



EVERGLADE KITE

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

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Ruth Trumpower, Editor

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MARK ROBSON TO SPEAK ON CRITICAL WILDLIFE AREAS

Wildlife biologist Mark Robson will explain the Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission's positive new program, "Critical Wildlife Areas," at the June 4th meeting.

Twenty areas are set aside at present in the state, with others being added. These areas have unusually high concentrations of wildlife species that are in conflict with humans in one way or another. Once the area is deemed a Critical Wildlife Area, it can be closed to the public.

Robson is a West Palm Beach native who received his Bachelor's degree at the University of Maine and his Master's degree in wildlife ecology at the University of Florida. He has been with the G&FWFC since 1977 and has been the regional nongame wildlife biologist for 10 counties since 1988. His area goes from Vero Beach to Key West to Naples.

Much of the work that Robson does is survey and inventory work - data collection for data bases.

The program he will present promises to be interesting - it's a step in the right direction right here on our own doorstep. Please join us on Tuesday, June 4th, 7:30 p.m., at the West Palm Beach Garden Club Center on Dreher Trail North. (Rhonda Wilson)

1991 BIRDATHON REPORT

The ASE Birdathon participants, Brian Hope and Howard Langridge, started at Fort DeSota in St. Petersburg at 11 a.m. on May 4th and ended in Palm Beach County the next morning.

The astounding element of this Birdathon was the almost complete absence of migratory land birds - with only one, the Gray Catbird.

Despite the absence of migrants, we saw several species we did not expect to find in our hurried search. A late Common Loon, American Kestrel, Wild Turkey and Hairy Woodpecker were among our unexpected sightings. These lucky finds boosted our final count to 124 species, quite good considering the lack of migrants.

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Many thanks to Brian and Howard for an excellent job, and to all the members and friends who support ASE's Birdathon. Letters regarding pledges will be mailed shortly.

FIELD TRIP NOTES

The Loxahatchee Refuge Fly-In the evening of May 14 was a big success even though the rookery to the west of the Marsh Trail had been destroyed by a recent storm.

A good number of ducks and herons

were closely seen in the beautiful late afternoon sunlight. Hal Weidemann pointed out interesting plants as well as birds, and Ranger Lois Chapman was a pleasant addition, recognizing many of the calls of birds we could hear but not see. A sora rail gave us a good long look as it fed among coots, moorhens and iridescent purple gallinules. We saw several greater and lesser yellowlegs, least sandpipers, snipe, and many black-necked stilts. A night-hawk came buzzing overhead to announce its recent return from South America.

For those who remained, the best viewing occurred after the sun went down. Two great horned owls were perched near the Visitors Center, and a barn owl and several black-crowned night herons flew by as we looked over the dike at the boat ramp. By then the stars and the planets had come out, but so had the mosquitoes, so we left rather quickly with a total of 41 species for the trip.

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A clear, still morning in a naturally preserved hardwood hammock off the beach in Fort Lauderdale was the setting for our migratory warblers search at the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park on April 27. Gloria Hunter had her good friend and outstanding birder, Wally George, lead this field trip. He didn't disappoint us even though there was no major fallout of warblers. When the weather is as fair as it had been, they just keep flying over. The wind and rain of a weather front is needed to force them down to rest and feed.

Nevertheless, we got good views of the black-throated blue, Cape May, prairie, northern parula, blackpoll, black and white, prothonotary, American redstart, common yellowthroat, ovenbird and yellow-throated warblers, plus a nice, bright yellow-throated vireo. All were in their colorful spring plumage and it was easy to pick up their movements in the still trees. We heard, but could not find, a Louisiana waterthrush.

Some of our best birds of the morning were seen at the nearby little Colohatchee Park, a preserved wetland with boardwalk set right in the middle of Fort Lauderdale. Here we got closeups of the rose-breasted grosbeak, yellow-billed cuckoo, pileated, downy and red-headed woodpeckers, northern flicker, and many of the warblers listed above.

Spring color was not only in the beautiful wildflowers and the resident cardinals and blue jays, but also very bright in the spot-breasted oriole, summer and scarlet tanagers and the many wild parrots we saw.

(Woody Bracey)

ANNUAL LIBRARY REPORT

Seventeen new books on birds have been added this year to the Audubon Ornithological Collection at the County Library on Summit Blvd., at an expenditure of six hundred fifty dollars. Several useful and needed volumes have also been donated.

