



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 52, Number 1

October 2011

CALENDAR

- Sat. Oct 1, 7:30 a.m. Juno Dunes/Carlin Park.** 14200 US Hwy 1, Juno Beach. Meet in EAST parking lot at Loggerhead Marine Life Center. Leader: Clive Pinnock
- Fri. Oct 7, 8:00 a.m. Green Cay Wetlands.** 12800 Hagen Ranch Rd., Boynton Bch. Meet outside Nature Center Main door. Leader: Linda Humphries
- Sat. Oct 8, 8:00 a.m. Frenchman's Forest, PB Gardens.** W side of Prosperity Farms Rd. 1.5 miles north of PGA Blvd. Meet in parking lot. Leader: Steve & Melanie Garcia
- Sun. Oct 9, BIG SIT—Join the fun!** (24-hour bird observation sitting in a 17' circle—pick your time) Coordinator: Linda Humphries 561-742-7791.
- Tues. Oct 11, 5:00 p.m. Wakodahatchee Wetlands.** 13026 Jog Road, Delray Beach. BEGINNING BIRD WALK. Meet as above. Leader: Paton White.
- Fri. Oct 14-15, Audubon Assembly, Lake Mary, FL.** See Website: www.audubonofflorida.org for details.
- Sat. Oct 15, 8:00 a.m. Spanish River Park, Boca Raton.** Meet at split fence on south side of Spanish River Blvd, just W of ATA. Leader: Brian Hope
- Sat. Oct 15 & Oct 16 Florida Keys Fall Migration/Hawk Watch.** \$45 plus hotel. Leader: Paddy Cunningham. Contact Linda 561-742-7791 to register. Space limited.
- Thur. Oct 20, 5:00 p.m. Peaceful Waters, Wellington.** SE corner of Village Park, 11700 Pierson Road. Meet at beginning of boardwalk. Leader Paton White
- Sat. Oct 22, 8:00 a.m. Frenchman's Forest.** Meet as above. Leader: Marvin Greenberg
- Sun. Oct 23, 8:00 a.m. Wellington Environmental Preserve, 3499 Flying Cow Rd, Wellington.** Park at 2nd entrance. 2 mile walk, no shade. Leader: Chuck Weber
- Mon. Oct 24, 8:00 a.m. Wakodahatchee.** Meet as above. Leader: Linda Humphries
- Sat. Oct 29, 8:00 a.m. SWA/Palmetto Trail Head, WPB.** Meet at Palmetto Trail Head, 45th and Jog Rd. Leader: Claudine Laabs
- Sun. Oct 30, 4:00 p.m. Wakodahatchee Wetlands.** Meet as above. Leader: Valleri Brauer

Program for Tuesday, October 4, 2011

Natives: They're a Natural!

Sue Dingwell, Florida Native Plant Society

In an effort to continue to emphasize the importance of native plants to our natural habitats and animals, ASE invited Sue Dingwell, Master Gardener, to extend and enrich our knowledge of native plants at the October 4th meeting.

Sue grew up riding horses all over the Flying Cow Ranch, a place now called Wellington. She spent time up north, getting a Masters in Education, learning to garden, and raising a family. After moving back to Palm Beach County in 2000 she became a Master Gardener, a member of Florida Native Plant Society, and then a Master Naturalist. Sue assisted ASE in the planting of ASE's native plant garden at FAU/ Pine Jog. "I love to spend time sharing the fantastic news of how we can all contribute to Florida's well-being through the use of native plants." she said. Currently Sue is Conservation Chair of the PBC Florida Native Plant Society and Communications Chair of Florida Native Plant Society. She also serves on Palm Beach County's Master Gardener Advisory Board and the Natural Resources Advisory Board of Palm Beach County. Check out FNPSblog.org and Cleangreennatives.info. Questions are welcome at the meeting!

The meeting will be held at our regular meeting place, rooms 101 and 102 at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center. The program begins at 7:30 p.m.; refreshments are served beforehand, so come at 7:00!

Bird of the Month: *Anhinga*

This delightful waterbird's taxonomic name is one of the "doubles," where the genus name and the specific epithet repeat (*Anhinga anhinga*). Also called snakebird, water turkey, and (for its relatives in the Old World) darters or shags, anhingas are a widespread genus. Our species is a neotropical species, meaning that its range is the warmer parts of the Americas.

This is one of the most common birds at some of our most accessible sites: Wakodahatchee and Green Cay usually have breeding groups, and the refuge certainly has its share of Anhingas.

See Tom Poulson's article in this issue for some points to ponder about this bird, and come to our October meeting to hear Clive Pinnock tells us more about this common waterbird with its amazing "makeup" in the breeding season.

The Everglade Kite

is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Everglades, published 10 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.

Donations In Memoriam

Donations were received in memory of Robert (Bob) Meissler from:

Linda Humphries

Paton White

Alan Parmalee

Your company might have a matching gift program; whether it does or not, please consider ASE in your charitable contribution plans.

