



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 52, Number 4

January 2012

CALENDAR

Sat. Jan 7, 8:00 a.m. Green Cay Wetlands, 12800 Hagen Ranch Road, Boynton Beach. Meet outside Nature Center main door. Leader: Valleri Brauer

Wed. Jan 11, 7:30 a.m. ARM Loxahatchee NWR. Meet at Marsh Trail. Entry \$5 per car.

Sat. Jan 14, 4:00 p.m. Wakodahatchee Wetlands, 13026 Jog Road, Delray Beach. EVENING FLY IN. Meet at top of boardwalk. Leader: Linda Humphries

Sat. Jan 14, 6:30 a.m. STA 5, Clewiston. Registration required. Call Linda to register, 561-742-7791

Mon. Jan 16, 6:30 a.m. Everglades Birding Festival (Jan 12-16), Upper Keys Trip. \$85 contact Paddy Cunningham, 954-805-6810

Thur. Jan 19, 2:30 p.m. Wakodahatchee Wetlands. BEGINNING BIRD WALK. Meet as above. Leader: Linda Humphries

Sat. Jan 21, 8:00 a.m. Riverbend Park. 9060 Indiantown Road, Jupiter. Meet at SOUTH end of main parking lot, near canoe rental trailer. Leader: Ed Kaweck

Sun. Jan 22, 8:00 a.m. Wellington Environmental Preserve. 3499 Flying Cow Road, Wellington. Park at 2nd entrance. 2 mile walk, no shade. Leader: Chuck Weber

Sat. Jan 28, 8:00 a.m., Daggerwing Nature Center, Boca Raton. South County Regional Park, 11200 Park Access Rd. Leader: Kelli Dorschel

Sat. Feb 11, all day. Everglades Day. See back cover and website for details.

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.

Program for Tuesday, January 3, 2012

Avian Programs at the Palm Beach Zoo

Keith Lovett, General Curator/Director of Living Collections

Mr. Keith Lovett will share with us the status of the Palm Beach Zoo's Avian Programs. As anyone who visits the zoo knows, there are many different species to be seen there. Over 25 are in the Species Survival Program. Mr. Lovett joined the Palm Beach Zoo as the Assistant Animal Curator in 1998 after spending five years at York's Wild Kingdom in York Beach, Maine. He was promoted to General Curator in 1999 and Director of Living Collections in 2004. Under Mr. Lovett's leadership, the zoo's animal collection grew from 400 animals to more than 1,400 animals representing over 300 species. In addition, Mr. Lovett has overseen more than \$20 million in animal habitat and exhibit construction at the zoo. Mr. Lovett is responsible for the care and wellbeing of the Palm Beach Zoo's flora and fauna through his management of the Animal Care, Maintenance, and Horticulture Departments. He also supervises the in-house conservation education programs and coordinates many zoo-sponsored field projects.

Mr. Lovett was awarded his B.S. from Plymouth State College in New Hampshire in 1994. He is a member of the International Wild Waterfowl Association, Florida Ornithological Society, Florida Avian Group, American Association of Zoo Keepers, and the Audubon Society of the Everglades.

Mr. Lovett is also a professional member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and is the zoo's Institutional Representative for the Florida Association of Zoos and Aquariums. In addition, he is Chair of the Waterfowl Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) and the Vice Chair of the New World Primate TAG. He is Vice Chair of the Jaguar Species Survival Plan (SSP), and Coordinator of the Spider Monkey (SSP), and Studbook Keeper and Population Management Plan (PMP) Manager for the West Indian whistling duck and spotted whistling duck.

LAKE WORTH LAGOON

Linda Humphries

I was invited on December 2, 2011 by the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative to tour the Lake Worth Lagoon. This was my second trip in the last couple of years. Lake Worth Lagoon is approximately 20 miles long and a half mile wide. It stretches from North Palm Beach to the City of Boynton Beach and Town of Ocean Ridge. It was encouraging to see the new projects and how much the older projects were growing and succeeding in cleaning the water quality and restoring wildlife in the Lake Worth Lagoon. All of us live in a watershed area and most people reading this article live in the 550 square miles covering the Lake Worth Lagoon watershed. Properties even as far south as Boca Raton are in this watershed. This means that all our rainwater containing things like fertilizer, lawn chemicals, trash, and more, drains directly or indirectly into the Lake Worth Lagoon from stormdrains and 3 main canals: Earman River/Canal-17, West Palm Beach Canal/Canal-51, and the Boynton Canal/Canal-16.

The Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative was created in 2009 and is a partnership with several other government agencies to restore the Lake Worth Lagoon. So far these agencies have funded 44 projects to restore the habitat and clean up the water quality in the lagoon. This effort has been very successful. They have created mangrove islands and restored existing mangrove habitat as well as created oyster reefs and more seagrass habitat. Did you know that one oyster can filter and clean up to 50 gallons of water per day? These efforts are saving and creating healthy estuaries for fish, sea turtles, manatees, nesting birds and other wildlife. The Snook Island and South Cove projects are will soon have board walks, observation platforms, and many other amenities for the public to enjoy. You can be proud of the accomplishments made in the last several years. We hear and read so many negative articles I wanted to share with you a success story. By using fertilizers and lawn chemicals wisely, throwing away litter in proper places, disposing of pet waste properly, and recycling used motor oil, paint, and pool chemicals (not pouring them in storm drains) will help continue this success story and restoration of one of our local treasures, Lake Worth Lagoon. For more information go to www.LWLL.org.

The Everglade Kite

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

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<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.

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. Call Claudine for more information 655-9779

Donations In Memoriam

Donations were received in memory of **Lewis Sutfin** from Susan Epps; in memory of **Robert Meissler** from Susan and Roy Snyder; and a Google Matching Gift in memory of **John Mitchell**.

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

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

Deborah L. Smith

This year I was given an opportunity I could not pass up. I received a matching scholarship to the Audubon Leadership Camp on Hog Island, Muscongus Bay, Maine. ASE gave me \$225 and National Audubon gave me \$525; these grants completely covered the cost of the camp. The only portion I paid for were my travel expenses. The camp was held from August 15, 2011 to August 20, 2011. Eight people from Florida attended. I was the only one who attended from Palm Beach County.

When I arrived in Maine, it was overcast and rainy with a temperature of about 60 degrees. From the airport I took a cab to the bus station where I caught a bus to the pick-up point in downtown Damariscotta. From downtown the eight of us from Florida were driven to the boat launch a couple of miles away. From the boat launch we took a boat out to Hog Island where we were met by the staff and given our room assignments. I was assigned to a two-story cabin built in the 1920's named "The Porthole." We were each assigned to groups with different bird names; mine was the Terns. Everyone was assigned a roommate and we all settled in. Soon after we arrived, an orientation was held and we were served an excellent organic meal in the family-style dining room in the main building.

After we had dinner our group went to the "Fish House" where we were treated to a lecture entitled "Then and Now and the Ecology of the Gulf of Maine" by Steve Kress and Peter Salmonsohn (Mr. Kress is the Bird Conservation Director for the Seabird Restoration Program on Eastern Egg Rock and Mr. Salmonsohn is the Education Coordinator for the Seabird Restoration Program.) The Fish House is a rustic cabin with a huge stone fireplace. The fireplace was lit when we arrived, as it was pretty cool and rainy the first night. By 7:30 P.M. we were all very tired and retired to our cabins. Of course it was dark by then and we had to find our way back to our cabins with flashlights and headlamps. Our days usually ended at 7:30 and we were free to relax for the rest of the evening. One evening a group of us set up a telescope and we were able to see the rings of Saturn, the Milky Way and other planets and stars; of course we also had some wine and snacks as well. It was an astronomer's paradise.

The next morning and every morning while we were on the island we were given the opportunity to participate in an early morning (6 AM) birdwalk on the island. The mornings were usually in the 50's and of course the scenery was beautiful. The terrain was hilly and rocky so we were given quite a workout on these morning hikes. Breakfast was served at 7 and our first session of each day began at 8:15. Each day we participated in workshops on different topics such as "Who Am I and Why Am I here," "An introduction to the Atlantic Flyway Initiative," "How to Develop an Education Program to Achieve Conservation Outcomes" and many other interesting conservation workshops which gave us tools and strategies to use in our local chapters.

