuck Weber, compiler

ASE Conservation Co-Chair Wins Governor's Award

Rosa Durando recently headed to Tallahassee at the invitation of Governor Crist, where he awarded her a 1000 Points of Light Award. Rosa was nominated by the South Florida Water Management District for her years of dedicated volunteer service to protect the environment. To keep up with what items are coming before the agencies, Rosa receives all official communications from the district and many other governmental agencies. Her special favorites are the engineering reports! She reads them all and gives public comments on many. "If the case goes to court," she explained, "the first thing they ask is - did you voice your objection in public hearings?" With Rosa attending public meetings, the answer is *yes* and the case can continue. Congratulations, Cissy! ASE salutes your commitment and dedication.

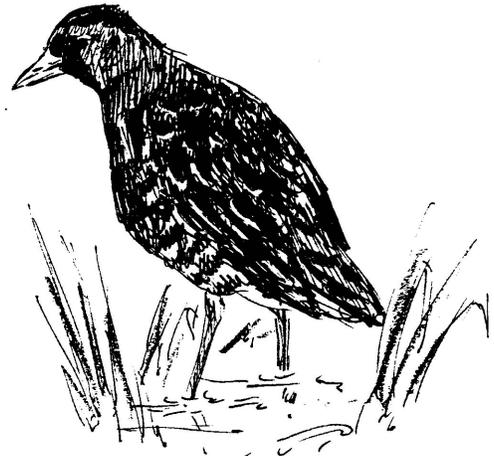
Tenth Annual Everglades Day Report

On February 7, 2009, Everglades Day celebrated its 10th anniversary! Judging by the visitors spread around the refuge on trails and tours and at exhibit tents and speaking venues, the event was a success despite windy conditions. It was an honor to have Jim Kurth as the main speaker as he is the new appointee for Deputy Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It was the first opportunity for most to see the new refuge Visitor Center! The audience was quite diverse thanks in large part to the PBC School District which sent fliers to all schools. Manatee Elementary sent fliers home with students. It was a first visit for many families and the first time they learned that the refuge was a part of the Everglades!

Check out Youtube for video of the event produced by Gstar School of the Art students. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr4ei_UyM8Y&feature=channel

Thank You, Volunteers!

Cynthia Plockelman
Stella Rossi
Charles & Martha Musgrove
John and Sheila Elliott
Paton White
Linda Humphries
Carol Shields
Debra Smith
Vallery Brauer
Rick & Linda Byrnes
Roy & Susan Snyder
Marvin & Sheila Calderon
Kay Skoog



Sora (*Porzana carolina*) by Kirsten Munson

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Check out our online community at www.auduboneverglades.org. Send us your thoughts!

Join Audubon Society of the Everglades

There are now two ways to join ASE: Chapter-only membership, and membership through the National Audubon Society.

Chapter-Only Membership

When you become a member of the Audubon Society of the Everglades by using the form at right, all of your membership fees are put to use supporting **local** projects: Everglades Day; Education Programs such as model schools and field trips; Scholarships; and Conservation activities. Audubon Society of the Everglades members also receive 11 issues of the *Everglade Kite* newsletter.

National Audubon Society Membership

When you join ASE through the National Audubon Society, you also receive 6 issues of *Audubon Magazine*, and membership in Audubon of Florida. For details, visit www.audubon.org. To join the National Society, send your information as above, but make your check out to **National Audubon Society**. NOTE: The annual fee is \$20 for regular NAS membership. In either case, send your check, payable to ASE (\$15/\$10) or NAS (\$20) as appropriate, along with this form to

Membership, Audubon Society of the Everglades
P.O. Box 16914
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-6914

Audubon Society of the Everglades (ASE)

YES! I want to become a **chapter-only member** of ASE. Enclosed is my check made payable to Audubon Society of the Everglades for:

Regular \$15 Senior (62+)/Student \$10

I would like to save ASE postage and printing costs; please send my *Kite* via email

I would like to donate an additional

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$_____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

e-mail _____

I would like to volunteer for:

- Education
 Conservation
 Everglades Day
 Fundraising
 Other: _____

E00 7XCH

Audubon Society of the Everglades general meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. (refreshments at 7) at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, located on Summit Blvd, near the intersection of Summit and Jog, in West Palm Beach. The public is welcome to attend.