



#### MEMBERS TO PRESENT NATURE, ETC. SLIDES

Once again the annual and popular "Membership Slides" program will be featured at ASE's August 1st meeting.

On page 3 we have reprinted the application coupon, but since time may be short when you receive your KITE, perhaps it would be best to call Program Chairman Rhonda Wilson, 967-2346. Advise her that you would like to show some slides and what area of the natural world they concern.

At previous August programs, members have shown slides ranging from scenic environments and nature tours to birding and ASE field trips.

Join us on Tuesday, August 1st, at 7:30 p.m. at the West Palm Beach Garden Club Center in Dreher Park. Bring along a friend, particularly if you have one interested in photography, because our amateur photographers are happy to answer questions concerning their slides. (Rhonda Wilson)

#### SPECIAL FIELD TRIP

There will be a special field trip Saturday, August 26th, to the Duda Farms near Belle Glade. Car pooling will be in order and they will leave at 7 a.m. Those participating are asked to meet at Four Points (Congress and Southern Blvd.) in the parking lot

on the northwest corner.

Gloria Hunter, who will be the leader, reports many flooded fields for shorebirds and she expects good birding in August. Please call her, 585-7714, if more information is needed.

#### ASE AGAIN FIRST IN BIRDATHON CATEGORY

Everglades Audubon has done it again - taking first place nationally for chapters in the 1,000 members and over category, as well as first place for both region and state in that same category.

Thanks to Leah Schad's fund raising efforts, the support of her Birdathon team, and those who made pledges, we broke last year's record by \$1,000. The total amount raised prior to the deadline was \$16,865. This, divided between National and Florida Audubon and ASE, gave each one \$5,571 to use for Audubon causes. Since the June deadline, Leah reports receiving an additional \$209.90 which will be held over for next year's Birdathon.

At the July 3rd ASE meeting, Treasurer Seymour Miller called attention to an article about the cost of fund raising and a new, tighter state law concerning same. He was pleased to report that our Birdathon

expenses were less than 1 percent of the total raised.

### COWBIRD INVASION CREATING PROBLEMS

According to Drs. Thomas Bancroft and Wayne Hoffman of the National Audubon Society Research Staff at Tavernier, cowbirds are invading Florida at an alarming rate. Of particular concern is the impact on resident song birds. Brown-headed cowbirds began breeding in the Panhandle in 1956 and have since spread across the northern part of the state. In 1985, a fledgling was found as far south as Pinellas County. In fact, we spotted the pest at Fort DeSoto Park on our Birdathon.

Shiny cowbirds have begun to intrude upon our environment, expanding their range from South America by island hopping through the Caribbean. U.S. breeding has not been confirmed, but is suspected.

Both species are brood parasites. They lay their eggs in nests of other species, often removing one egg of the host, thereby reducing the number of host's young.

Several months ago, while visiting a friend in Columbia, SC, I noticed a brown-headed cowbird in the yard. When I pointed out the species to my hostess, she remarked that it was the first time she had noticed the bird. Incidentally, she keeps pretty good tabs on what's in her yard.

After the June National Audubon Board meeting, a number of us stayed over for a trip to Grayling to visit the jack pine areas in search of the Kirtland's warbler. After a briefing at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife facility, we headed out to find this endangered species. (Part of the briefing included a slide presentation which had photos of Paul Sykes and Dr. Larry Walkenshaw.)

We heard a male singing as we were getting out of the car and shortly thereafter the bird perched on a dead snag and all binoculars and scopes

were sharply focused for a rather long time. It is always a thrill to see a bird for the first time, but the awesomeness is somehow intensified when you know "this one is endangered" and there are only several hundred pairs in the world - and the very place in which you are standing is the only place the bird breeds and raises its young.

Cowbird parasitism has been implicated in the decline of the Kirtland's warbler, as well as several other species. In Michigan, the Wildlife Service builds a rather spacious, room-sized cage to trap these uninvited visitors. Live cowbirds are used as "bait" for others to join them. The birds get caught, but very few if any escape. When enough are caught, they are collected and disposed of, thereby increasing the odds of successful nesting by the Kirtland's warbler.

