



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida
Volume 46, Number 2
November 2005

CALENDAR

Tues. Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Monthly Program, Howard Park

Tues. Nov. 8, 8:00 a.m.

Hungryland Slough and Sweet Bay Natural Area. Meet at Hungryland parking area 1.7 mi inside JW Corbett WMA. Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd. North of Northlake Blvd. (13 mi west of I-95). Leader: Barbara Liberman.

Nov. 5, 6, and 12, 7:00 a.m.

Riverbend Park, Jupiter. The Parks Department is offering guided walking tours, starting from the Parks Office, 9060 Indiantown Road (1.5 mi west of I-95). These are not Audubon field trips, but all interested birders are welcome. Contact John Wildner, Parks Supervisor, 561-748-2028

Sat. Nov. 12, 4:00 p.m.

Wakodahatchee Wetlands SUNSET walk. Delray Beach. Meet at boardwalk. East side of Jog Road. 1.5 mi north of Atlantic Ave. Leader: TBA

Sat. Nov. 26, 8:00 a.m.

Green Cay, Boynton Beach. Meet at the nature center on Hagen Ranch Road, 1 mi south of Boynton beach Blvd. Leader: Ben Kolstad.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please submit articles and/or photos to newsletter@auduboneverglades.org for future editions of the Kite or for publication on our website. I've seen lots of you out there with cameras; please share your images with us! If you have an article with photos, we'll print it in the web-only Kite; if you have photos only, we'll post them to www.everglades.audubon.org.

Lake Worth Lagoon—Manatees and Sea Turtles Included

Paul Davis

Coastal resource issues are always in the news because beaches and marine life are important to Florida's economy. Paul Davis will discuss threats to local coastal resources and describe monitoring and restoration work affecting estuaries, beaches and reefs, including manatees and sea turtles. He will give us a broad overview and let us know how we can help.

Paul Davis has a BS in Biology from Stony Brook (NY), worked in Palm Beach County in the field of monitoring and coastal

management for 27 years. He is currently the Supervisor of the Maritime Resources Section of Environmental Resources Management, which monitors and manages reef, beach, dune, mangrove, seagrass and estuarine communities with emphasis on endangered species such as manatees and sea turtles.

Please join us and learn more about our coastal concerns Tuesday, November 1 at 7:30 PM at the Howard Park Community Center.

Everybody Loves Birds (DVD by Peter Merritt)

Susan Snyder

EVERYBODY LOVES BIRDS is a DVD which captures attention from children and adults alike! Bird identification is made easy thanks to Hayley Merritt's narration and the great videography of Peter Merritt and his wife Victoria. Hayley really sells birding with her enthusiastic, clear delivery. The family worked on this project during the summer before Hayley entered sixth grade. Many of you know Peter. Recently he has shared programs about warblers and endangered bird species at our ASE meetings.

By presenting Florida birds in their natural habitats, beginning birding is made easy. Species are grouped by where they are usually found: pond, beach, field, yard, marsh, etc. Videos show the birds in action! Hayley gives an interesting fact or description of behavior for each bird.

At the end of each section is a review. Final tests mix birds across categories. The DVD also includes a file with activities and worksheets developed by the family to extend interest and knowledge.

EVERYBODY LOVES BIRDS would make a great gift for children. The DVD format allows viewers to review or skip around to practice their bird ID skills. The cost is \$25.00. To order call 772-485-8016 or email merritt@gate.net.

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The Everglade Kite

is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Everglades, published 12 times a year.

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Audubon Society of the Everglades, incorporated in 1966, serves communities from Jupiter and Tequesta south to Boca Raton; in other words all 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. .

Conservation Report

Rosa Durando

The Scripps debates are alive and well. South Florida Water Management District's latest (Oct. 12) approval in this most sensitive area (headwaters to the Wild & Scenic River) allows a water/wastewater pump station, chemical tanks, generator, underground fuel tank, 5 million gallon water tank, and oh, yes: associated entrance drive.

There is continued euphemistic reference to "a created on site natural area." No details as to size, depth, etc., except there will be a pumped runoff from the developed area into this (oxymoron) "natural area." Sounds like a conveyance canal to me.

There were protests, to no avail.

- Dropped from the agenda was an item that would have led to discussion that sounded like it was a road through the adjacent Vavrus property. It will be back.

- Also postponed until November, further discussion on WMD's contract with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on exotic removal contract with the wildlife refuge.

- Progress on Loxahatchee River restoration was covered. Tremendous support by local citizenry including Martin County helped this.

- There is no such coordinated effort to hold Wellington and the SFWMD responsible for cleaning up their dirty direct pumped discharge into the refuge. This urban/agricultural water is supposed to meet certain standards and be diverted north by 2006. I do not believe the plan to date will accomplish this.

- The battles over lake levels in Lake Okeechobee continue unresolved. The estuary contamination in St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee will not be solved soon. There will be a special local meeting on Wednesday, November 2. The next board meeting will be in Key Largo on November 9.

Those of you who have a special place in your heart for **Gopher Tortoises** please comment now to Kim Jamerson: (352) 333-9577, or Joy Hill: (352) 732-1225. Both are with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. The current philosophy of "incidental take" is an abomination.

There will be five Legislative Delegation meetings from Sugar Island to Boca Raton. Call for more details.

