



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida
Volume 47, Number 4
January 2007

CALENDAR

SAT. Jan. 6, 8:00 a.m.

Wakodahatchee Wetlands,
Delray Beach. Meet at
boardwalk, E side of Jog Rd.,
1.5 mi north of Atlantic. Leader:
Ethel Kujanpaa.

TUES. Jan. 9, 9:00 a.m.

John Prince Park, Lake Worth.
Use Congress Ave. entrance,
follow signs to campground.
Meet at campground office.
Leader: Dorothy Brindle.

SAT. Jan. 13, all day

Babcock Ranch. For details, call
Ben Kolstad, 561-367-7689.

SAT. Jan. 20, 7:30 a.m.

Riverbend Park, Jupiter.
Indiantown Road, 1/4 mi W of
I-95 on south side. Leaders: Ed
Kawecki and Walt Hackenjós.

SAT. Feb. 10, Everglades Day.

Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee
National Wildlife Refuge. Free
entrance (park at Monte's).

TUES. Feb. 13, 8:00 a.m.

Okeehetee Nature Center, 7715
Forest Hill Blvd., West Palm
Beach. North side of Forest Hill,
1 mile west of Jog Road (east of
turnpike). Meet at Nature Center.
Leader: Ethel Kujanpaa.

SAT. Feb. 17, 8:00 a.m.

Belle Glade Campground.
Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Kmart on
NW corner of Southern Blvd
(SR80) and 441/SR7; park next
to Garden Center. Bring lunch.
Leader: Chuck Weber.

SAT. Feb. 24, 8:00 a.m.

STA-1. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at
Kmart, as above. Leader:

Program for Tuesday, January 2nd *Florida Bats, Cindy Marks*

Our program for January features the world's only flying mammal (flying squirrels glide but don't fly). Bats can be found on practically every continent on earth: the order contains over 1000 species, 20 of which reside in Florida. Cynthia and George Marks founded the Florida Bat Conservancy in 1994 and between them they have over 15 years of working with these flying mammals. Besides caring for and rehabilitating hundreds of injured and orphaned bats they have written a book, *Bats of Florida*, and provide informational and educational lectures for all ages.

Please join us at Howard Park Community Center at 7:30 p.m. on January 2nd to enjoy this unique experience.

President's Comments

Marcella Munson

What a wonderful birthday / holiday party we had last month! Thanks to all who showed up for the celebration, and a very special thanks to those who helped make the evening so festive (see page 3 for a special note). Happy 40th Birthday, Audubon Society of the Everglades!

By the time this edition of the Everglade Kite arrives in members' mailboxes, we will be on the cusp of a brand-new year. In preparing my 2007 birding diary, I am particularly reminded of just how much our regular chapter activities reflect the annual cycles of the natural world. The fast-approaching Christmas Bird Count, now in its 107th year, is not only a beloved birding ritual, but also provides unparalleled scientific information about the status of our winter bird population. In early February, we look forward to our annual co-sponsorship of Everglades Day at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, where visitors can learn fun facts and absorb the beauty of nature, and enjoy food and music. The very next weekend is the Great Backyard Bird Count, sponsored by National Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. This four-day event is a fun introduction to birdwatching and conservation. In spring, the second Saturday in May, we turn our attention to the (Spring) North American Migration Count, which provides a comprehensive "snapshot" of breeding bird populations. Summer is a quiet birding season here in South Florida, but for many of you, it's time to travel to parts north (and west) to see new sights, and new birds (or old favorites). On the third Saturday in September, it's time for the (Fall) National Migration Count, which completes the portrait of North America's migratory species. I hope that 2007 brings you and your loved ones much peace and joy -- and good birding.

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.

Great Backyard Bird Count Combines Fun of Watching Birds with Conservation

This February, the tenth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, will give everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and “Count for the Record.”

During February 16–19, 2007, people of all ages, from beginners to experts, are invited to join this event which spans all of the United States and Canada. Participants can take part wherever they are – at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges. Observers simply count the highest number of each species they see during an outing or a sitting, and enter their tally on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

Visitors to the web site can also compare their sightings with results from other participants, as checklists pour in from throughout the U.S. and Canada. Together, these counts offer a real-time snapshot of the numbers and kinds of birds that people are finding, from Boreal Chickadees in Alaska to Anhing as in Florida.

“The Great Backyard Bird Count is a community celebration of birds, birding, and nature,” said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “We often fail to notice how rich our surroundings are, but counting birds, even for just 15 minutes, is not only educational—it can provide a lasting source of enjoyment, turning a daily walk into a treasure hunt.”

