



# EVERGLADE KITE

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
OF THE EVERGLADES  
(serving Palm Beach County, Florida)

Volume 44, No. 2

November 2003

## ~ ~ CALENDAR ~ ~

SAT. Nov. 1, 9:00 a.m.

Beginning Birding Class. Okeeheelee Nature Center, 7715 Forest Hill Blvd., West Palm Beach. Instructor: Clive Pinnock. Reservations and fee required, 561-233-1400 weekdays.

SAT. Nov. 8, 9:00 a.m.

Beginning Birding Class, part 2.

TUES. Nov. 11, 8:00 a.m.

Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Delray Beach. Meet at boardwalk. East side of Jog Rd, 1.5 miles north of Atlantic Ave. Leader: Wilma Zane.

THURS. Nov. 27, THANKSGIVING

SAT. Nov. 29, 8:00 a.m.

Wakodahatchee Wetlands. Meet as above. Leaders: Doug Beach and Linda Most

## TUESDAY, November 4th PROGRAM

Claudine Laabs, Program Chair

### HARPY EAGLES BY RON MAGILL

The realm of the HARPY EAGLE is high in the towering trees of tropical America. Gliding along the the canopy, the world's largest eagle makes meals of unsuspecting monkeys and sloths. Little was known about the habits of these strong, stealthy birds of prey until studies in the rainforests of Panama were conducted by Ron Magill and Wildlife Conservation International in the 1990's. Nests were observed in trees as tall as a 12 story building and birds were radio-collared.

Ron Magill is the Director of Communications at Miami Metro Zoo. He has been involved with the rebuilding of the "Wings of Asia" aviary as well as restoring habitats for other animals there. He is also involved with King Cheetahs in Africa and is often on national television explaining their plight.

Please join us to learn about the world's largest eagles from the world's tallest zookeeper - Tuesday, November 4th at 7:30 PM at the Community Center in Howard Park.

## SPECIAL EVENT



The Florida Trail Association's "Big O Hike" around Lake Okeechobee is scheduled for November 22-30.

You may join all or part of the hike. Thanksgiving dinner will be at the Clewiston Inn. For more information call Paul Cummings at (561)963-9906.



ASE would like to wish everyone a  
**Happy and Safe**  
**THANKSGIVING**





## **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

— *Carol Shields* —

I often wonder, with all the development and the influx of exotic wildlife, what is happening to the food web? You know, insects eat plants, birds eat insects, reptiles eat birds, etc. etc.

Take, for example a housing development that once was habitat to snakes, nesting birds, insects and rodents. Snakes might move to another location. Birds will have to find other nesting trees. But they very well could leave the area and fly further inland or north. Rodents and insects might not travel to other locations, but establish new habitat in what gets developed or dilapidated.

How is this affecting the balance of the food chain locally and regionally? We already have seen what the loss of panther habitat (predator) has done to the wild boar (prey) population. With no snakes or birds in check to consume insects and rodents it would stand to reason that these populations, too, would increase. Is that the crux of the problem in inner cities infested with rats and roaches? I wonder.

And what of the recent incidents of people releasing exotics pets into the wild because they no longer wish to care for them? Pythons are found in the Everglades; iguanas are in Dade and Broward. There are no known predators of the iguana in South Florida. And after a recent incident in Everglades National Park, alligators might possibly be predator to the python, but that is yet to be known.

We try to keep a balance, but it is not always successful. Developers continue to destroy and develop; wildlife officers cannot rid all of South Florida successfully of exotic wildlife.

The responsibility is ours.

And there are ways we can help.

In Belle Glade is an ongoing research study on Barn owls. Dr. Raid works with the local sugar growers by installing Barn Owl boxes. These boxes quickly gain avian residents who, in turn, hunt the rodents that devour sugar cane. No pesticides, no herbicides, just a natural remedy by Mother Nature weaving her food web.

Think about preserving natural lands for wildlife to exist. The next time you see a snake or perhaps a large spider in your path, leave it alone. It is an important link in the food web.

## **ROMANCE**

By Hank McCall

Birds become romantic in the spring-time for one undeviating purpose... perpetuating the species. They sugar coat hard labor with a little song and dance routine.

Sandhill cranes jump and flap their wings at their ladies. Prairie chickens find bare grounds called leks where the roosters parade, dance, and whistle for the hens. Least terns catch little fish as presents for their intended. In Europe, lapwings gather at dusk to perform aerial ballets and sing loudly all night long to bewitch their fair ladies.

