



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida
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October 2007

CALENDAR

Tuesday, October 2, 7:30 p.m.

West Palm Beach: General Meeting. Phil Weinrich will be speaking on migration. Meet at Howard Park Community Center, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 6, 8 a.m.

Frenchmen's Forest, Palm Beach Gardens, 8 a.m. Meet in the parking lot, Prosperity Farms Road, north of Northlake Blvd. Leader: Marvin Greenberg. Suggested donation: \$2

Saturday, October 20, Palm Beach County Migration Day.

Green Cay Wetlands, Boynton Beach. ASE exhibits 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the nature center, on Hagen Ranch Road north of Lake Ida Road.

November 2-3, Cocoa Beach

Audubon Assembly 2007 runs from noon November 2nd through lunch, November 3rd, featuring a full slate of informative seminars, field trips and a gala dinner with special guest Carl Hiasen. More importantly, the event will provide a forum for you to help set Audubon of Florida's Conservation Agenda for the coming year.

Registration for the all-inclusive Assembly package of programs, workshops, receptions, talks, meals and field trips is only \$115/person through October 2nd. After 10/2/07, registration cost is \$125/person. Special room rates are available until this date as well. For more information, and to register online, visit Audubon of Florida's website, www.audubonofflorida.org, or email Jacqui Sulek, jsulek@audubon.org

Migration *Phil Weinrich*

Our speaker for the October meeting is Mr. Phil Weinrich, lead science teacher at Jupiter Environmental Research and Field Studies Academy. Mr. Weinrich received a B.A. and M.S. from the University of Florida, and an M.A. in Education from Florida Atlantic University. Phil is a decorated teacher who has inspired generations of students through his work in Jupiter and at Pine Jog. Please join us at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 2 at Howard Park community center. You don't want to miss it!

Editor's Note *Ben Kolstad*

As I write this, the first cool breath of autumn (well, of the cool season, anyway) is sighing across the land, bringing with it some welcome relief from the long, hot summer season. The days are getting shorter (I leave for work before dawn these days—and this year, daylight “saving” time lasts until November!). A gentle rain is invigorating the garden, allowing me, and any of my neighbors who seem to notice, to switch off our irrigation systems (ours hasn't been on in weeks). While our coastal areas have received a good amount of rain this summer (year-to-date, we are at 86% of normal), most of the rest of the Everglades watershed (remember, it goes all the way up to Orlando!) is worse off. The Lake O watershed is at 66% of normal, and southwest Florida is hovering near 70%, up substantially thanks to some recent storm systems. Lake O, however, is still quite low, which should allow for some wonderful regeneration of the littoral zone if and when the water comes back.

That's the rhythm of life here in south Florida. Hot, then cool. Wet, then dry. The pulse of the rains follows, and is followed by, a pulse of migrating birds. The shorebirds have already come through, delighting those of us who went to the flooded fields of Duda farms this summer; passerines have already started to appear (cuckoos [a near passerine, but among my favorite migrants], tanagers, the first few warbler species), and we're eagerly awaiting the height of the season.

One of the greatest delights of the coming season is the opportunity to reconnect with our seasonal members. If any of you have any stories or articles to share, please feel free to get in touch with me at 561.367.7689, or newsletter@auduboneverglades.org. I'd love to share your stories with our chapter!

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.

WRDA Passes Senate, Finally

For the first time in nearly seven years, a Water Resources Development Act has passed both chambers of congress, and will be sent to the White House for authorization. This bill authorizes—but does not appropriate money for—water projects around the country, including many of the projects that will help restore the Everglades. It also introduces several reforms in how the Army Corps of Engineers operates, including, according to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, an increase in “Federal participation in watershed-based planning to take into account the interconnectedness of projects.”

Other encouraging aims of the legislation are to encourage wetlands conservation, and to clarify one of the most widely misunderstood tools of environmental conservation in use today: **mitigation**.

(Sec. 2008) Lists mitigation plan requirements under WRDA. Directs the Secretary to ensure that each water resources project plan to mitigate losses to flood damage reduction capabilities and fish and wildlife complies fully with the mitigation standards and policies established pursuant to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA).

Requires a specific mitigation plan for a project to include: (1) a plan for monitoring the implementation and ecological success of each mitigation measure; (2) the criteria for ecological success; (3) land to be acquired and the basis for a determination that the land is available for acquisition; (4) a description of restoration activities and the resource functions and values that will result; and (5) a contingency plan for corrective actions when monitoring demonstrates that mitigation measures are not achieving ecological success.

Sets forth criteria for determining success and reporting requirements.