“We are encouraging people to go outside and count birds for the first time this year,” said Paul Green, Audubon’s director of Citizen Science. “By submitting their counts online, birdwatchers can quickly see how the dots they put on the map form new patterns that tell new stories about the birds that share the

world in which we live, including our own backyards and parks.”

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the GBBC, and Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are challenging people everywhere to “Count for the Record,” by participating in greater numbers than ever before. Greater participation, with more checklists submitted, provides more information about bird population trends – and helps to better inform conservation efforts.

Last year, participants submitted more than 60,000 checklists – and reported 7.5 million birds overall and 623 different species. The count helped chronicle the early spring migratory routes of Sandhill Cranes, documented lingering migrants such as Orange-crowned Warblers and Tree Swallows, revealed the ongoing range expansion of introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves, and recorded declining numbers of American Crows.

Participants who want to hone their bird watching skills can learn more from the Great Backyard Bird Count web site, which offers identification tips and access to photos, sounds, maps, and natural history information on more than 500 bird species. People can also submit photos to an online gallery showcasing the dazzling array of winter birds found during the GBBC. Competitions add another element of fun, including a photo contest, rankings for most numerous birds, and the coveted “checklist champ” title for towns, states, and provinces with the highest participation.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a free event, sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited. For more information, visit www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

Everglades Day

Susan Snyder

Mark your calendar for the 8th annual Everglades Day Festival, February 10th at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. *Explore the Everglades* is the theme and will feature guided nature walks and talks.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Contact Susan at 561-627-7829 or roysue@bellsouth.net

A Special Thank You to Everyone Who Helped Make Our 40th Birthday Party A Success!

Ann De Booth
Jill Harrold
Sheila Reiss
Stella Rossi
Leah Schad
Susan Snyder
Jeri von Taube

And all the membership of ASE for bringing their delicious entrees, salads, and desserts! A good time was had by all!

Anniversary Celebration

Audubon Society of the Everglades held its 40th anniversary celebration at our December meeting, which started with a delicious pot luck dinner. There was an incredible selection of dishes thanks to all our contributors. It was easy to find plenty to enjoy! Dessert featured a big birthday cake as well as other selections. A talk by Colonel Grosskruger of the Army Corps of Engineers followed.

Marge Eaton related a history of the formation of ASE. She attended the initial meeting when representatives from Tropical Audubon in Miami and National Audubon Society assisted in the formal process of certifying our chapter. Early ASE meetings featured reel films featuring well-known birders and naturalists. ASE emphasized birding in the early years, but as time went on environmental concerns played a larger part of ASE's mission.

ASE received the Regional Director's Conservation Award from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2004 in recognition of the chapter's commitment to conservation.

If you have information about the history of ASE, and you can forgive a pun, please contact us: we'd love for you to help us rediscover our grass roots!

Conservation Connection

You win some, you lose some. In December, a federal judge ruled that backpumping polluted agricultural water into Lake Okeechobee is illegal, which might just mean that there is a future for the lake after all. While good news, the only tangible outcome of this trial is more hearings next year. So stay tuned!

As it has every time since 2000, WRDA failed to make it through Congress, which means that there is no funding plan to guide Everglades restoration at the federal level. Critical projects are in jeopardy, and the Everglades is yet again at the mercy of state and local officials.

Local efforts continue apace, though: Miami's Metropolitan Planning Organization recently voted to explore funding the 11-mile elevated Tamiami Trail option that the Army Corps refused to fund. This greatly improves the chances of restoring natural sheet flow to Everglades National Park, which has been thoroughly disrupted by the roadway ever since its completion in 1928.

Seen Around Town

The hit of the Thanksgiving season was an Eared Grebe seen at Green Cay Nature Center. A good bird for South Florida, to be sure, and one that caused a bit of a stir. Yours truly, birding "by the book," called it a Horned Grebe until more experienced birders enlightened him. Shamefaced, I took my range maps and a new determination to look at the bird, not the book, with me to India, where I visited Sultanpur National Bird Park, garnering a couple dozen new life birds, among them Crested Serpent Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, the truly gigantic Black-necked Stork, and the curiously named Zitting Cisticola.

If you have any sightings of these or local birds, be sure to send them to me: benkolstad@adelphia.net, 561-367-7689.

Babcock Ranch, January 13-14

ASE will be taking a carpool trip to tour this property on the west coast of Florida, which was recently purchased by the state in one of the largest contiguous tracts of land purchased for conservation. For details on when and where to meet, please contact Ben Kolstad, benkolstad@adelphia.net, 561-367-7689.

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.

Reminder: Deadline for submissions for the **February 2007** issue is **January 10th**

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