On day 3 half of the participants joined in an Intertidal Romp. We started out at 9 AM from our cabins, and hiked around the island to the shore area. I discovered that the coast of Maine is very different from what we have in South Florida. There were large granite boulders covered in lichens (which were extremely slippery); we learned that there were plenty of life forms in the intertidal zone of Hog Island including lichens, blue-green algae, bladder wrack and knotted wrack, barnacles, muscles, purple sea snails, hermit crabs, and plenty of fish. I volunteered to help catch some of the local animals and plants using a large net which took two to handle; the water was extremely cold and I did get wet, but it was worth it. After we learned about the animals and plants we caught in the net, we all climbed around on the rocks and collected mussels and small purple snails. I decided that instead of climbing down the rocks I would attempt to walk around the rocks (that was not the best idea I have ever had!). After I took two steps in the mud I was stuck and walked completely out of my shoes and had a hard time retrieving them. While we were collecting mussels and snails, a member of the staff (Eric) started a fire on the beach and to our surprise we cooked and ate them as a mid-morning snack. They were the best tasting mussels I have ever eaten, and the snails were delicious too.

The next day our group was treated to an off island Puffin Boat Tour while the other group went to the intertidal zone. Fifteen of us boarded the boat at Hog Island and were taken out to sea. Along the way we saw storm-petrels, Black Terns, murrelets, loons, many different types of gulls, seals, porpoises and puffins. Our main destination was Eastern Egg Rock where the puffins were reintroduced 30 years ago and according to what we saw, and what we learned, they are recovering well and are thriving.

On the last evening on Hog Island each group presented a skit about their time on the island. Our group got together and did some dancing, singing, cheerleading, and reading of poetry. We called ourselves the Tern Cheerleaders and our main objective was to encourage the fledgling Osprey in a manmade nest on the island to fledge (as it did not want to leave the comfort of home). Some of us also read a poem we had written and this is my Haiku: "I slipped and slid in the intertidal zone, I walked in the mud, I walked out of my shoes, I laughed."

Overall, my summer vacation this year was enlightening and an experience I will never forget. I would encourage our members to attend the Hog Island Camp, which will be held again on Hog Island from August 26, 2012 to August 31, 2012. If you would like information on the camp go to hogisland.audubon.org. Anyone can attend; you do not have to be a board member or an officer.

President's Column

Linda Humphries

Happy New Year! I hope the upcoming year brings you great happiness and good health! I find it hard to comprehend it is already January 2012. Many good, bad, and sad things have happened in 2011. For me the loss of my father has changed my life completely, but the gift of having my Mother live with me and being able to enjoy her is priceless. My house is a paperwork nightmare between medical billing for six therapists (my job), managing two condo associations, Mom's mail, my mail, and the Audubon. I'll bet you can guess what my New Year's Resolution is----eliminating some of this paperwork and keeping it more organized! My daughter from Key West came up in December to help me organize some of this paperwork nightmare. I am always encouraging you to spend more time outside on walks and enjoying nature, but I seem to have let it slip away. I am writing this to make sure you don't let your life consume you and forget about what you enjoy, being with nature. When I finally do slip away I am amazed at how much better I feel. I live five minutes from the ocean and become rejuvenated when I see and breathe the salty air---yet I seem to forget this and just keep sitting in front of this computer. My first New Year's Resolution is to find more time to enjoy nature.

Lately I have been hearing from people asking about taking their children and grandchildren on bird walks. Yes you can bring them along, we encourage ages 10 and over. As long as you are with them, we encourage children to see and enjoy nature. I feel too much time is spent in the house with video games. I make my grandchildren go on short neighborhood walks whenever they come to visit, I don't take "don't feel like it" for an answer. Just remember you might choose to leave our walks early when they are no longer enjoying the walk. Children's attention span is not as long as ours and we want them to have an enjoyable experience.

My last request is that you contact your County Commissioners (see our website for phone numbers) regarding Peanut Island. Developers are trying to put a restaurant and/or other facilities on Peanut Island. This is a small Island in the Lake Worth Lagoon (see Lake Worth Lagoon article in this newsletter). The island has no facilities or ways to accommodate the influx of a restaurant or large amount of people. Think of the trash and waste products that will engulf this and surrounding waters. Think of the sea life that will be affected. Millions of dollars have been spent restoring Peanut Island and the lagoon, why would you, the tax payers, want your hard earned money spent to destroy all of this with a restaurant? Don't forget to contact your County Commissioners concerning Peanut Island, you can make a difference.