Nine donations have been made to the Ornithological Book Fund and book plates have been placed in that number of books "honoring" or "in memory of" those so designated. Donated books duplicating those already on our shelves

are sold and the proceeds added to our fund. A donation to the Ornithological Fund is a thoughtful way to remember a friend or relative, or to honor a birthday or other special occasion.

If you have not visited our collection at the Summit Blvd. Library, this is the perfect time to do so. Here's your chance to check on the birds you're apt to encounter on your summer travels. We've endeavored to have such information on the fifty states, as well as most areas of the world.

Or why not find out just why the woodpecker frequenting your backyard this spring is making such a racket, or what's happened to all the gulls you met each morning on the beach all winter. Our books on specific species are improving by the year. Or settle down to a good adventure - birding in the wilds of Peru in air-conditioned comfort.

Some recently added books, with their classification numbers to help you find them:

Keith Taylor, "Birder's Guide to Costa Rica," A598.297286. To help you locate any of the hundreds of species found in this beautiful country.

Don Stap, "A Parrot Without a Name," A598.2985. Search for the last unknown birds on earth in the rainforests of Peru with famous ornithologists John O'Neill and Ted Parker. This will keep you up past your bedtime.

Lawrence Kilham, "The American Crows and the Common Raven," A598.864. Learn about the habits and behavior of the American crow on a Central Florida cattle ranch. (If you've not read Kilham's "On Watching Birds" yet, check it out!)

D.W. Buden, "Birds of the Southern Bahamas," A598.297296. An annotated check list of the neglected islands of the southern area.

"The Reader's Digest Book of North American Birds," A598.297. A good source of basic information on most of our native birds, with an attractive format and excellent illustrations by 22 artists. Look it over.

Charles Sibley & B.L. Monroe, Jr., "Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World," A598.SIB. A valuable reference to supplement field guides, to put each species in a context within the avifauna of the world. You'll find this helpful in clarifying recent 'lumpings' or 'splittings,' or in standardizing your computer entries.

Charles Sibley & Jon Ahlquist, "Phylogeny and Classification of Birds: A Study in Molecular Evolution," A598.238. A new phylogeny using genetic material suggests some surprising new relationships among the nearly ten thousand living species of birds. A monumental work!
(Gloria Hunter)

KITE STRINGS

Audubon members are cordially invited to meet Mr. Charles Rowe, water color artist, who was named as the Florida Conservation Association's "Artist of the Year" for the 1991-92 season. He will be present at the opening of his exhibit of southern wilderness paintings and prints at the Wildlife and Nature Fine Art Gallery, 2800 North Military Trail, W.P.B., on

Thursday, June 27th, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
The exhibit will continue through July 12.

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The Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, a privately-funded unit of the College of Education of Florida Atlantic University, will receive one of the General Operating Support grants provided to 432 museums and nature centers throughout the United States. One of only two nature centers in Florida to receive a grant, Pine Jog will use the award to add to its hands-on environmental programs for children.

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Anne Kilmer, the Random Gardener columnist in the Sunday P.B. Post, is offering three-hour classes in Random Gardening at Pine Jog, Mounts Botanical Gardens and the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens. Call her, 585-1935, for details.

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BIRDS OUTSMART MAN

Within the last few years hundreds of ring-billed and laughing gulls have migrated annually in the fall to Century Village and have chosen several rooftops for their lodgings. However, the dwellers in these homes disapprove of the intruders because they are noisy and leave their droppings on the roofs.

The homeowners decided something must be done to dispose of these birds, and held counsel. Their brilliant conclusion was to outwit the gulls by placing decoys on the roof to frighten the birds away. Some decoys were purchased and placed at regular intervals on the rooftops. The natives were confident this would solve their problem.

For a short time it seemed this ruse was working, which brought great joy to the occupants of the buildings. Sad to tell, soon a few wiser gulls realized these plastic decoys of great horned owls were not dangerous at all, and insisted on remaining on the roofs. Other gulls took note of their safety and joined them. Before long, hundreds of birds scorned the decoys and settled comfortably on the rooftops.

The birds had rendered useless homo sapiens' efforts at removing them. The gulls, and man, had learned that you can fool some of the birds all the time, but you cannot fool all of the birds all the time. (Saul Rimberg)

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Our chapter has gone all out the last couple of weeks representing the voice of what I like to think is sanity and a concern for the future. I am very proud of the fact that we have attracted a few new faces, both in and out of the chapter, to "bear witness."