The most skillful enticement is made by Australia's satin bower bird. This robin size fellow is so handsome in his violet black coat that the nubile females flock to him. He builds a love nest with two entry walls 10 inches high, 12 inches wide, and three feet long. This leads to a bower that shelters the nuptial couch. The whole structure is decorated with flowers, colorful papers, and scraps of plastic.

He poses and postures until an innocent female comes along. He dances her to the nuptial couch, and when he is sure that she is fertilized, he kicks her out and proceeds to woo another sweetheart. The jilted little lady wanders through the jungle, builds her nest, lays her eggs, and raises her young alone, alone, alone.



## **Are You Getting Your FLORIDA NATURALIST?**

Alison Austin is the Outreach and Communications Director for Audubon of Florida. Please be advised that if your membership is current (that is paid up) and you are not receiving the Florida Naturalist please get in touch with Alison directly and give her your information so she can trace the problem. Her email address is: [aaustin@audubon.org](mailto:aaustin@audubon.org)

## **Conservation Corner – Cissie Durando**

I feel there should be acknowledgement and some discussion of the proposed amendment to the FL Constitution being bandied about with a request for voters to sign on. It is being endorsed not only by the FL Sierrans, but individuals fed up with what incorporated and unincorporated areas have permitted in comprehensive Land Use Plans and subsequent zoning. It would require all Comprehensive Plan changes to go to a public vote or referendum.

As one who served ten years on the county Land Use Advisory Board, I have Considered this as a possible avenue. I am of the opinion it will not produce the desired results. Why? Because not enough people vote. Not enough people are informed. Not enough people care to be informed. There are not enough funds to support all the referenda to address all the requested changes to the Land Use Plan every year. Too many people are influenced by hired professionals to support (or not support) a Land Use Plan change.

A county in Washington recently decided to allow voters in that county to elect a Planning Director. That has never been done before in America. It will be interesting to follow this move of desperation! It seems more in line with representative democracy, and that's what the politics of this Country are all about.

It seems simple and straight forward enough twice to support and pass a public referendum in P. Bch. County to buy environmentally sensitive land and land in the agriculture reserve for conservation. After two years of ranting and raving I have not been successful to have the county pass an ordinance that would protect these lands, in perpetuity, for the purpose they supposedly were bought. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of a weak declaration of purpose will probably pass the Board of County Commissioners on Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>. I did not see a great public turn out at the workshops or the 1<sup>st</sup> reading. I can still hope a knowledgeable large group turns out for the final adoption.

If any of you "Out there" would like to attend a conservation meeting in any discussion on various crises, do get in touch!



## **Learn To Bird!**

ASE and the Okeeheelee Nature Center are working together this year to offer Beginning Birding. The workshop will be held at Okeeheelee Nature Center on November 1 from 9:00am – 12:00pm; followed on November 8 by a special field trip for workshop participants.

Okeeheelee Nature Center manager Clive Pinnock, an accomplished birder and field naturalist, will present an introduction to birding. Topics covered will include basic bird identification and behavior, an introduction to field guides, how to choose and use binoculars and spotting 'scopes, and dos and don'ts when birding in the field. Also planned is a special treat for participants: an up-close and personal visit with some of the birds of prey that live at Okeeheelee.

The workshop costs \$10.00 per participant and reservations are required. Please call the Okeeheelee Nature Center at 233-1400 to register. The Nature Center is located in Okeeheelee Park at 7715 Forest Hill Blvd., West Palm Beach, 1 mile west of Jog Road.

## **Carol Browner Becomes National Audubon Chair**

AT the National Audubon Board Of Directors Meeting last June, Carol Browner was elected as the first woman ever to chair Audubon. Ms. Browner was head of the Environmental Protection Agency from 1993 to 2001 and served in that position longer than any of her predecessors. Her tenure was marked by the implementation of some of the strongest Clean Water and Clean Air regulations in U.S. history. She greatly accelerated Superfund clean-up sites and created the highly successful urban Brownfields program. Ms. Browner succeeds Donald C. O'Brien, Jr. who is retiring after nearly 24 years on Audubon's Board of Directors, 15 of those as Chair.

## Memberships in the National Audubon Society make great gifts!

In Florida, a special 3-way membership automatically makes you a member in the National Audubon Society, Audubon of Florida and Audubon Society of the Everglades. Your membership will include subscriptions to AUDUBON Magazine and the EVERGLADE KITE.

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**E00 7XCH**

The Audubon Society of the Everglades General Meetings are held  
the first Tuesday of every month, 7:30 p.m. at Howard Park Recreation Center in West Palm Beach.  
The public is welcome.

Deadline for submissions for the Dec. issue is Nov. 8th.

### Audubon Society of the Everglades

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