



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 49, Number 9

July/August 2009

CALENDAR

Tue., July 7. General Meeting.

Doors open at 7 p.m., refreshments shortly after, and meeting at 7:30.

Tue., August 4. Members' Photos & Ice Cream Social.

Ice cream at 7, annual photo extravaganza follows.

Sat. Aug 15 and 22, Duda Farms.

Meet at K-Mart Garden Center, 441 and Southern. We leave at 7 a.m. SHARP! As usual, these trips are by special permission of the management of the farms; please DO NOT CONTACT DUDA about them. For more info, call Linda, 561-742-7791. Conditions will be very hot; bring lunch, water, sunscreen, etc. Leaders: Chuck Weber (8/15), Ben Kolstad (8/22).

Bahama Birding Trip Oct 3 thru Oct 4, 2009.

Space is limited. Contact Linda Humphries for details and to reserve your seat. 561-742-7791.

Everglades Florida Bay Boat Trip Sept 27, 2009.

Space is limited. Contact Claudine Laabs for details and to reserve your seat. 561-655-9779.

If you have moved and no longer wish to receive this newsletter please contact Linda by email (hlinda@aol.com) or phone (561-742-7791).

If you would rather receive this newsletter via email instead of regular mail contact Ben Kolstad, ben@kolstad.com.

Thanks for helping us reduce our environmental impact and our printing/postage costs.

Environmental History of Palm Beach County

Tuesday, July 7, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Our general meeting for July will feature a presentation about the environmental history of Palm Beach County by Robert Robbins, deputy director of the county's Environmental Resources Management.

As usual, the doors at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center (Summit Blvd., WPB) will open at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting will start at 7:30 p.m.

Members' Photos and Ice Cream Social

Tuesday, August 4, 7:00 p.m.

Everyone's favorite meeting of the year is coming up quickly. Ice cream and a picture show! Bring your best nature photos and tell us your stories. Please choose only nature or travel photos (no pix of Aunt Tillie, please!). Photographs are limited to 12 prints or slides per member. We will have a digital projector; please bring your digital photos on a USB thumb drive.

Before the show there will be an ICE CREAM SOCIAL, so bring your appetite!

PATHFINDER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Melissa Miller, Palm Beach Central High School, was awarded the \$2500 Ruth and Seymour Miller Scholarship by ASE at the May award ceremony held at the Kravis Center. Extensive individual research projects done by Melissa throughout high school made her the stand out candidate for this recognition. Melissa was nominated by PB Central HS in the science category for her research work on the effect of salt on mangrove seedlings which won first place at PBC Science Fair. She developed an educational display board on apple snails which was exhibited at the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

Melissa produced a video for PBS Wired Science, placed 2nd in Drop It, Build It, Fly It contest and was captain of the school's National Ocean Science Bowl and Envirothon teams. "Melissa's involvement and success in such a variety of science activities is higher than any previous student I have taught in twenty years," said William Bartenslager, PBCHS.

Asked how she developed such an interest in science Melissa said, "My family went camping and I always spent a lot of time outdoors in nature. Also I enjoyed reading the many scientific journals my science teacher provided in his research room."

ASE Member Appointed to WPB's Green Task Force

Congratulations to our own Janet Schreiber, ASE's Treasurer. The longtime West Palm Beach resident and champion of what the city has to offer, was just appointed to Mayor Frankel's Green Task Force. The volunteer advisory group meets twice a month at the 1st and 3rd Thursday from 4 to 6 pm; meetings are open to the public. Among other tasks, the Green Task Force is most recently charged with prioritizing the list of city projects to be funded by the President's Stimulus funds—and of course, to make sure these projects are GREEN!

The Everglade Kite

is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Everglades, published 10 times a year.

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ASE on the Internet

<http://www.auduboneverglades.org>

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.

Bird of the Month:

July's Bird of the Month will be the Snail Kite. Please bring in any pictures you have for everyone to enjoy.

August's Bird of the Month will be the Swallow-tailed Kite. We are hoping to have a real swallow-tail for you to see.

Is there any special bird you have been wondering about? Call Linda or email hlindaase@aol.com with your ideas.