Directs the Secretary to: (1) establish a recordkeeping system to track, for each project undertaken and for each permit issued under the FWPCA, the wetland affected, the mitigation measures required, and the status of monitoring of such measures; and (2) make information contained in that system available to the public on the Internet.

All of these lofty goals appear to be safe: the president has vowed to veto the bill, but it passed both the House and the Senate by what appear to be veto-proof majorities (381-40 and 81-12, respectively).

Alternative Energy Summit

Energy is on everyone’s mind these days. Recently a public forum was held entitled “The 2007 alternative Energy Summit: Powering Florida’s Energy Independence”. Gov. Crist is striving for the state to get 20% of its energy from renewable sources. Attendees represented universities, industry, commercial businesses, and government. Topics presented were “Cutting Edge Research in Alternative Energy”, “Available Energy Sources”, “Funding for Alternative Energy Sources” and “State and Federal Government Support for Research and Development of Alternative Energy Sources”.

Presentations covered wind, fuel cells, ocean energy, biomass, nuclear, CO2 mitigation, solar, net metering, etc. Participants were reminded that there is no free energy! Therefore, giving honest assessments of costs and impacts when analyzing energy sources is very important.

For detailed information, visit the summit’s website at:
www.publicforuminstitute.org/activities/2007/fl/agenda.asp.

STA-1E Birding Tours

The South Florida Water Management District and Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, a unit within the College of Education at Florida Atlantic University are partnering to offer FREE birding tours of the Stormwater Treatment Areas.

The stormwater treatment areas, owned and operated by the South Florida Water Management District, are vast, constructed wetlands that use vegetation to naturally cleanse excess nutrients from water before it enters the Everglades. These remote, shallow water marshes attract many species of nesting wading birds, migratory and other water fowl such as great blue herons, wood storks, snowy egrets and roseate spoonbills.

Tours are open to anyone, but participants must register before the desired date to reserve a space on the trip.

To register for the tour or for more information, contact Helen Beers at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center (561) 686 6600.

STA-1E Birding Tour dates

Time: 8:00-noon

2007

September 29
October 13
October 27
November 10
November 24
December 08
December 22

2008

January 05
January 19
February 2
February 16
March 1
March 15
April 12
April 26

Briefly Noted

One of the most powerful books to hit the newstands this year is Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Frequent contributor to the New York Times Magazine and professor of journalism at UC Berkeley, Pollan's book explores the paradox of how a species that can eat almost anything goes about deciding just what in the world to eat. Along the way, he demonstrates that corn has just as strong a claim to having domesticated humans as we have of domesticating it. He also shows how industrial organic food is perhaps less environmentally disastrous than our conventional pharmaceutical-laden food chain, but can't really lay claim to being "organic" as the term was originally intended.

Recommended reading.

Bird of the Month

Prairie Warbler (Dendroica discolor)

The Florida race (*D. discolor paludicola*) of this familiar little bird is a year-round resident of mangrove forests and coastal strand, while its numbers are augmented by wintering birds. According to Stevenson and Anderson, it is distributed "throughout the state except interior of Panhandle, increasing from very rare northward to fairly common in parts of s. Florida." According to Cornell's Birds of North America, "The Prairie Warbler appears to be a promising candidate for comparative experimental investigation of differences between a migratory generalist subspecies and a sedentary specialist subspecies. Examples might be studies of habitat selection and of genetic, developmental, and physiological bases for the expression of migratory behavior."

The Prairie Warbler breeds in early successional habitats, which means scrubland and abandoned farmland. It also means that where it bred last year, or for the last several years, it might not breed again for some time.

Dunne calls it "The Yellow Spectacled Warbler," which is his way of putting what Garrett and Dunn describe as "a distinctive facial pattern" in all plumages, "with a yellow supercilium (whitish in some plumages), dark transocular line, broad pale crescent below the eye, and dark lower border to the cheek." It also has pale yellow wing bars, which helps separate it from the myriad species with white wing bars.

Prairies, like their cousins the Palm Warbler, tend to bob their tail ("Given a few minutes, almost any Prairie Warbler will bob its tail," says Stevenson). They also tend to stay fairly low to the ground, although perhaps not so low as the Palm. Dunne quips "some Prairie Warblers may go through their entire lives without ever seeing the canopy of a tree." It will often "hover-glean" at the end of a branch like a kinglet.

In case you're curious: *Dendroica* comes from the greek *dendron* (tree), and *oicos* (inhabit): tree-dweller. *Discolor*: "of different colors." *Paludicola* is derived from the latin *palustris*, marsh. So our Florida race of this bird is the different-colored marshy tree-dweller. Not an entirely inane description!

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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 **November 2007** issue is **October 15th**

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