



# EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES  
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida  
Volume 47, Number 10  
August 2007

## CALENDAR

### Tuesday August 7

Members' Photo Night and Ice Cream Social. Howard Park Community Center, 7:30 p.m.

### Saturday August 11 and 18

Belle Glade: Carpool trip to Duda farms. Leave at 7 a.m. from Kmart on 441/Southern Blvd. 561.367.7689 for details.

### Tuesday, August 21, 7:00 p.m.

*Lovin' the Lake Worth Lagoon: Stewardship and the Future of an Urban Estuary.* Gumbo Limbo Environmental Center, Boca Raton. Join Alyssa Dodd, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, for a summary of the latest information about the health of the Lake Worth Lagoon and ongoing efforts to protect this valuable resource. Currently, PBC Environmental Resources Management is updating the lagoon's management plan. Find out more about how you can participate in the process and play a role in protecting and enhancing the lagoon. Free and open to the public, but registration is requested. Please call 561.338.1473.

Anyone wishing to support ASE's scholarship fund is encouraged to send donations marked for Pathfinder Scholarship to Leah Schad, treasurer.

### Tuesday August 7th

### *Members Night to Shine and Ice Cream Social*

On Tuesday, August 7, 2007, we will again celebrate the photography skills of our members. This is the meeting that our members will show off their photographs, either slides or CDs (if you have your own computer), telling us all the details regarding your work...the usual how(what kind of camera, etc.), where(self-explanatory) and when...color or black and white. Each member who plans to present is limited to five pieces of work. There are always oohs and aahs from the audience and is one of our most popular meetings. If you are going to take part, please call or email Ben Kolstad so we will have an idea of how much time we need to set aside.

Along with the presentations we will also have our ice cream social following the meeting.

Remember the date, August 7th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Howard Park Community Center.

### Pathfinder Scholarship Awards

Erin Good was awarded the Ruth and Seymour Miller Audubon Society of the Everglades Environmental Scholarship Award. The award was presented at the Palm Beach Post Pathfinder's event in May by Rosa Durando, who was also a judge.

Nominated by Olympic Heights High School in Boca Raton, Erin achieved many academic honors as well as outstanding grades and test scores. She competed in the Florida Ocean Science Bowl which quizzes students on diverse marine science topics from current events to geology.

For three years, Erin volunteered at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, first maintaining the seawater tanks and sharing information with visitors. Dr. Kirt Rusenko, Marine Conservationist for the city of Boca Raton, said, "...I recognized her high level of intelligence and responsible behavior." Erin then assisted with the caretaking of turtles, scrubbing algae off shells and weighing the turtles weekly.

Headed to Duke University, Erin plans to major in Biology with an emphasis on the marine sciences.

Audubon Society of the Everglades members wish Erin all the best in her college career.

## **The Everglade Kite**

*is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Everglades, published 11 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.*

## **Wakodahatchee On July 4, 2007, In A Drought Year—Different!**

I made it to Wakodahatchee on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 2007, by 2 PM. It was very hot, sultry, little breeze and a thunderstorm in the west—hard to guess how long I would have to record the “magical” scenario. That is, during a record drought—was the element of birds in the breeding season and “magic” still there?

First thing you notice is the lack of water in the first impoundments! These are always shallow, but not large expanses of exposed muck/sand/algal mats as this 2007. It is a scene experienced repeatedly as one progresses along the boardwalks. Really different, but I am also encouraged to note the many young birds and activity of adults hunting and carrying food to nests. The balance of species changes considerably.

There are many fewer of the fishing species: anhingas, d.c. cormorants, least terns, wood storks and the larger herons and egrets. These have gone elsewhere to nest and fewer juveniles are present. Normally, anhingas would have finished nesting, but this time I counted 12 sitting on nests (a sign of nesting delayed by food conditions) and 2 nests with downy young. The exceptions are the wonderful tri-colored herons, as last year, with nests, adults and newly fledged young everywhere. With their colorful plumes and feathers, these characterize the holiday.

The second important item is how well the purple gallinules and moorhens have done, despite the drought. First birds I saw were 4 adult purples and at least 20 juveniles. Final count was 11 adults in glorious plumage and 52 young birds in all stages of growth—all easily seen. Hooray! I logged over 200 c. moorhens and more than triple that in young birds. Alligators were not as evident this year, but those there will likely take their toll of the guileless moorhens. One lone coot!

Least bitterns were more noticeable this time—colorful, dashing about or carefully poised to catch fish. Watching a young least bittern imitating its parent was hilarious! Only one green heron was visible—sitting on a nest in pond apple at the waterline in the first impoundment! I doubt these have abandoned Wakodahatchee—just not as active if “sitting” on eggs. Redwing blackbirds, boat tail and common grackles were clamoring noisily everywhere. Fish crows were winging about and even acting like predators at one of the martin houses, where larger than normal nests were visible. Monk parakeets added to the constant bird calls. Many fewer swallows around at all.

Escaping a bare 2 hours later, just ahead of the rapidly approaching thunderstorm, I added a gray kingbird and a distant purple swamphen (potential exotic pest) on the northern side. The few mottled ducks and blue wing teal were also in the northern ponds and flats. The 39 species for the 2 hours was less than last year. However, I can say that Wakodahatchee on the fourth of July, 2007, was just as “magical.” And, I managed NOT to get drenched!

