



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida
Volume 46, Number 12
September 2006

CALENDAR

Tuesday Sep 5

Monthly Meeting, Howard Park,
7:30 p.m.

Saturday Sep 16

Fall Migration Count. Compiler:
Cynthia Plockelman, 561-585-
1278.

Saturday Sep 23

Spanish River Park, Boca Raton.
Meet at south side of Spanish
River Blvd. just west of A1A.
Leader: Chuck Weber.

Saturday Sep 30

Turkey Creek, Viera Wetlands.
Meet at 6:30 behind Applebee's
Restaurant, Jupiter, north side of
Indiantown Rd. 1 mile east of I-
95 (exit 87A) to carpool. Leader:
Ben Kolstad.

Audubon Assembly 2006

Saving Birds and Special Spaces October 19-21, Cocoa Beach

Join Audubon of Florida at
the Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach
Oceanfront Resort for engaging
programs that highlight Florida's
coastal environments and issues that
affect their well-being. Get inspired
and sharpen skills for advocating
for birds and their protection. Hear
scientists share insights on global
warming and its consequences
for Florida's extensive coastal
areas. Collaborate with other
environmentalists and birders from
across the region to shape policies
and take an active part in saving
our birds, wildlife, and habitats.
Enjoy one of Florida's best beaches
while you catch up with friends,
colleagues, and fellow Audubon
members. Field trips will take in
some of Florida's birding hot spots,
so don't forget your binoculars!

Program for Tuesday, September 5th Busch Wildlife Center: *Wild Critters of Florida*

David Hitzig and his staff have been providing our society with great programs for over 10 years and will be returning for our September 5th meeting. 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 Howard Park Community Center for *Wild Critters of Florida* Tuesday, September 5th at 7:30 PM. Don't forget to bring the kids.

President's Comments

Marcella Munson

Well, September is almost here, and with it the promise of a fresh birding season. I look forward to returning to Florida and sharing the excitement of fall migration with you. My summer trip abroad has been a rewarding one and I hope that this summer has also brought you exciting adventures and good birding. Although one need possess neither tremendous birding skills nor fabulous birding luck to find *Phoenicopterus ruber* in abundance in the Camargues, it was breathtaking to be able to watch huge groups of elegant flamingoes feeding in the salty waters off of Aigues-Mortes just a few yards from my camera lens. And speaking of photos, congratulations and special thanks to all who shared their favorite photos at the Ice Cream Social.

Although the summer months may be quiet for birding in Florida, our chapter board has been anything but quiet. We have been working hard to bring exciting new changes to your chapter, including a new membership structure (look for the *Kite's* new back page), which will enable our chapter to accomplish its educational and conservation missions more easily. Did you know that if you renew your membership directly through Audubon Society of the Everglades, more of your precious conservation dollars will stay right here in the chapter to help with our own scholarship, education, and conservation projects. I encourage you to renew your membership through our chapter, using the form on the back page. This simple action will make a tangible difference for us, and enable us to put your membership dollars to use to accomplish your goals. I also invite you to consider making a special pledge to our chapter at whatever level is comfortable for you. See the back page of the *Kite* for full details; all donations include one year of membership in the Audubon Society of the Everglades. For those who would prefer to donate their time, we have opportunities in many areas, including Education, Conservation, Fundraising, and hospitality. Look for more volunteer opportunities in the months to come, and remember that no matter what your level of participation, we are glad to have you as a member.

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 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.

Conservation Newswire

National Audubon Society Condemns Senate Approval of Drilling Near U.S. Coast

Washington, DC, August 3, 2006 - The Senate's vote on Monday cleared the way for final approval of offshore drilling legislation there, and follows House action last month, where a broader bill was approved. It remains unclear whether the two bodies will be able to work out a compromise.

According to Mike Daulton, Director of Conservation Policy, National Audubon Society, "it's unfortunate the Senate has chosen to pass legislation opening our precious coastal areas to offshore drilling. Americans want our leaders to enact real solutions to our oil dependence, not just more favors to big oil companies.

"The oil and gas industry already has access to over 80 percent of the known reserves of oil and natural gas in our offshore areas. They have rights to more than 4,000 untapped leases in the Gulf of Mexico alone. It makes no sense to put our coasts at risk when the industry has not even tapped into the leases they already have.

"Offshore drilling does little more than offer some false hope to consumers that it may lower gas prices. Perhaps the gulf that exists between the House and Senate version of this bill will spur Congress to consider energy solutions that actually reduce our dependence on oil."

For more information about the bill, please visit: http://www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/OffShoreDrilling_07_31_06.html.

AUDUBON SANCTUARY ISLANDS COASTAL CLEANUP – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 8 AM

There are four sanctuary islands stretching along the rocky spine in the middle of the Lake Worth Lagoon. To the north of the Southern Boulevard causeway is Fisherman's Island. The causeway is on the Bingham Islands, a cluster divided by channels. Next are the Hunter Islands east of Forest Hill Boulevard. The southernmost is John's Island, which has been restored with native plants and trees. These islands are visited by many migratory bird species and offer homes for nesting herons. American Oystercatchers have been seen regularly for the last four years and have been nesting on the nearby Snook Islands.

In 1942, National Audubon signed a 99-year lease with the Bingham family. The islands were set aside to be wildlife sanctuaries supervised by the Palm Beach County chapter, the Audubon Society of the Everglades.

Please join us to clean up the shoreline on these beautiful islands. Refreshments and T-shirts will be provided. To register, please call Claudine Laabs at (561) 655-9779.

