



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 52, Number 3

December 2011

CALENDAR

Sat. Dec 3, 6:30 a.m. South Florida Exotics with Tropical Audubon.

Matheson Hammock Park, 9610 Old Cutler Rd. Miami. Meet in parking area on the left inside the park entrance. No fee. Leader: Paul Bithorn

Sat. Dec 3, 8:00 a.m. Peaceful Waters, Wellington. SE corner of Village Park, 11700 Pierson Road. Meet at beginning of boardwalk. Leader: Linda Humphries

Wed. Dec 7, 7:30 a.m. ARM Loxahatchee NWR. 10216 Lee Rd. Boynton Bch. Meet at Marsh Trail. Entry \$5 per car.

Sat. Dec 10, 3:30 p.m. Everglades Research and Education Center. See and learn about **Barn Owls**, 3200 East Palm Beach Road, Belle Glade, FL. Meet at the old Kmart (now Burlington Coat Factory), NW corner Southern & 441. Leader: Dr. Richard Raid.

Sat. Dec 10, 8:00 a.m. Plantation Preserve and area, 7050 Broward Blvd., Plantation. Contact Linda 561-742-7791 to carpool. Leader: Paddy Cunningham

Sun. Dec 11, 7:30 a.m. Wakodahatchee Wetlands. 13026 Jog Rd, Delray Bch. Meet at top of boardwalk. Leader: Valleri Brauer

Tues. Dec 13, 4:00 p.m. Peaceful Waters, BEGINNING BIRD WALK. Meet as above. Leader: Paton White

Sat. Dec 17, 8:00 a.m. Okeetheelee Nature Center, WPB, 7715 Forest Hill Blvd. Meet on porch. Leader: TBD

Fri. Dec 23, 3:30 p.m. Wakodahatchee Wetlands. Meet as above. Leader: Valleri Brauer

Fri Dec 30, 8:00 a.m. Green Cay Wetlands. 12800 Hagen Ranch Rd., Boynton Bch Meet outside Nature Center Main door Meet as above. Leader: Paton White

Sat. Dec 31, Christmas Bird Count. Coordinator: Chuck Weber.

Program for Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Holiday Pot Luck Dinner

December's meeting is our annual Holiday Pot Luck Dinner. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. and the food will be served at 6:30 p.m. Our annual holiday meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. People with last names that begin between A-K will bring desserts; L-Z will bring meat, salad, or veggies. Please bring ready-to-serve food, as we have no kitchen. We will supply the drinks and coffee. We have great items donated for our traditional chinese raffle. Come join in the fun—we look forward to seeing you.

Program: Birding Adventures in Ecuador. Phil Weinrich, Educator, Jupiter High School Environmental Research and Field Studies Academy

Phil Weinrich has been involved with nature study and science education for most of his life. Phil has a B.S., an M.S. in Wildlife Ecology, and a B. A. in Education. After serving 12 years as director of Morningside Nature Center in Gainesville, he returned to West Palm Beach to teach science at Forest Hill and Jupiter High. After teaching science at Forest Hill H. S., he was asked to develop and teach an environmental science/field studies program at Jupiter H. S. This is the 19th year of turning out students who care about nature and go on to study and work in related fields. He also coaches an Envirothon team, competitive at regional, state and national competitions. One year, Phil's Envirothon team won a state championship and he was awarded a trip to the Galapagos. That was when he and his wife, Ann, discovered the many birds to be seen in Ecuador - over twice as many as all of North America, in a country the size of Colorado! Phil will share his experiences at the December meeting.

Probably Phil's favorite birding spot in Palm Beach County is his back yard—Palmway Hammock in Lake Worth. He and Ann landscaped with native plants, attracting over 100 species of birds including rarities such as Banaquit, Mangrove Cuckoo, Western Tanager, Connecticut Warbler and Black-Whiskered Vireo.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING APPEAL

Dear Members and Supporters,

If you haven't had the chance to donate yet, please consider doing so now. We are reaching out to you asking for your help with our annual fundraising campaign. Now more than ever we need your support. Your donations make it possible for us to continue our many projects throughout the year.

Our free, family-oriented annual Everglades Day festival is struggling to offer the same level of activities and events that it has done in the past, but it is in dire need of money.

In equal measure we are hoping to raise enough money to continue participating in the Palm Beach Post's Pathfinder Scholarship Awards. ASE presents our \$3000 Ruth and Seymour Miller Scholarship to a high school senior who excels in environmental science. Rosa Durando has participated in the science judging and selecting of ASE's winner for over ten years.

As an all-volunteer organization, we rely on the involvement of our members in our work to protect our natural environment here in Palm Beach County. We are facing powerful opposition in our community, and there are many challenges here and statewide.

