



EVERGLADE KITE

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

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Ruth Trumpower, Editor

MARCH 1991

CLAUDINE LAABS TO GIVE EVERGLADES N.P. UPDATE

Professional photographer Claudine Laabs returns center stage on March 5. With "Update on the Everglades," Laabs will give us an overview of Everglades National Park and adjacent areas, including Florida Bay.

Her presentation will focus on current environmental problems in the Everglades, with wading birds as an indicator species.

Laabs has once again been commissioned by the Palm Beach Council of the Arts to do another poster on "Florida's Everglades - Nature's Masterwork." This year the poster will feature roseate spoonbills.

With the fine arts emphasis in her nature photography, Laabs is a recent nominee for the Hector Ubertaini Art Award. The winner will be announced March 8 at the Ibis Country Club where the exhibit of all nominees' works will be held.

Please join us as we again welcome this internationally-known nature photographer who is also an ASE member. The meeting is at the West Palm Beach Garden Club, Dreher Trail North, on Tuesday, March 5, at 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend! if you like fine art and photography and up-to-date information, you will enjoy this program.

(Rhonda Wilson)

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 8:00 A.M. - Dupuis Reserve Wildlife & Environmental Area. Meet at Entrance Gate 2 on SR 76 west. Mark Robson, leader. Take Beeline Hwy. (710) to SR 76 just before Indiantown, then take SR 76 west (towards Port Mayaca) to Gate 2.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 7:30 A.M. - A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at Marsh Trail.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 23 & 24 - Highlands Hammock State Park weekend trip. Provide own transportation and motel or camp. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at boardwalk each day. Directions - 6 miles west of Sebring, off U.S. 27-98. Turn west at the sign onto Florida 634 which leads to the park entrance.

Highlands Hammock is one of the most famous nature parks in the south-east. It's a 3800-acre preserve of a magnificent hardwood forest containing some trees over a thousand years old. One of the few virgin hammocks left in Florida, it appears much as it did when Spanish conquistadors first arrived looking for gold.

Those wishing to camp should reserve space by calling the camp office, 813/385-0011, or write Highlands Hammock State Park, Route 1,

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Vote YES

for the Environmental Land
Preservation Referendum on March 12th



WHAT IS THE REFERENDUM ABOUT?

The referendum gives voters the opportunity to approve funding to acquire, preserve and maintain environmentally sensitive lands in Palm Beach County through the issuance of tax-free, low interest, long-term bonds, not exceeding \$100 million. The purchase of these lands will ensure habitat for wildlife, protect endangered species of plants and animals, and provide recreational and educational opportunities for residents of Palm Beach County.

WHY DO WE NEED A REFERENDUM?

For the past 20 years, Palm Beach County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Unfortunately, protection of our unique natural heritage has not kept up with the County's fast paced growth. Many of the special places we have come to enjoy have been lost to development. Consultants who prepared a report in 1989 found that natural areas worthy of preservation make up less than 10% of our county. As little as 2% remains of certain types of ecosystems, such as Florida Scrub.

WHAT LANDS WILL BE PURCHASED?

HOW WERE THEY SELECTED?

An Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Advisory Committee composed of Palm Beach County citizens has reviewed the consultants' study and visited the high quality natural areas identified. The Committee recommended to the Board of County Commissioners that 14 sites, totalling 22,407 acres, be acquired as natural areas for public benefit. The sites were chosen from the northern, central and southern regions of the county to ensure protection of the various types of natural areas throughout the county and to provide recreational opportunities for the residents in each region.

WHY ARE THESE SITES IMPORTANT?

Many of these sites improve the quality of our surface waters and recharge the underground aquifers that provide much of our drinking water. They provide places to live for wildlife such as the gopher tortoise, Florida scrub jay, and bobcat and plants such as wild orchids that have been classified as endangered, threatened, or of special concern by state and federal agencies. The protection of these sites will establish corridors for wildlife between the City of West Palm Beach's Water Catchment Area, Jonathan Dickinson State Park and the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area. Protected corridors allow wildlife to migrate and forage for long distances.

