



# EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES  
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida  
Volume 46, Number 3  
December 2005

## CALENDAR

**Tues. Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.**

Monthly Program, Art Auction, and Buffet Dinner, Howard Park

**Sat. Dec. 10, 8:00 a.m.**

Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at Marsh Trail. Lee Rd., W side of 441, S of Boynton Beach Blvd. Admission to refuge is \$5 per car. Leaders: Marge Eaton and Gloria Hunter.

**Tues. Dec. 13, 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: Dorothy Brindle

**Sat. Dec. 31**

Christmas Bird Count. Call Gloria Hunter, 561-585-7714

**Jan. 27-29**

Merritt Island NWR. Holiday Inn Titusville group rate: \$79/night. Call 321-269-2121. Slide show at the hotel Friday the 27th. Leaders: Phil and Ann Weinrich

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## Holiday Buffet, Art Auction, and Program

*December 6, 2005*

Come and celebrate with our special Buffet Dinner,\* Silent Auction, and presentation of *100 Years of Audubon*.

The year 2005 is the centennial of Audubon becoming a national corporation and setting up headquarters in New York. Florida has always figured prominently in Audubon history because of our nesting wading birds which were hunted to near extinction for their plumes. Our program covers Audubon's conservation efforts locally and nationally.

The art auction features the four Audubon prints from the new centennial edition (donated by Robert Hall of Zebra Publishing), the Harpy Eagle print, paintings, books, and porcelain birds, so bring your wallet and your checkbook!

Join us December 6 at 7:30 PM at the Howard Park Community Center.

\*ASE provides the main course; members A-L, please bring a vegetable side dish; M-Z please bring a dessert. Thank you.

## President's Comments

*Claudine Laabs*

Hurricane Wilma's wicked winds blasted through South Florida on October 24, after pummeling the Yucatan for days. The fury of nature gives way to softer, gentler times as we and our animal friends rebuild. I hope all of you are recovering well and getting in a holiday mood. There is much to appreciate in the world around us and there is much work to do to protect our environment.

It is with great sadness that I report the death of a friend and great environmentalist. Rich Paul from Tampa's Audubon Sanctuary office passed away on November 11 after a struggle with cancer. He once said "Nature is indifferent." He will be missed, but his work and his life are worth celebrating.

## Christmas Bird Count 2005

It is time for experienced birders in the area to start thinking of the upcoming Christmas Bird Count. Gloria Hunter will be the Christmas Bird Count Compiler for the county and she will appreciate all the help she can find!

The date this time is Saturday, December 31, 2005. Those who have participated before are urged to contact their team leader before long.

If you are interested in joining us for the first time, call Gloria at 585-7714.

You can see the results of last year's 105th CBC in Volume 59 of *American Birds*. The 151 species recorded in West Palm Beach last year, while respectable, is certainly beatable!

## **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 news of the moment is no final decree by Judge Middlebrooks on Scripps. A quick interpretation has been that the judge's November 10th decision was confusing, ambiguous, and open to second guessing as to what could happen.

I have reached the conclusion that the judge was playing Solomon: "Divide that baby!" Problem is, too much at stake, and that gamble (mediation) will fail.

I do not advocate violation of the Sunshine law, but I hope there will be honest consideration/discussion between commissioners and that they may come to a majority opinion to MOVE IT!

**November 9th and 10th**, two long days of seminars and panels titled "21st Century Economic Summit." It was sponsored by the Business Development Board (taxpayer supported), the Economic Development Research Institute (BDB plus corporate support). Builder's groups, Port, Chambers of Commerce, Agribiz, investment groups also kicked in and manipulated the show. There was lots of contribution by politicians. The mantra was economic development. If I had not been there, there would have

been no reference to water (quality or supply), Lake Okeechobee, the Refuge, Loxahatchee River, lawsuits (including Everglades National Park). The glib planners talk about "a sense of peace" and "smart growth" and do not have a clue.

The South Florida Water Management District is in line to buy 74,000 acres from a private developer (developed Ibis) who proposes to keep an additional 17,000 acres to develop. He bought the entire property, known as the Babcock Ranch, from a pioneer. The catch is, he wants the water rights on the District land.

At that meeting we heard from Colleen Castille, Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, and officials of Charlotte and Lee counties. They are ready to go with the 140,000 new units, except for there being insufficient water supply. Oops! There go springs, lakes, wetlands in a dry year.