President's Column

Linda Humphries

Fall migration is under way. There are many beautiful birds that migrate through our area but for me the warblers are special. They never stay still very long so it is hard to identify them, but the colors and markings are so beautiful. I enjoy reading the postings of which warblers have arrived and what other birds are being seen in our local area on our auduboneverglades yahoo group. I appreciate the people that are taking the time to post sightings and pictures. I hope this will become one of the best areas on the web to check what is being seen in our local area of Palm Beach County. Please help us expand the postings. Chuck Weber has been posting his weekly bird sightings and the birds that are seen on our bird walks. If you see something that you find exciting or unusual, or a place that is full of birds and do not want to do the posting, please call me Linda at 561-742-7791 and I will be happy to post for you.

I realize that people reading my column have varying birding abilities. The advanced birders probably go "duh" when I write some of my comments. My purpose is not to bore people but to give encouragement to the birders that are not sure if they will ever figure it all out. I went to Germany for 2 weeks this summer (I have family) and was amazed at how many more birds I could spot than six years ago. I bought a local birding book at a book store which helped narrow down what I was looking at. I was able to see the similarities to our birds and which group they belonged to. Even some of the field marks jumped out at me. I found it didn't matter what the bird was called, it was fascinating watching their behaviors. Come join our bird walks and be surprised at how much you really know but never realized it!

From the Archives

Thirty years ago (May 1981) Rosa Durando wrote her first conservation article for the *Everglade Kite*. Here is an excerpt:

In my first attempt at this report I will tread a narrow line between being brief and to the point and something less than yellow journalism—for the express purpose of enticing new faces. We need people with pet (environmental) projects they would like to support. We need letters to our County Commissioners. We need people to volunteer as letter writers. Emergency action letters are needed whether your interest is broad, encompassing the state, or regional to Palm Beach County. Contact with our legislators (and commissioners) does mean something. As we've mentioned before in this space, some things never change! We still need these people, these letters, phone calls, emails. Back to the present: Legislative season is gearing up. Stay involved! Public Hearings for PBC Legislative Delegation Call 355-2406 for information.

**** October 10, 2011 Dolly Hand Center, Belle Glade 10:00–Noon**

**** October 26, 2011 Royal Palm Beach Cultural Center 2:00–4:00**

Field Trip Report: Duda Farms, August 13

Ben Kolstad

Well, on our second trip to Duda Farms this August, we had 10 people in 3 cars, and about 10 birds in 3 ponds. It wasn't quite that bad, but the water was too high wherever the fields weren't either dry or still full of tall crops! There were some Pectoral Sandpipers, Least, Semipalmateds, a few dowitchers here and there, quite a few yellowlegs, and, always very far away, good numbers of Roseate Spoonbills.

We did get King Rail at the dump, and decent looks at the Northern Bobwhite. We had a good colony of terns on some drying mud, with Least, Forster's, and Black the most common. There were some terns that looked like they might be Common Terns, but we discounted those as they seemed too much of a rarity in Palm Beach County (looking forward to an updated Bird List!) We did find 3 Barn Owls, but no warblers, along "Barn Owl Row" as we headed for the exit.

We stopped at the tree stand on Brown's Farm Road; nothing but night-herons. We also stopped at 6-mile bend, but no Uplands in sight (the close field was being mowed, and the far field was too heat-hazed to make anything out).

Field Trip Reports

Chuck Weber

Frenchman's Forest, September 10

A nice variety of migrants kept more than a dozen birders busy on ASE's field trip at Frenchman's Forest Natural Area in Palm Beach Gardens. Highlights: an early Merlin (seen by some of us) and a female Summer Tanager. We tallied 10 warbler species, including first-of-season Cape May Warblers, several Wormeating, and both Northern and Louisiana Waterthrush. A small flock of Eastern Kingbirds flew overhead, and a Great Crested Flycatcher paid a visit.

My thanks to a good group of birders who spotted and identified well. They even patiently endured a large mosquito swarm at one point.

(South County birders at Spanish River Park also reported first-of-season Cape May Warblers, as well as a Hooded. They also had Pewee and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.)

Duda Farms Photography Trip, August 20

Had the pleasure of leading ASE's first Duda Farms trip geared toward photographer-nature enthusiasts. Water levels in Duda's flooded fields were high. Still, we encountered a nice assortment of birds around the edges: all the expected wading bird species—the highlight being two groups of dozens of Roseate Spoonbills; at least 14 shorebird species, the best of which was a Marbled Godwit (not everyone saw this); and the five expected terns—Least, Black, Gull-billed, Caspian, and Black Skimmer.

Off the fields, we flushed a Barn Owl at the usual spot, and many got looks at Yellow Warblers (which migrate through the interior of the county in decent numbers). We also had Parula, Prairie, and Common Yellowthroat-- for a total of 4 warbler species. Even heard the zeet of a Bunting species (yes, they are moving and/or arriving).