Bird of the Month: Ovenbird

Ben Kolstad

Seiurus aurocapilla, the Ovenbird (L 5.75 in.) gets its name from the fact that its nests look like little dome-shaped ovens on the forest floor. Palm Beach County residents know it best as the skulking leaf-kicker with the loud voice. This stocky warbler looks more like a miniature thrush with an orange mohawk than its more glamorous cousins in the *Dendroica* genus, the high-flying Cerulean Warbler, or the smartly colored Black-throated Blue.

At Spanish River Park, if you don't notice the Ovenbird's rustling in the leaves at the side of the footpaths, you're sure to notice the loud vocalizations of this spot-breasted, stripe-headed loudmouth: birders who leave Florida to visit the bird on its nesting grounds will hear a crescendoing series of 8-10 two-syllable TEACH-er, TEACH-er calls. In our neighborhood a loud, distinctive "Chupp" is the most often heard sound.

The head often appears to bob while walking. The tail is held up, sometimes quickly cocked up, then brought back to a horizontal.

While you're checking the leafy undergrowth for the common Ovenbird, keep an eye peeled for the elusive Swainson's Warbler—now *that's* a good bird.

Manatees Head to NYC to Beat the Heat!

NEW YORK (AP) August 7, 2006

In the heat of summer, all sorts of tourists head north to cooler climes. This year, a manatee has joined the crowd, cruising past the nightclubs of Manhattan and continuing north. The massive animal has been spotted in the Hudson River at least three times in the last week—first off the Chelsea and Harlem sections of Manhattan, then to the north in Sleepy Hollow in Westchester County.

"It was gigantic," said Randy Shull, who said he spotted the unusual visitor Sunday afternoon while boating at Kingsland Point Park in Sleepy Hollow. "When we saw it surface, its back was just mammoth."

John Vargo, the publisher of Boating on the Hudson magazine, said his alert about the sightings was met with disbelief by some boaters.

"Some were laughing about it, because it couldn't possibly be true," he said.

It is unusual for one of the creatures—often associated with the warm waters of Florida—to travel so far north, although they have been reported along the shores of Long Island and even Rhode Island.

"I'm 70 years old, and I've been on the river my entire life," Vargo said. "I've seen dolphins and everything else, but never a manatee."

Wakodahatchee—Magical on a Hot July 4th Afternoon!

I needed to "walk", so I headed for Wakodatchee for a couple of hours respite on our Fourth of July, 2006. Expecting a relatively quiet sojourn, even though it is the height of the breeding season, it turned out to be a joyful celebration of bird life. There were lots of "walkers," camera-bugs, children, and just plain bird lovers taking it all in. Wakodahatchee was truly magical, from the first steps on the boardwalk, to the last, over 2 hours later.

Not quiet either, as grackles, martins, herons and egrets, moorhens, blue jays, mockingbirds, hawks, fish crows, among others, all contributed to the serenade of the viewers. Even a Carolina Wren chimed in. There were 4 species of doves; a Snail Kite, as well as Red-Shouldered and Coopers Hawks. Just about all the herons and egrets were to be seen, especially tons of adult and juvenile Tricolored Herons flitting to and fro—really colorful right now and not the least afraid to visit you close by on the railing!. (25 adults, 3 nests with young, and 27 juveniles!) This is also the time of year to see Least Bitterns—4 were dashing from cover to cover, while feeding young. Green Herons always announced their presence, as did the multitude of Red-winged Blackbirds and Boat-tail Grackles.

Anhingas were especially evident, burdening all the trees in and around the impoundments. I counted at least 49 adults and 53 juveniles. One nest had 5 white downy chicks in stair step sizes, crowding each other for footing. Moorhens also had a very good summer with numerous young of all sizes. Several Purple Gallinules added a bright note. Monk Parakeets had nested in the area and were very noticeable all afternoon. A lone common nighthawk rested on a railing on the north side of the impoundments.

The species count is not really important, but for the record, I had 32 species of birds and 11 of butterflies. There really is too much to mention here, but I urge you, to visit Wakodahatchee next July 4th! You will have a great time, even if it is hot.

Cynthia Plockelman



Donate to the Audubon Society of the Everglades (ASE)

Make a tax-deductible contribution to the Audubon Society of the Everglades by using the form at right; your donations will be put to use supporting *local* projects: Everglades Day, conservation projects, Pathfinder scholarship, and educational activities including Audubon Adventures, class

field trips to Pine Jog and Birds of Prey programs.

Join ASE now! Support our efforts to protect local birds, wildlife, and their habitats.

Audubon Society of the Everglades members receive 12 issues of the Everglade Kite newsletter, priority sign-up on local field trips, and educational classes. Make your check payable to Audubon Society of the Everglades and send with this form to ASE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 16914, West Palm Beach, FL 33416-6914.

Regular \$20 Senior (62+) \$15

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

Audubon Society of the Everglades (ASE)

YES! I want to help restore the Everglades and support the ASE. Enclosed is my check made payable to Audubon Society of the Everglades for:

- \$100 **Pelican Gift***
- \$250 **Sanctuary Island Family Gift***
- \$2500 **Painted Bunting Donor***
- \$5000 **Roseate Spoonbill Donor***
- \$10,000 **Snail Kite Donor***

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

e-mail _____ T-shirt size _____

*All donations include 1 year of membership in ASE

I would like to volunteer for:

- Education
- Everglades Day
- Other: _____
- Conservation
- Fundraising

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.

GET PUBLISHED! The deadline for submissions for the **October 2006** issue is **September 10th**

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