Review: A Short History of Nearly Everything

Hank McCall

This is a history of a little round speck of dust that has been floating in space for 4 billion years.

Its lesson is that in spite of catastrophic changes in climate and geography, life always goes on.

August 1883 witnessed the explosion of the volcano Krakatau that threw so much dust into the atmosphere the 3 following years of winter stopped agriculture.

Orchard, NE has a fossil bed of rhinoceros, elephants, zebras, camels, sabertooth deer, and turtles that all died from breathing

volcanic dust. The eruption of a caldera under all of Yellowstone Park covered the northwestern state with 7 inches of dust. This pocket of liquid magma is still there and it has exploded six times at about 600,000-year intervals. The fossils are aged at that figure.

This book is written with a light touch and is a MUST READ!

PS—Have you seen MARCH OF THE PENGUINS yet? This documentary is a must-see—hurry, before it leaves town!

Whooping Crane Reintroduction

Jim Harris, ICF

This year, 24 Whooping Crane chicks are almost ready for their first migration south from Wisconsin's Necedah National Wildlife Refuge—the largest cohort to date. For the first time, the project will be using two methods of releasing birds to the wild. Most of the chicks will be following ultralight aircraft to their wintering grounds in Florida. However, four Whooping Cranes are being released in central Wisconsin using a technique called the Direct Autumn Release, in which chicks reared according to the costume/isolation-rearing protocol are released in the company of older Whooping Cranes that have successfully migrated in the past.

Whooping Cranes face a long journey before they are safe from the threat of extinction. They need our help to ensure their survival. The current eastern migratory Whooping Crane reintroduction project is being undertaken by the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, a team of non-profit and governmental organizations whose founding members include the International Crane Foundation, International Whooping Crane Recovery Team, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Operation Migration Inc., US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey's Patuxent

Wildlife Research Center and National Wildlife Health Center, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and many other dedicated partners.

Once the birds arrive in Florida, biologists from ICF and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) care for the birds through their first winter. The birds live in an open-topped pen in the salt marshes at the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge along Florida's Gulf Coast, and are free to fly in and out. They do not become truly independent until the day they start their northwards migration—in March or April the following year.

ICF and FWS personnel also track the birds north, through the summer and in subsequent migrations with help from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other collaborators. Aside from gathering valuable information that can help us improve future releases, we occasionally intervene when a bird is lost or in trouble. Very few interventions have been necessary.

*Update by Jim Harris, ICF President and Joan Garland, ICF Outreach Coordinator. Dick Freshley of ASE forwarded this email update to the Kite. **If you're interested in a field trip to Chassahowitzka to see the Whooping Cranes this year, email fieldtrips@auduboneverglades.org or call Gloria Hunter.***

Mid-Season Migration Roundup

Ben Kolstad and Marcella Munson

September and October birding began slowly, but picked up steam as the days grew noticeably shorter, the moon lower and lower in the sky, and Mars higher and higher in the evening. Brian Hope reported that the strong winds out of the east and south early in September blew some rarities into the county: a juvenile Bridled Tern was seen for quite some time at the Boynton Inlet where it was making a comfortable living feeding on the fish entrails left by obliging fisherfolk. When it first arrived, it was in the company of an Arctic Tern, the not-so-common Common Tern, and several Shearwaters closer to shore than usual.

The first few field trips of the season brought a more limited variety of species than we've had in some years, but Ray Buchholz's walk through Spanish River turned up several notable warbler species, including a Prothonotary, a Chestnut-sided, and several Cape Mays. The group got two excellent looks at the Chestnut-sided as it gleaned insects near The Mound.

Oct. 1: Turkey Creek, near Melbourne is usually a fabulous habitat and a likely spot for migrants, but we caught it on an off day. Nevertheless, Bill and Shirley Hill were able to find us a few individuals, including a Blackburnian, Cape May, Yellow-throated, and Magnolia. After leaving the sanctuary, we pushed

farther north to Viera Wetlands, where we were treated to good views of several large families of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, a pair of Crested Caracara preening each other atop a pine tree, a Bald Eagle, and scores of Blue-winged Teal, our earliest wintering duck.

Oct. 8: Frenchman's Forest was the most successful early season field trip. Marvin Greenberg and Chuck Weber scoured the area for 13 warbler species, several vireos, and a few raptors. Almost the first bird of the day was a Peregrine Falcon flying just above the treetops as we were congregating in the parking lot. Other highlights included several extremely active Brown Thrashers, some reticent Yellow-Billed Cuckoos, at least one Tennessee Warbler, and many other warbler species, including Blackburnian, Cape May, Black-and-White, Yellow-throated, Worm-eating, Magnolia, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Black-throated Blue, and Ovenbird. All in all, 28 species were spotted.

We hope to see you on our full slate of November field trips! Even if you can't join us on these scheduled trips, it is well worth getting out and birding. Folks have been reporting migrants at the same locations, mere days before or after our trips. Try your birder's luck: grab those binoculars and get into the field—the birds are migrating; who knows what you might find??

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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The Audubon Society of the Everglades General Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at Howard Park Community Center in West Palm Beach. The phone number for the Community Center is (561) 835-7055. The public is welcome to attend.

Deadline for submissions for the **December 2005** issue is **November 10th**

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