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC USE THESE SITES?

These scenic lands will provide open space for passive recreation such as hiking, photography, bird watching and wildflower walks. The establishment of corridors will provide new recreational opportunities with the addition of long distance hiking trails. Protected Natural Areas will be available for environmental education, research and use by schools.

HOW WILL THE SITES BE MANAGED?

Natural Areas purchased through the referendum will be managed to maintain the natural values of each ecosystem. Management will include the placement of fences around sites and trails, boardwalks, educational signs and other facilities to allow the public access to these sites. Some of the management work will be accomplished with the assistance of volunteers from local communities, schools and organizations. Some of the sites will require special care such as controlled burning and removal of invasive exotic species to continue the natural functions of each ecosystem.

HAVE OTHER COUNTIES DONE THIS?

Twelve counties throughout Florida, including neighboring Martin, Broward and Dade, have already passed similar referenda. Other counties have scheduled such elections for 1991.

HOW MUCH WILL THESE SITES COST?

ARE OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDS AVAILABLE?

The total assessed value of all 14 sites is approximately \$300 million. The County intends to raise additional money for purchasing these natural areas by applying for state matching grants through the Conservation and Recreational Lands and Florida Communities Trust programs. These programs will distribute funds under the Preservation 2000 Program that was enacted in 1990 by the Florida Legislature. More lands could be protected by sharing the cost of acquisition with municipalities, through the establishment of a Transfer of Development Rights program and as part of the activities of the Land Preservation Trust of Palm Beach County, a private organization recently formed in the County. But without passage of the referendum, the significant pool of state funds will be lost to the County.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST ME?

The cost to a homeowner with a \$100,000 house and a \$25,000 homestead exemption will be approximately \$15.50 per year. This cost will decrease over the 20 year term of the bonds as the County's tax base increases with population growth and economic development.

WHY IS THE REFERENDUM BEING HELD NOW?

The rate of destruction of palm beach County's natural areas is higher than in the Brazilian Rain Forest. One tenth of our native ecosystems are cleared each year. Unless we take steps to preserve the last remaining natural areas, the best lands will be lost forever. This is simply our last chance. Also, state funds that will allow the County to acquire these areas are now becoming available. But more counties are passing referenda and the competition for these matching funds is increasing. Our tax money could go to other counties unless we pass this referendum. Voters will have opportunity to enhance the quality of life in Palm Beach County by protecting the few natural areas that remain relatively unchanged by 120 years of development. Without the passage of the bond issue, the opportunity to protect the last remaining parts of "old Florida" in our County will be lost forever.

Box 310, Sebring, FL 33870. The park is very busy during the winter months and reservations are a must. (Woody Bracey)

CONSERVATION REPORT

Now that the Water Management District has been "persuaded" to put the unfavorable S.W.I.M. Plan on "hold" until the Governor gives the green light, we continue to urge W.M.D. to go ahead with two other very important projects: exterminating melaleuca trees in the Water Catchment Areas and removing nutrients from the water heading for Everglades National Park (the ENR program). The W.M.D. still has more than enough to do.

If you would like to help clean up one of our Audubon sanctuaries on Saturday, March 16, please call our Sanctuaries Chairman, Carole Fields, at 586-5413, and get the details.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE "YES" ON MARCH 12TH! The referendum is very well explained on the opposite page. (Chuck Potter)

EVERGLADES BUS TRIP

Everglades National Park is always a fascinating place to visit, and we are fortunate to have this unique area right at our doorstep. There are so many places to explore along the 45-mile stretch to Flamingo that it is difficult to squeeze everything into one day. Thanks to our knowledgeable leader, Howard P. Langridge, we managed to hit all the hot spots and accumulate a long list of 78 species.

Our first stop was the Visitors Center where we birded along the back of the parking lot, sighting at least ten species, including a flock of lovely cedar waxwings and a brightly-colored pine warbler serenading us in the chilly morning air. The sky was as clear as a bell, making a perfect backdrop for raptors, so we set our hopes high on finding a short-tailed hawk.

