



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida
Volume 47, Number 9
June–July 2007

CALENDAR

Tues. June 5, 7:30 p.m.

General meeting, Howard Park Community Center.

Tues. July 3, 7:30 p.m.

General meeting, Howard Park Community Center.

Funds Needed for Visitor's Center at LNWR

ASE would like to ask its members to contribute funds to install brand new educational exhibits at the new visitors' center. As official refugekeepers, we are very excited about the opportunity to help make the new visitor's center an engaging experience for all. Please consider contributing to this environmental education cause (mail-in form inside); the planned exhibits are truly wonderful. You will be glad you did! For more information, go to www.loxahatcheefriends.com. Click on "The Refuge" to see plans for the new exhibit hall.

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Editor's Note: To save printing and postage costs, we are combining the June and July issues of the Kite this summer. We will be back to monthly newsletters with the August issue.

Tuesday June 5th Program

Aquifer Storage & Recovery/ACCELER8

We are privileged to have as our speaker for the June Membership Meeting Mr. Thomas M. Teets. Mr Teets is the Chief Planner for the South Florida Water Management District. He received his B.S. from Indiana University and M.S. from the University of Florida. Tom has been with the district for nineteen years. At our June 5th meeting he will be enlightening our membership on the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Plan, the ACCEL8 program, plus other water issues facing our area. This should be a very interesting program what with the drought and development concerns we are currently facing.

Tuesday July 3rd Program

Oceans Update: Kirt Rusenko, Gumbo Limbo

Kirt Rusenko, Ph. D. at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center will be our featured speaker for July's program. Dr. Rusenko is head of the Sea Turtle Conservation and Research Program at Gumbo Limbo.

President's Comments

Marcella Munson

Have you been thinking of "going native" in your yard? With the current water restrictions, and heightened awareness of the needless water waste that traditional turfgrass yards represent, there's never been a better time! At my house, we had been talking about this for years, and this past December we finally took the plunge. With the help of a landscaper, we converted our tiny suburban yard (25' by 50' in front and back) to a native plant and wildlife habitat area. We deliberately selected plants for their "wildlife value"—for the food, shade, and cover they provide. This included many plants, (such as passionflower vines, cocoplum, milkweeds, beautyberry, firebush, wild coffee, salvia, *Cordia globosa*, and bird pepper), and several trees (Live Oaks, various stoppers, a Gumbo Limbo, a spicewood, and a strongbark) that would replace our non-native *Shefflera* (shudder!) and ficus hedges.

We'd been thinking that we would have to wait at least until next fall, perhaps next spring, to see a difference in the backyard birding we could do. But boy, were we wrong! The very day after the NAMC (see inside for details), our little yard (25' by 50') played host to 4 species of warbler simultaneously: American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Black-Throated Blue, and even a Connecticut Warbler (!), who seemed to really enjoy poking around at the base of our coffee plants and firebushes looking for insects to eat. We got to watch the Connecticut Warbler up close (about 5 feet away) for over 45 minutes, and observed many behavioral traits, including an almost constant tail-flicking (very shallow, like a shiver) not mentioned in any of our bird guides. What a treat!

Many of the non-native plants found in South Florida yards have no wildlife value—they do not provide adequate food or coverage. And the use of non-native plants can increase the need for pesticide and fertilizer use—and we all know how much harm these additives cause when they inevitably filter into our ecosystems. Attracting birds to your garden by choosing native plants is simple and satisfying, and can easily increase the value of a house and lot. But most importantly, if we make adequate food, water, and shelter available to birds, we can increase the number and variety of species that visit our yards, and make sure a wide variety of bird species remain common sights in the South Florida landscape.

The Everglade Kite

is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Everglades, published 11 times a year.

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Conservation Report

Rosa Durando

Things do not seem to let up. But let's celebrate some good things:

The Audubon Society of the Everglades was proud to participate in the annual Pathfinder Awards. A deserving senior in any high school in Martin and Palm Beach county is selected to receive a \$2500 scholarship sent to the college or university of their choice. The applicants submit a detailed, lengthy resume on the preceding 3 years of their life. Grades, goals, community service, research, clubs, honors received: in short, their waking moments!

It is a lifesaver for me to wade through some 20 to 30 applications in the science category looking for that promising student to receive our award. The student must express an environmental concern to receive our award. A bright spot for me!

The recipient this year is Erin Good, of Olympic Heights High School, whose work and concern is ocean ecology, especially turtles, and whales in the future. No system is in greater need of rescue than our oceans. The latest affected, we read, is the migrating Northern Gannets starving in our area.

The other time-consuming situation, climaxing after a couple of years and reaching over 2 frenzied days at the Board of County Commissioners was to citify or not to citify 4,000 acres in the west central part of our county. This subject is too involved with so many ramifications, I will not attempt to justify the commissioners' final decision to reject, other than to say that in my opinion it was the only thing to do.

The water crisis we are in is far from over. It will surely not end this year, only alleviate if there is a rainy season. it will recur in the 2008 dry season. The root cause is hardly addressed by the South Florida Water Management District. Under the charge of flood management, major water systems will continue to function by pumping billions of gallons of water out to sea. This is not a credit to engineering progress over the last 75 or so years, but a confirmation of the power of politics. I think it was Will Rogers who said, a long time ago, "Water flows uphill to the money."