The oldest standing battle involves the proposed management of the C-51 Basin (Palm Beach Canal), which is north and east of the Refuge approximately from Lake Worth Road on the south to the water catchment area on the north. The ASE Board reaffirmed our opposition to the Army Corps' latest plan. The plan does not add to the water supply, nor improve water quality. It will continue to degrade Lake Worth to the east, and drag the Refuge into a backpumping scheme

during a minimum 1-in-10-years rainfall. There is no commitment to a restrained Land Use Policy by the county or by the expanding municipalities. It is a poor document, and the Corps never heeded comments of the past from agencies or individuals. The Wildlife Service took a stand against receiving pumped water into the Refuge, and subsequently allowing withdrawals to the new system. The estimated cost of \$54 million to the taxpayers would go for an above-ground reservoir complete with a 22' dike (not a marsh or thing of beauty), a control structure and pumps, roads, canals, and purchase of approximately 2½ square miles.

Through the years of rapid development in the Wellington-Royal Palm Beach area there never has been significant flooding causing property damage. This turkey would enable a greatly increased density in that area. It would destroy our wildlife corridor concept and escalate the cost of any sensitive land tracts we passed the bond issue to purchase. We were pleased to see that this hearing brought out our old friend, Nat Reed, to speak against it.

The chapter supported the inclusion of several tracts of P.B. County land to be purchased using S.O.R. funds. Two, the Loxahatchee Reserve and Loxahatchee Slough, are on our list of 14 preferred sites to buy with bond money. One is also shared with Martin County, the Palmar Project in north county. This area also contains some of the notorious Hobe Sound Plantation property that is such a controversial Development of Regional Impact adjacent to Jonathan Dickinson State Park.

The fourth tract was a surprise to me, as I was sure it was already purchased. Staff reported it was "inadvertently" left off a 1989 survey after SFWMD Board voted to purchase it along with the Strazzulla Tract as buffers to the Refuge. It was documented back-up habitat for the struggling snail kite.

All these properties should receive support before the second week in June, when they will be brought to the SFWMD Board. Write a card to Allan Milledge, Chairman, SFWMD, P. O. Box 24680, W.P.B., Fl 33416.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council meeting on May 17 opened potential disaster for the county. Many land designations of residential were changed to commercial. We also witnessed about 1500 acres transferred from 1 unit on 10 acres to 3 units per acre, or about a population of 11,000. This is west of Wellington and very close to the Refuge. To allow this complete turn around from an avowed policy of not sprawling ever westward, and instead attempt to rescue existing dying cities, we had to witness an amendment to our Comprehensive Plan to allow this to happen.

We were looking for a bone in that this great potential increase in units in the county should have been accomplished by buying developments rights of environmentally sensitive areas. We didn't get that either because the county study, promised in the Plan, was delayed sufficiently to allow this to pass first. Our next disappointment was to discover an erstwhile God has feet of clay. After resigning from the Department of Community Affairs, Mr. Tom Pelham hired out to Corepoint, the developer of Wellington, and pleaded its case before the

Regional Planning Council.

Our lack of a good national conservative energy policy continues to foster fragmented approaches. We need to support Senator Graham's efforts to return off-shore rights to the states involved. He has introduced legislation to ban drilling within 100 miles of the Florida coastline. He also filed a bill to strengthen the Clean Water Act. The state would extend jurisdiction over water quality from 3 to 12 miles and over pollution threats from adjacent states. This deserves our support, but does not help us with the problem of Indian Territory being leased for oil exploration and permitting "slant drilling." Nor does it address the problem of another nuclear power plant in Florida, which we hear Senator Graham might be backing.

The threats to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are getting seriously geared up again. A real diversionary tactic: Senator Connie Mack is trying to stir the pot to condemn Cuba for possibly leasing off-shore areas to France for

oil exploration. Everything points to our need to move to a real position on conservation and efficiency and alternate sources of energy. Let's all tell our Congressmen just that!

On a national level, only second to energy, is needed support and pressure for ancient forest protection. What a legacy to sit by and allow the destruction of ancient forests in one more generation. Write Representative Harry Johnston and urge him not to support exempting federal forest management decisions from environmental laws. We must not weaken the Endangered Species Act. (Cissie Durando)

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