Several Common Nighthawks sitting in the roadways obliged the photographers. Some in the group took advantage of up-close looks at butterflies and dragonflies.

Just outside Duda, a few hundred Wood Storks and other waders had descended on a rice field. Neat spectacle. The flooded fields east of Duda on CR 880, were also higher than in previous weeks. No phalaropes this time, but we did add a dozen or so American Avocets. Also made a stop at 6 Mile Bend sod fields where there was an incredible variety of birds for that habitat. Unfortunately no Uplands.

A huge "thank you" to A. Duda and Sons for again allowing us on their property to enjoy the wildlife. And to our group—for being good-natured, appreciative and respectful. Birds are moving. Enjoy!

ARE YOU A NEW MEMBER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON?

We are delighted to have you as a member of the Audubon Society of the Everglades as well. We hope you will join us at our meetings and trips. If you wish to continue to get the *Kite*, please contact Paton White and let her know if you prefer to receive your Kite by mail or by email. Paton White 561-818-7574, patonrwhite@aol.com.

LEARNING ADVENTURE TO THE WAKODAHATCHEE WETLANDS

Dr. Tom Poulson, award-winning naturalist extraordinaire

I guarantee you will have fun while learning whether you are a kid or senior, an avid birder or a neophyte, a scientist or lay person, a snow-bird or resident. For more fun read my natural history column. www.loxahatcheefriends.com click on "The Refuge" and then on "Exploring Nature."

Here are questions to lead you through thinking processes to come up with hypotheses that you can test by observing the birds.

The questions concern how different species are specialized for their different feeding niches (like occupation) and habitats (like address) and whether this minimizes competition. Some of the questions include:

1. What, if anything is unique about birds? Warm-blooded? Very high metabolic rate? Eggs? Shelled egg? Uric acid excretion? Nests? Parental care? Beak without teeth? Flight? Feathers? Scales? Why is bird-watching popular but not mammal-watching?

2. As you try to see fish just under the water surface, you find it difficult because of the problems of the four Rs (where r is the 1st letter of the word).

a. What are these problems?

b. How do species like herons and egrets and bitterns solve these problems? How does the least tern minimize these problems?

c. How do the green heron and anhinga completely avoid the problems (different ways!)? How does one r help bass see fisher-people?

3. What tricks do snowy egrets and green herons occasionally use to avoid the four Rs problems and catch fish? Hints: Golden slippers and tools

4. How do wood storks and ibis capture prey? Hint: Which of our five senses do they use? Why does this make their "giving up density of food" so high? How does it relate to the wood stork being the goldilocks species for Everglades restoration?

5. Darwin hypothesized that species that are most closely related are most likely to compete. What is his logic? How could closely related species have evolved differences in habitat (address) and feeding niche (profession) and so have solved the problems of competition? Using a classification (species, genus, family, order, class) of Wakodahatchee birds, how will we test Darwin's hypothesis?

a. Four species in the same genus (*Egretta*) and the same size: tricolor heron, little blue heron, snowy egret, and reddish egret. Habitat? Feeding mode? What's an egret?

b. Three species in the same family (*Rallidae*) of the same size and the same bill and head shapes: coot, moorhen, and purple gallinule: Hint: leg & toe length and shape

c. Five - seven species of herons, egrets, and bitterns in the family *Ardeidae* ranging in size from Great blue heron to green heron. Which are likely to be sit-and-wait hunters eating big prey and which active pursuers eating small prey?

6. Why do anhingas (and cormorants?) spread out their wings in the sun? Two reasons for anhinga; each having to do with where they catch live prey. Feather structure? Oil vs water?

7. Why are moorhens the most abundant water bird? Hint: food habits.

8. Why do moorhens take ~ 2 months hatching to adult size but green herons (~= size) take only ~ 3 weeks? Hint = food quality and altricial vs. precocial

9. Male red-winged blackbirds have different redness. Why? Immunology & mate choice

Try to answer the questions while you are at the wetlands. Next month I will answer the questions.

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ATTENTION: This could be your last issue of the *Kite*! See inside for details.

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Articles NEEDED! Send to ben@kolstad.com by the 15th 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 10 issues of the *Everglade Kite* newsletter. Send your check, payable to ASE, along with this form to

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

National Audubon Society Membership

If you join ASE through the National Audubon Society, you will receive 6 issues of *Audubon Magazine*, and membership in Audubon of Florida, but unless you give us your email, you will not receive the *Kite*. For details, visit www.audubon.org. To join the National Society, send your information and check to

*National Audubon Society Membership Center
PO Box 422450
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250*

Be sure to include the code **C9ZE000Z** with your application so NAS will know how to process your payment.

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 \$20 Senior (62+)/Student \$15
 Household \$25 Patron \$50

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: _____

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.