Cynthia

## Duda Farms Field Trips

August brings our annual visit to the flooded fields of Duda Farms in Belle Glade to look for the shorebirds and wading birds that concentrate on these fields. To reduce the number of visitors at any one time, Duda Farms is kindly allowing two trips again this year. The dates will be Saturday August 11, and Saturday August 18. The fewer the number of cars involved in these trips, the more enjoyable they are for everyone, so please plan to carpool and to limit your participation to one trip only!

We meet at the Kmart store at the northwest corner of the intersection of Southern Blvd. (State Road 80) and 441/State Road 7. Park next to the garden center. Carpooling is required and we leave Kmart at 7:00 a.m. Return to the coast will be around noon.

Come with a full tank of gas; bring binoculars and spotting scopes, fluids, snacks, sunscreen, and hats. There will be very little walking but expect intense heat and glare. We will see myriad migrating shorebirds and spectacular gatherings of our local wading birds. It will be interesting to see how the drought affects this year's trip—if the water's not there when the birds need it, they will look elsewhere! However, the fields are flooded now, and we will see what we can see.

Please note that we are responsible for everyone arriving and departing as a group. The farms are private and not open to the public and we have special permission from the Duda Farms management to bird on their property for these two annual field trips. For questions, please call me at 561-367-7689. Please DO NOT Call Duda!

--Ben Kolstad

## Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to assist Friday, August 16 at the Science Symposium held for Palm Beach County science teachers. This is an opportunity to share information with teachers about Audubon as well as nature areas in Palm Beach County. ASE will have an exhibit and handouts for teachers, many of whom are new to South Florida and have little knowledge about our habitats or resources. Call Susan at 627-7829.

## Coastal Cleanup—Volunteers Needed

The annual coastal cleanup is scheduled for Saturday September 15 at 8 AM. To sign up please call Claudine at (561)655-9779.

## A Message From Doris

Many of our members are aware that our good friend, Doris Mager, the Eagle Lady, recently acquired a screech owl for her education programs.

And many of you responded by contributing to her expenses to go pick up the owl. (We passed the hat at our June meeting and collected \$91 which was forwarded to her with a few checks from other members.) Recently she passed along a note and a snapshot of her new charge. Her note says:

*How can I thank my friends at ASE for going to 'bat' for me. Your generous donation helped a great deal with the gas bill to pick up the adorable little owl, named "Tex." He or she will be excellent in educating the children. I have had to work very hard with the bird, but I believe it will do well. First showing is the 29th at the Canton (S.C.) library.*

*Thanks again,  
Love,  
Doris*



Doris's new owl--ain't he a hoot?

## Book Notes: New Insect Guides

For those of you who can't get enough of the recent profusion of books about the sounds and sights of nature (e.g., Don Kroodsmas's *Singing Life of Birds*), Lang Elliott and Wil Hershberger's new book, *The Songs of Insects* is a wonderful new resource. Full of *stunning* photographs and accompanied by an amazing CD with the songs of 77 eastern insects (katydids, crickets, cicadas for the most part), this book might just open your eyes (and ears) to another entire class of our native fauna!

If Lang Elliott's recordings merely whet your appetite for entomology (I almost said "give you the bug!"), there are two excellent new field guides to serve you here. Kenn Kaufman's *Field Guide to Insects of North America* and the National Wildlife Federation's *Field Guide to Insects and Spiders of North America* are both new in 2007, and both are packed with descriptions and photographs to help you identify, at least to genus, any insect that might catch your fancy. (Caveat: there is no way to capture even a significant portion of North America's insect population in a field guide: there are between 90,000 and 100,000 known North American species, with (presumably) many more yet to be described. Taxonomy is still somewhat bewildering. In contrast, our avifauna numbers well under 1,000—so count your blessings, birders!)

For a larger, more complete reference, try Stephen A. Marshall's *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity*, which, at over 5 pounds and 4000 photographs, provides a very complete reference to the insects of northeastern North America (although the marketing materials claim it covers eastern North America, it is quite limited in its coverage south of the mid-Atlantic states).

## Birding on the Web

If you're reading this, it means you've found our PDF version of the newsletter on the Web, and so you've probably already got your favorite web sites for birding. But I thought I'd throw these perhaps lesser-known sites out for your consideration; let me know if you like them!

Aimophila Adventures:

<http://www.birdaz.com/blog/>

This is the blog of the editor of *Winging It!*, the newsletter of the American Birding Association. It has some of the most challenging bird IDs, and some of the best birding book reviews available for free. (He also writes reviews for *Birding*, but they don't come often enough). I'm really looking forward to his review of the new Peterson reference guide to gulls, by Steve N. G. Howell.

Mike's Birding & Digiscoping:

<http://www.birddigiscoping.com/blog.html>

This site, run by an employee of Eagle Optics (he's not hawking equipment, no pun intended...), provides lovely photographs taken through an old Nikon point and shoot digital camera and a spotting scope. He provides pointers on how to get into digiscoping, as well as fabulous shots of the birds in his stomping grounds in Wisconsin.

BirdNote:

<http://www.birdnote.org/>

This site has web-available media streams of a local NPR show about birds. Local is relative, of course: it's located in the Pacific Northwest. However, there are NO local radio shows about birds that I can find. If I'm wrong, please let me know—I've been looking for some time without success!

The Smithsonian has streaming audio podcasts as well, but the production values aren't as nice as the ones for Birdnote.

<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Podcast/>

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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 **September 2007** issue is **August 10th**

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