In order for us to make an impact, we need your assistance. Please remember your nonprofit 501(c)3 Audubon chapter in your year-end giving. Thank you,

ASE Board

Audubon Society of the Everglades, Inc. is a non-profit organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. For your benefit and as required by law we state that Audubon Society of the Everglades, Inc. did not provide any goods or services in consideration, in whole or in part, for this contribution. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling the Toll Free Number 800-435-7352 within the state. Our registration number is CH4923.

The Everglade Kite

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

President

Linda Humphries 561-742-7791

1st Vice President

Cynthia Plockelman 585-1278

2nd Vice President

Paton White 818-7574

Secretary

Alan Parmalee 498-0996

Treasurer

Janet Schreiber 689-2530

Field Trips

Valleri Brauer 969-0908

Bird ID

Clive Pinnock 233-1400 x4

Library

Anne Hoxtor 601-8007

Conservation

Rosa (Cissie) Durando 965-2420

Education

Susan Snyder 627-7829
roysue@bellsouth.net

Community Relations

Debbie Smith 967-4879

Publicity

Sheila Hollihan-Elliot 845-304-6988

Sales

Stella Rossi 732-4786

Hospitality

Mary Lou Hall 553-0216

Kite, Webmaster

Ben Kolstad 367-7689
ben@kolstad.com

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.

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, patonwhite@aol.com.

President's Column

Linda Humphries

As I was discussing birding and postings with different birders, I realized the different perspectives we have in the way we approach our birding. When writing short reports good birders find it unnecessary to list all the birds seen when they were out birding. Most of it is the normal birds you always see around. Good birders don't care about the quantity of birds seen; they are looking for the different varieties and that one rare bird that really should not be in our area. For the average birder like me, when I hear there are warblers being seen, I want to read the entire list. Since I really love the warblers, I am always curious what is in the area now; I lack the knowledge of which warblers fly thru at which time of the year. I am thrilled if I have five warblers on my birding list, where good birders are disappointed with ten. I realized one of the very important things involved with birding is figuring out what time of the year different birds are seen. For instance I learned the Gray Kingbird leaves in October until April and the Gray Catbird is just arriving. I am sorry to admit but the only Gray Kingbird I have ever seen has been once at Spanish River Park and in the area around Everglades National Park. I understand the Gray Kingbirds perch on the wires around shopping centers along Federal Hwy, but somehow I have never noticed them. I will try to find them next spring. I have been around here most of the summer but I have not taken the time to go birding except for the wetland areas. I realized there is a big difference trying to spot water birds and trying to spot warblers and vireos. As I went birding near the end of migration season the warblers were flitting around but just out of reach of my binoculars. By the time I was advised it was a, had my binoculars on its back, it flew away. After two hours of watching the bird fly away, I was finally able to find the bird and look at details before it flitted to another spot. The thing I learned the most that day was that good birders are good birders because they are disciplined to go out often, bird more than one area at a time, and are very focused in what they do. They have the discipline that I lack; therefore, I will probably always remain an average birder. I did realize there are at least four important steps to becoming a better birder: first, the more you bird the more you learn; second, listen to your leader's tips; third, learn what birds are usually around this time of the year; and fourth go home and review what you saw. Different leaders give you tips it has taken them years to learn, and can help make your birding experience much easier. When I finished my birding adventure, I rushed home and started a note page in my computer with tips about warblers and what birds can be seen this time of year. I will add to it and review it often. My new plan is to go birding in areas around my home daily to improve my birding skills. Come join our walks. We bird a lot of different areas and have a great selection of leaders with helpful tips. See you soon.

Birding in Panama – March 7–13, 2012

Panama has the reputation of the best rainforest birding in the world (according to Kenn Kaufman and Ron Magill) so we have planned a seven day, six night adventure: three days in the rainforest and three days in the highlands with deluxe accommodations.

- Day 1 Depart Miami airport – arrive in Panama City and transfer to Gamboa Rainforest Resort half way up the Panama Canal
- Day 2 Boat ride and birding in the Panama Canal
- Day 3 Aerial tram ride
- Day 4 Transfer to Albrook airport, fly to David, transfer to Volcan at approx. 4500 ft. (Hotel Dos Rios)
- Day 5 Birding in the cloud forest to see Resplendent Quetzals
- Day 6 Visit Barrilles archeological site
- Day 7 Return to Miami

Cost \$ 2400 p/p double occupancy – airfare increases after Dec. 6
Call Claudine for more information 655-9779