President's Perspective

Linda Humphries

I was at the beach today with my grandson and cannot believe all of the trash that is not picked up as the people pack up and leave. Andrew is only 8 but he sees the messes and starts to pick it up and throw it in the trash cans. He tells me he has learned about our Earth and how important it is to try to save it from further destruction. He worries about the birds and turtles eating the trash and getting sick. Sometimes it seems hard for me to bend and pick up the trash but I tell myself it is really good exercise and I see the example it sets as my grandchildren pick up the trash on their own. I realize it doesn't seem fair, but we all need to continue our efforts to keep areas clean. A special thanks to all of you for helping to maintain our beautiful Florida.

It has been documented by spring migration counts that the number of birds is really low this year; please continue to provide water for the birds and think about what you can do to plant more native shrubs and trees to help our birds survive. Even though it's not a native tree, the mango tree outside my bedroom window provides me hours of enjoyment watching the blue jays and mockingbirds eating the fruit. There are still plenty of mangos for me to enjoy also! I have my blue jays, cardinals, and doves still coming to my feeders. The starlings and mockingbirds continue to drink the water I provide. Even though these are common birds their behaviors provide endless enjoyment. Never stop looking at the common birds—there is always something new to observe

Thank you for all of the positive input you have given me this past year. I really appreciate hearing from all of you by phone or email. I was in Michigan the end of May and my answering machine was having problems. If you have not heard from me please call me again. We are in the process of planning our trips and speakers for next year. We have come up with some new and exciting trips. Continue to check our web site for updates. Please contact me with any of your thoughts or ideas at 561-742-7791 or email me at hlindaase@aol.com.

Birds in Crisis — Florida in particular

Cynthia Plockelman

National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida have great concerns about the crashes in our native bird populations. These are documented through a long list of bird counts and surveys both in Florida and nationally. The recent drought certainly has not helped, especially on the coasts, where migrants are heavily dependent on local ecosystems to support their long travels. Song birds are particularly dependent on feeding before jump off and on return landfall. The changes in our coastal landscapes, to exotic trees and plants, from productive/supportive native species, and commercial landscaping practices have contributed.

Preliminary review of the recent Spring North American Migration Count verifies this in Palm Beach County — as have most of our recent census efforts: 10 or fewer species of warblers, virtually no vireos, orioles, tanagers, buntings, grosbeaks, swallows, nighthawks, etc. Palm Beach county used to be a birder's destination for spring and fall migration — no more!!!

We could work on that: John Ogden, now returned to AOF, emphasizes the importance of native plants and trees, in this scenario. Douglas W. Tallamy of the U of Delaware and professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, also brought a similar message to WPB, in May, as keynote speaker of the Florida Native Plant Society Conference. His book: *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife With Native Plants*, should be a "must read" for all of our members. It is now out in paperback.

To help our members, Linda Humphries has compiled a list of important trees and some plants, from materials received at the Audubon Academy. We have copies now available for members. I will also be bringing plants and talking about their importance at our meetings. Hopefully, we can right the situation before it is too late.

TogetherGreen Update

Susan Snyder

Have you visited FAU/Pine Jog Environmental Education Center (PJEEC) since the new center opened? The native plant landscape funded by the TogetherGreen grant has been partially planted on the east side between the buildings. This educational landscape is designed to show ways to use natives in different landscape styles. The butterfly, home garden and coastal 'rooms' were planted the day after the rains started, which was fortuitous! Signage will be added later in the summer.

'Extreme Backyard Makeover' was the theme for this kickoff event which drew over 125 people eager to learn about native plant landscaping, take nature walks and buy native plants! The evaluations were very positive. "Thank you. I look forward to more seminars/activities like this." "Excellent program, very informative!" "A plethora of knowledge was presented."

This push to encourage native plants, which save water and attract insects, birds and butterflies, has been possible because ASE received a \$15,000 grant supported by TogetherGreen, an Audubon program with funding from Toyota.

As you enter Pine Jog EEC notice the incredible wetlands on the left funded by a South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) grant. In one week the native plantings TRANSFORMED the TogetherGreen and SFWMD sites into productive, natural habitats!

ASE Education News

Susan Snyder

Doris Mager visited seven schools and presented the "Birds of Prey" program to 1175 students at elementary, middle and high school. Her visit to PBC was a success judging from these thank you letters from fifth graders!

"I just wanted to say thank you for coming to Pine Jog Elementary School and showing us what you do in your life. It really is a good thing that you showed us kids what you do in life so they can be more responsible and tell our parents to be careful a little bit more when it comes to animals." Ayesha.

"After you presented the different birds, I have decided that when I grow up, I would like to devote half of my time to rescuing animals.....Hopefully the next generation will notice that they cannot go shooting random birds whenever they want." Tiffany.