There is a loud federal assault on the Endangered Species Act, and nothing but silence from the state (Conservation Commission, formerly Game Commission, needs our comments!).

## **What Bird Did That? by Peter Hansard and Burton Silver**

*Hank McCall*

This book is a beautifully illustrated field guide on avian dejecta. The bird splays are classified by species and clearly show size, shape, color of the nucleus, and strength of the envelope. Sizes range from those of the Great Blue Heron to the little jewel excreted by a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Shapes illustrate the big sloppy creamy specimen from the Turkey Vulture to the appropriate stringy residue of the Greater Road Runner. Some of the best tools for collection are the windshield and roof of your car. Be aware that your parked car can add to your count list birds long since out of sight and earshot. For the serious birder this book is a "must have."

## Great Backyard Bird Count Taking Place February 17-20, 2006

Put a note in your calendar for the following dates next year: February 17-20. That's a weekend not just for watching birds, but for teaching new people about watching birds as part of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). And it's the opportunities that GBBC offers you that are so important, whether as Chapter Leader, Center Educator, or active member.

Some members use their library to recruit new members by talking about the GBBC. Others invite new birdwatchers to take part in GBBC at their Centers, others lead groups out onto National Wildlife Refuges or into National Parks because America's backyard is big. It only starts at your back door! Teachers even build curriculum around the GBBC.

Take a look at past year's results at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc), and get your digital camera ready to share your birds through the online gallery. Participants submit their observations online and can see where their results fit in immediately through maps, charts and tables. There's no fee to take part, and no registration, just the joy of birds and the buzz of seeing your results on the computer. Your challenge is working out what you can do with the GBBC to help you be more successful! For more details, contact Paul Green at [pgreen@audubon.org](mailto:pgreen@audubon.org).

## The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Home Study Course

Ben Kolstad

For those of you who have taken the course, no explanation is necessary. For those of you who haven't, no explanation is sufficient. Send your \$300 to the Lab and take this course. You will become a better birder. You will learn—a lot!—about the birds around you. You will struggle—Chapter 4 has reduced many a crack birder to tears—but, as Nietzsche once wrote, what doesn't kill you will make you stronger. (*Note: Nietzsche died in an insane asylum in Turin, Italy.*) You will know more about the distribution, structure, breeding habits, behavior, vocalizations, and movements of birds than you had ever thought possible.

The course is divided into 10 chapters, each of which is written by experts on the particular topic. The chapters each focus on one key component of bird science: Chapter 1 is an introduction to

the classification and distribution of world birds; Chapter 2 is a guide to bird watching; Chapter 4 covers nearly every internal system, from muscles to bones to nerves, and then some. Chapter 7 comes with a companion CD and covers bird song, something that those of us who live in these latitudes rarely get to experience, apart from the constant "Figaro" of the mockingbird and the chip-whistle of the cardinal.

Cornell says that some birders complete the course in a year, while others take quite a bit longer (I'm into my second year already, and still struggling with Chapter 4!). But it is definitely a worthwhile study, particularly now that they have repackaged the material into a shiny four-color book (I have the old 3-ring binder system and am considering signing up again just to get the new book!).

### From Audubon of Florida Operations Report for August

**Indian River Lagoon** — As Audubon's D.C. team pushes forward with the authorization of the Indian River Lagoon and the Picayune Strand CERP projects, the Army Corps of Engineers took a proactive stand in protecting the IRL natural storage lands by denying the permit for the Harmony Ranch development. In our continuing effort to protect CERP lands from development, Audubon, with other environmental partners, met with the Corps to discuss denying permits in conflict with CERP. The Corps' denial of the Harmony permit sets a precedent for protecting lands identified for restoration.

**Swallow-Tailed Kites at Fisheating Creek** — In response to a proposal to put large reservoirs and Storm-water Treatment marshes adjacent to the Fisheating Creek and the location of the largest Swallow-tailed Kite migratory roost in North America, Audubon staff solicited help from Kite expert, Dr. Ken Meyer, who is now working with the study team. The team then decided disturbing the Kite roost area was too risky and is studying ways to move large features to a safe distance. [*Editor's Note: Let's hope this allows ASE's summer excursions to the roost to continue—help us protect this area!*]

**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 **January 2006** issue is **December 10th**

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