Soon the bus took off for Anhinga Trail, a famous photographic hot spot for wading birds and nesting anhingas. Unfortunately, the anhingas did not nest successfully last year due to the drought and, although it was still a little early in the season, there seemed to be very few attempting it this year. We were, however, awed by the beauty of one male anhinga in breeding plumage showing off his striking turquoise eye ring. The remainder of

the time was spent looking for rails and bitterns and enjoying the great number of yellow-crowned night herons. Of course we made another attempt to locate a short-tailed hawk among the dozens of black and turkey vultures soaring above the park, but to no avail.

After an early lunch at Long Pine Key Campground, we went to Mahogany Hammock where a well-camouflaged barred owl was the highlight, along with four species of warblers and a solitary vireo. The warblers responded to "Phishing" by appearing all at once and then disappearing in the same manner. You had to have a quick eye to spot them all - magnolia, black-throated green, prairie and black-and-white.

At Nine Mile Pond we again searched for a short-tailed hawk, but without luck, so we headed for West Lake. The timing couldn't have been better, for as soon as we arrived Howard Langridge's eagle eyes spotted a white phase short-tailed hawk flying leisurely over the lake and providing us with a great view. All kinds of Ah's and Oh's sounded at that point, so I'm sure there were a lot of happy birders.

Mrazek Pond was rather disappointing as there were very few birds. Maybe it was just the wrong time of day, for at times it can be fantastic. We loaded up the bus and were on our way to Flamingo, arriving about 2 p.m. to check out the shore birds in Florida Bay. There were a good number of gulls, willet, white pelican, and even a group of marbled godwit on the sandbar. Then we combed the marina looking for a shiny cowbird, but lucked-out on that one.

Eco Pond was our last stop, and we hoped to find the groove-billed ani that had been reported among a few smooth-billed anis. Again our timing was perfect; no sooner did we step from the bus than out leader spotted ANOTHER short-tailed hawk, this time a black phase. We had a fantastic view as it passed over the road. Both phases in one day! Incredible!

As we walked around Eco Pond, American goldfinches flew by and a large flock of cedar waxwings gleamed in the sunlight as they turned in flight. Suddenly an ani's whining call rang out and we saw three of them fly into a thick stand of cattails. It was tough getting a glimpse of just one of the birds because there were over thirty of us and you had to stand in only one spot to see its head. When the scope was finally on the ani, a few of us managed a quick look at the bill before the bird flew off. A groove-billed ani for sure. What luck!

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PLEASE SUPPORT THE BIRDATHON

I will participate in the 1991 Birdathon by pledging the amount of _____ per species counted. (Or, if you prefer to pledge a set amount, please indicate it here: \$_____.)

NAME _____ PHONE NO. _____

DRESS _____

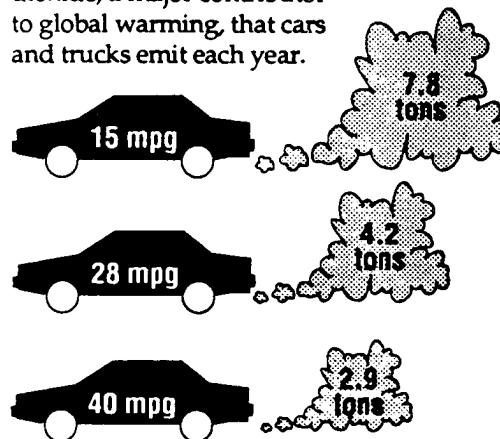
Make payable and mail to: Audubon Society of the Everglades
P. O. Box 6762
West Palm Beach, FL 33405

We left about 4 p.m. and enjoyed the scenic drive back through the park, arriving in West Palm Beach around 7 p.m. It was a long, full day and a lot of fun.

(Katie Gersher)

Gas Mileage and Air Pollution

Improving motor vehicle gas mileage standards can lower the amount of carbon dioxide, a major contributor to global warming, that cars and trucks emit each year.



Source: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
All figures are for yearly emissions
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