"Your experience and your stories have inspired me to help save birds like you. Thank you for coming to our school free of charge. We appreciated your time to stop by." Alain.

"People like you inspired me to care day and night about animals." Valentina.

ASE members' donations are always accepted for the Education Program! Thank you for your past support.

July Bird of the Month: Snail Kite

Linda Humphries

I was out at ARM Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge on June 9, 2009. I had heard reports that the Snail Kites might be nesting out there again. Serena Rinker showed me the area where the Snail Kites had been last year. I saw two Kites flying over the area and I was excited to see a male and female Snail Kite perched in trees. There was a visible nest in a tree used last year by the kites with a female Snail Kite sitting in it. The male was on another tree nearby calling to her with his harsh cackling sound. Last year there were a total of 11 nests in the C-8 impoundment. The biologists did not find any other nests in the interior of the Refuge last year. Of the 11 nests, only 3 young were known to have fledged successfully. The other nests were either predated by raccoons, great horned owls, etc. or were not viable because the parents left, eggs didn't hatch, or the nests blew down. The refuge is actively managing the water levels in C-8 to be optimal for the kites to nest. They are basing the water level on what the kites preferred last year. Hopefully more kites will nest over the next few weeks if they like the area and there is enough food for them to eat.

The Snail Kite is only found in the United States in appropriate aquatic habitats from central to southern Florida. It is on the Federal and State endangered species list due to their extreme habitat specialization. The Florida Snail Kite population is around 700 individuals or less because of the drought we have been experiencing the last few years. The drought has affected prey and breeding. Snail Kites are common in Latin America. Their habitat is marsh wetland and their primary food is apple snails. The Snail Kite is a medium-sized raptor related to hawks. The male coloration is slate black with red beak and legs. The female is dark brown with white streaking on the face and chest and has yellow or orange beak and legs. Both male and female have a down curved beak that can easily capture and eat snails. There is a white band on the tail near the body.

To view the Snail Kites park in the Marsh Trail parking lot. Take the south trail past the corner of the Marsh Trail (Impoundment 7) and continue straight to Impoundment 8. The kites are in the trees on the right side (west side) between the corner of the Marsh Trail and the photo blind. There have been reports of a Great Horned Owl in the trees on the left side (east side of the Marsh Trail).

Everglades Day, February 6, 2010

Art In The Everglades

Wanted: Program Suggestions

Is there someone in the arts you would like to see featured at Everglades Day next year?

Have you heard an interesting science presentation lately?

Send your suggestions to the Everglades Day planning committee at roysue@bellsouth.net.

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The *Everglade Kite* is published 10 times a year by Audubon Society of the Everglades, P.O. Box 16914, West Palm Beach, Florida, 33416-6914. Also available on the web: www.auduboneverglades.org.

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Articles NEEDED! Send to ben@kolstad.com by the 10th of the month.

Join Audubon Society of the Everglades

There are now two ways to join ASE: Chapter-only membership, and membership through the National Audubon Society.

Chapter-Only Membership

When you become a member of the Audubon Society of the Everglades by using the form at right, all of your membership fees are put to use supporting **local** projects: Everglades Day; Education Programs such as model schools and field trips; Scholarships; and Conservation activities. Audubon Society of the Everglades members also receive 11 issues of the *Everglade Kite* newsletter.

National Audubon Society Membership

When you join ASE through the National Audubon Society, you also receive 6 issues of *Audubon Magazine*, and membership in Audubon of Florida. For details, visit www.audubon.org. To join the National Society, send your information as above, but make your check out to **National Audubon Society**. NOTE: The annual fee is \$20 for regular NAS membership. In either case, send your check, payable to ASE (\$15/\$10) or NAS (\$20) as appropriate, along with this form to

Membership, Audubon Society of the Everglades
P.O. Box 16914
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-6914

Audubon Society of the Everglades (ASE)

YES! I want to become a **chapter-only member** of ASE. Enclosed is my check made payable to Audubon Society of the Everglades for:

Regular \$15 Senior (62+)/Student \$10

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

I would like to donate an additional

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$_____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

e-mail _____

I would like to volunteer for:

- Education
 Conservation
 Everglades Day
 Fundraising
 Other: _____

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Audubon Society of the Everglades general meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. (refreshments at 7) at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, located on Summit Blvd, near the intersection of Summit and Jog, in West Palm Beach. The public is welcome to attend.