Lake Worth Lagoon Symposium

The Lake Worth Lagoon symposium, held May 17 at Palm Beach Atlantic University was an excellent chance to catch up on the happenings that affect this degraded resource. For those who missed it, Willie Howard writes in the May 20th edition of the *Post* that the restoration goals for the next 5 years, as well as the presentations from the symposium, will be posted online on the ERM website: www.co.palmbeach.fl.us/erm. The program and other information is already available; click under the "Hot Topics" section, "LWL Symposium." Willie also informs us that there will be a "listening meeting" to discuss the latest draft of the lagoon management plan on June 27 (3-7 p.m.) at the county's Vista Center complex, 2300 N. Jog Road, West Palm Beach. For more details, contact Palm Beach County ERM, 561-233-2400.

To Contribute to the LNWR Visitor's Center, Join the Get Green ! Go Everglades Team

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Not Your Average Spring Migration

Cynthia Plockelman

The weather was not cooperative: very dry conditions and a recent tropical storm created strange ocean and beach scenarios. The smoke haze from around Florida and George was severe enough to prevent some birders venturing into the field for extended periods (or at all) and in western parts of Palm Beach County did limit viewing conditions to close range for most of the day. Yet, the out-of-season T.S. Andrea did us a favor, by delaying the bulk of migrants in "jumping off" on the homeward journey.

There were some clues we might get a break, with the trickle of warblers and late bobolinks and eventually some much-needed showers as T.S. Andrea broke up and drifted south. We did the official count May 12, 2007, and early realized we were going to be lucky for this Spring 2007 North American Migration Count. As the day wore on, the birds kept coming, and coming, and coming! One strange thing we noted early: gannets right offshore with very calm seas; we later saw them sitting on beaches or in the intracoastal or the inlets. Those birds were in trouble, as newspapers reported similar phenomena several places on Florida's east coast.

Fishermen reported to me that a number of warblers landed on their boats and fishing poles Saturday and Sunday, in an exhausted state. The west wind over Florida was a problem to the birds. Those birders working the coastal strand and parks in eastern Palm Beach

County encountered higher than usual quantities of warblers, cuckoos, gannets, terns. Large quantities of warblers were also reported inland, as the birds fed and worked into the state. We do not have all the NAMC reports yet, but we can say at least 19 species of warblers were recorded on May 12, 2007, especially Blackpoll, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Black-throated Blue, Northern Waterthrush, and Black & White. The rarest were single Worm-eating, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Orange-crowned and 2 Connecticut.

Other prizes: 2 Swainson's Thrush; 2 Black-whiskered Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, 36 Yellow-billed Cuckoo (but zero Mangrove), American Oystercatcher, Bald Eagle at DuPuis, plus 12 Bachman's sparrows, at least 15 Gray Kingbirds, 2 Eastern Kingbirds, Northern Roughwing Swallows, Sandhill Cranes and 5 parties with Bobolinks.

On the western side of the county, the dry conditions tended to concentrate waders and migrating shorebirds in WCA1/LNWR and STA1 E and W and ponds in the Everglades Agricultural Area: 18 Snail Kites from LNWR, 200+ white pelicans, and at least 180 Roseate Spoonbills. Sora rails, Least bitterns, least, semipalmated, spotted, and solitary sandpipers were widely reported, as were Stilts. Late Kestrels, Northern Harrier, and an Orchard Oriole at LNWR made the list.

These are preliminary results, but "It was a great day!"

ASE Scholarship News

Erin Good, Olympic Heights High School, was presented with the Ruth and Seymour Miller Audubon Society of the Everglades \$2500 scholarship at the Pathfinder Awards held recently. Erin has volunteered many hours caring for turtles at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center. She plans to major in Marine Biology. Watch for an interview with Erin next month.

Scholarship "Alumnus" Update

Recently ASE received a graduation announcement from one of our previous scholarship students, John Kenneth Rice (Jack) Leach of Lake Clarke Shores. Jack has earned a B. S. degree in Environmental Studies, with an Urban and Regional Planning minor from FSU. This fall he begins the master's program in Planning/Natural Resource Management. He is studying for the entrance exam for FSU's Law program that can now be combined with the Planning degree. His goal is to become an environmental lawyer. Congratulations, Jack!

While growing up, many people's interests can change, but Jack has always focused on the environment. ASE sponsored Jack's tuition for a National Audubon Society summer camp at Borestone Mountain in Maine, on land that previous generations of his father's family had owned. Jack also attended the Everglades Youth Camp at Corbett for several years, sometimes with an ASE donation.

Welcome New Member

ASE is pleased to welcome its newest member, Marian A. F. Morgan. Morgan's friends in the Palm Beach Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution have given her a gift membership and made a donation in her honor.

Gift Memberships

Gift memberships and donations are a wonderful way to honor friends, relatives and loved ones. Please remember to think of us when you can't think of a gift to buy someone special.

Final Report on the Annual Appeal

The response to our 2006-2007 Annual Appeal to members was very successful. It is hard to believe that we are now into our 2007-2008 year. (Our fiscal year runs April 1st through March 31st.)

The February 2007 issue of the *Kite* carried the names of all donors to that date. Since then an additional \$410.00 was received from:

Donald and Benita Maharam

Audrey Migliaccio

Steven and Suzanne Dauber

S. Macaulay Reich

Harriet Bloom

Judith Maddock

Ben Kolstad & Marcella Munson

We received a total of \$7,795.00. After printing and mailing costs of the letter the chapter netted \$6,912.87.

We count on our members to help us meeting our budget and are grateful for your generosity. Education is a very large part of our annual budget(see April's *Kite*) and we hope to continue to increase that effort through our school programs, exhibits at various functions around the county and Everglades Day.

Again, thank you all for your support.

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.

Articles Welcome! Deadline for submissions for the **August 2007** issue is **July 10th**

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