Other bird populations affected by the cowbird are the black-capped vireo and the least Bell's vireo. Yellow-shouldered blackbirds in Puerto Rico have suffered from shiny cowbirds. In Florida, scientists are concerned about some isolated populations, including the Caribbean races of the yellow warbler and the black-whiskered vireo; also the Florida races of the grasshopper sparrow and prairie warbler. Decline of the black-whiskered vireo in the Tampa Bay area has already occurred.  
(Leah Schad)

### KITE STRINGS

We bid farewell to Randy Loftis, environmental writer for the Miami Herald. Randy has been a good friend of the environment during his long association with the Herald. At the time members read this, he will have reported to the Dallas Morning News. Our loss is their gain.

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Leah Schad has been nominated again by the Southeastern Region to the Board of Directors of National Audubon. We earnestly hope she is re-elected. Her contacts and access

to information are helpful both to Florida Audubon, of which she is chairman of the Board, and to ASE, of which he is a director at large.

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Pine Jog plans a natural history tour to the Galapagos Islands. The small group on this personalized tour will be accompanied by Claudine Laabs, professional nature photographer. For more information, call Pine Jog Expeditions, 407/686-6600.

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#### CONSERVATION REPORT

A few of us got away from it all on July 16th to attend a Florida Coastal Barrier Workshop on Marathon in the Keys. It was sponsored by most all well-known environmental organizations: Audubon Sierra, Nature Conservancy, 1000 Friends of Florida, Izaak Walton League, etc., not to mention local chapters. It was intended to introduce us to proposed new legislation (Rep. Studds' HR 2840 and Sen. Chafee's out later this summer) that will change the Coastal Barrier Resources System in Florida.

There will be some mapping changes, most significantly approximately 110,000 acres of the Keys will be added. No need for me to elaborate again on the enormous pressure for development, the sometimes faint resolve of county commissioners, the nine endangered or threatened animal species and the

several plant species in the same predicament.

The original Coastal Barrier Resources Act passed in 1982 was on the right track, but inadequate. The goals were to protect human lives, diminish expenditures of federal funds and reduce the damage to natural resources by discouraging development of high hazard areas. The new legislation would prohibit public monies expended for infrastructure not now in place on undeveloped designated lands.

Nothing could be more simple! Those already there with federally-backed flood insurance would be continued to be vested, even on sale of property. If a hurricane destroyed 50+% of the existing structure, it would not be rebuilt. This, in essence, would end federal taxpayers continuing to subsidize unwise development on Florida's fragile coasts. Two billion is the estimated savings for the federal government within 20 years.

How could anyone object to that, you ask? Well, even at this environmentally sensitive meeting, there was a large group of vociferous people challenging every speaker on all the panels. We must more than balance this! Write or call Representatives Tom Lewis and Harry Johnston, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, and Senators Connie Mack and Bob Graham, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

#### Application for Showing Member's Slides at August Meeting

A maximum of 10 slides are permitted per member. Members will do their own commentary. Please fill out the lines below and mail to Rhonda Wilson, 3791 Dale Road, W. Palm Beach FL 33406.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Topic slides cover \_\_\_\_\_

\*A list showing your place on the program will be posted in the lobby on the night of the meeting.

Briefly, other national issues looming that need quick words of direction: (1) The crime of Tongass National Forest. We are for repealing the 1980 law, terminating long-term lumber contracts, permanently protecting areas valuable to fish and wildlife. (2) Acid Rain: The Senate has introduced no specific legislation yet. One bill, S 816, needs to be strengthened. House bills 2585, 2323 and 1470 all are weak in different areas. Encourage our representatives to do better, but at least to co-sponsor them. Senator Bob Graham (on the Environment & Public Works Committee) definitely should be reached. In the House, Michael Bilirakis, Florida representative on the Energy and Commerce Committee, is considered a swing vote.

Locally, the SFWMD deferment of a vote on School Site GGG, north county Foundation Land property, was one of those 30-day victories. True, we did make some people nervous (the

School Board had purchased land and let engineering contracts before all required zoning and permits were obtained) and we did get a couple of concessions: and upland conservation area linked to the mitigation wetland/retention area, and a promise to consult with Audubon on future sites.

Of course, we have no idea what they will consider "already" considered by them! Charles Lee of FAS aptly commented, "When it comes to environmental education, the Palm Beach County School Board needs some remedial instruction." The Florida Council on Comprehensive Environmental Education stated, "A carefully targeted program of environmental education aimed at every level of society is the most effective way to manage our growth, economy and natural resources."

Next Conservation Meeting -  
Wednesday, August 9th, at 7:30 p.m.  
at the home of Ruth Trumpower, 165  
Auburn Drive, Lake Worth.

(Cissie Durando)

**AUDUBON SOCIETY  
of the EVERGLADES**

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