STA-5 Birding Trip by Linda Humphries

We had 10 birders participate in our November 12 birding adventure at STA 5. Vince Lucas from Naples led our trip. The trip list starts at the beginning of Blumberg Road; in all, 74 species were seen. It turned out to be an especially great trip because most of us got a lifer, a Greater White-fronted Goose seen on Blumberg Road just before the main STA-5 gate. This was at the beginning of the trip. One couple had already seen the goose but was happy to finally see a Purple Swamphen. We all have different wishes. I was thrilled to hear an Eastern Meadowlark, but sad I couldn't spot it. Paton and I left before the end of the STA trip and missed the Cassin's Kingbird, which is back for the fourth year. The recent cold front brought in lots of ducks: Ruddy ducks, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, American Wigeon, Mottled Ducks, and Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling Ducks. We also had a lot of Raptors: Peregrine Falcons, Bald Eagles, Snail Kites, Northern Harriers, Merlin, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, and Cooper's Hawks, Crested Caracara and American Kestrels. Paton and I stopped along Blumberg Road on our way home and tried to identify the hawks on the poles and wires. It was a great learning experience as we watched the hawks fly off of the poles and wires. We then took a moment to study the books. The most common raptor on the wires was the American Kestrel and on the poles was the Red-tailed Hawk, but in STA-5 the most common raptor was the Northern Harrier; they were everywhere. We had great close-up looks at them. Paton and I drove south on CR835 hoping to see the Scissor-tailed Flycatchers we had seen last year but missed them. It was later reported by Vince that he saw Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and Western Kingbirds near Deer fence Canal on CR835. Vince says that is their winter stronghold in the region. Timing is everything. Paton and I just timed it wrong. For a complete list of all the birds seen on the trip please check our website.

TAKE 25 for Children's Safety

When it comes to the safety of our children at home or in the community, we are all concerned. At the November meeting members had an opportunity to learn about ways to keep their children and grandchildren safer. Whether it is in the home, neighborhood, at school or on the internet, threats exist. The TAKE 25 program encourages you to take time to educate youngsters about strategies they can use when situations arise and then practice "What if" situations. "What if you were lost in the mall or nature area?" "What if a stranger called you to their car to ask directions?" "What if a friend sends you sexual pictures on the internet?" As part of a grant, ASE is assisting the PBC Sheriff's Department by sharing this information with the community. Contact roysue@bellsouth for the flier "25 Ways to Make Kids Safer."

What's up at the Wakodahatchee? Answers to the next few of Dr. Tom's questions from the October EVERGLADE KITE

The questions again, in case you've forgotten them:

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?

Answers:

3. Snowy egrets startle fish by wiggling their yellow feet under water. This causes fish to turn on their sides to expose their silvery undersides so the countershading of dark back against dark bottom is not effective. Green herons look for fish to disturb a cover of duckweed and strike. And they may drop bits of leaf as bait to attract fish. This is use of a tool!
4. Wood storks, ibis, and spoonbills catch fish and prey under water by using touch receptors on or inside of their bills. The spoonbills swish their partially open bills side to side, the ibis probe with the slightly open bill tip amongst vegetation or into the mud or animals burrows. And the wood stork moves its half open bill side to side in open water 'hoping' that stirring the water with a foot will make a fish less evasive. All these tactile feeding modes work in muddy or turbid water and the four Rs are never a problem. The minus side of tactile feeding is that it requires very high densities of prey to be effective. As a result they give up trying when the density of prey is still high enough for sight-feeders like herons and egrets. The wood stork has the highest giving-up density (that is, it is least efficient at finding the 2- to 4-inch fish that are its main prey food) and this is one of several reasons why it is our "Goldilocks" indicator species for successful Everglades restoration.

PAPER COPY OF THE KITE

ASE has converted our *Kite* subscription list from paper delivery to electronic delivery (email) because of the monthly expense. If you are a CHAPTER MEMBER OF ASE you are receiving your copy in the form (email or paper) as you requested and do not need to contact us. If you are a NATIONAL MEMBER and want to continue to get your *Kite* (email or paper) and have not already contacted us, you must contact Paton White (561-818-7574/patonrwhite@aol.com). You will always be able to read the *Kite* on our website, www.auduboneverglades.org

Bird of the Month: Bald Eagle

December's bird of the month is one of the great conservation success stories in our history. Severely threatened by DDT in the 1960s, America's national symbol was placed on the Endangered Species list in 1973, this majestic raptor was officially delisted in August, 2007.

Its common name reflects its taxonomic name (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). The genus name is Greek for "sea eagle," referring to its preference for fish (often plundered from Ospreys!); the specific epithet means "white headed."

Come to our December meeting to hear Clive Pinnock tell us more about our national bird.

Audubon Society of the Everglades
PO Box 16914
West Palm Beach, FL
33416-6914

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

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 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.