I hope you find time to join our fun walks! See you soon!

Bird of the Month: Marbled Godwit

January is a good time of year to search our coastal mudflats and beaches for a large wading bird with a long, upturned bill. The bill has a dark tip and a pink base. In flight, you might spot the orangish stripe in the wings. This time of year it has a plain breast, but its breeding plumage shows substantial barring or "marbling," hence the common name of *Limosa fedoa*, our Marbled Godwit. Clive Pinnock will be on hand at our January meeting to tell you more about this elegant shorebird.

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

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?

Answer: Modern ecologists have surmised that the difference in feeding niche and habitat of closely related species is due to a "Ghost of Competition Past."

a. Four species in the genus *Egretta* are the little blue heron, the tricolored heron, the snowy egret, and the reddish egret. They have almost exactly the same sizes, shapes, bills, legs, and feet (but very different plumage and soft part colors to recognize one another during courtship). At Wakodahatchee tricolors are by far the most abundant of the four *Egretta* species. The reddish egret is mostly a west coast and always in estuaries. Both it and the tricolor have very energetic feeding modes with dancing, wing-flapping, feet shaking, quick runs and darts etc. Snowies use feet dragging in flight and feet wiggling when fishing in one spot. And little blues are mostly in shady areas and along rivers. All four species, as well as great egrets and great blue herons, have breeding plumes called aigrettes. So the name "egret" is a misnomer.

b. Two species in the genus *Ardea* are our largest herons and egrets. Both the great blue heron and the slightly smaller great egret ignore the abundant small fish like mosquito-fish and killifish. They sit and wait for larger and rarer prey like catfish, sunfish, and frogs.

c. Three species in the family Rallidae have virtually the same shapes, sizes, and bills but their legs and feet are so different that they are in different genera. Associated with their feet, toes, and leg differences they have very different feeding niches and habitats.

i. At one extreme we have a migratory "snowbird," the coot. An occasional pair stays at the Wakodahatchee in summer and nests. In winter here it is the only gregarious species of the three, often occurring in large flocks offshore. Its legs are positioned far back on the body and the toes are partially webbed; both allow fast swimming in shallow dives where it may eat live amphipods in addition to the usual submerged vegetation.

ii. At the other extreme is the purple gallinule, certainly one of the prettiest of our marsh birds in adult plumage. With its long legs and long toes it readily walks on lily pads and likes to eat spatterdock fruit. But its most spectacular foraging behavior is to climb the flowering stalks of tall fire flag to eat the seeds. It does what I call "The Great Wallenda" balancing act as it climbs the stalk and rides it down toward water level so it more safely walk to the end of the stalk and eat the seeds.

iii. The moorhen has an intermediate leg length and toe length and intermediate foraging behavior for its >95% plant diet. It is especially partial to floating duckweed which has a high proportion of fat and protein for a plant because it needs no stiff stem or leaf or thick roots.

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/patonwhite@aol.com). You will always be able to read the *Kite* on our website, www.auduboneverglades.org

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**Saturday, February 11: 13th Annual Everglades Day Festival - "Mysteries of the Everglades"
Science, Literature, Historical, Water, Plant & Animal Mysteries !**

As we focus on the Mysteries of the Everglades this year, the 13th Annual Everglades Day Festival at A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge is creating an exciting festival for visitors to learn about mysteries in the Everglades – the speculative unsolved mysteries like our own "big-foot" Skunk-man, as well as the even more fascinating natural mysteries in this unique biological treasure in South Florida. Learn scientific processes to solve these mysteries! In light of the trend toward more healthy, bio-friendly and greener lifestyle, there will be more walking programs this year, including walking Lila tours. Limited bus service in the refuge so wear walking

shoes. Come visit and enjoy this special place with trained guides and walking tours, outdoor canoeing, presentations, workshops, and nature events. Everglades Day is family friendly, fun, and free except for food!

The all-day fun filled lineup includes workshops, "mystery detective" games for kids, ecology exhibits, programs with live animals, birds and reptiles along with a variety of nature walks. Science, Literature, Historical, Water, Plant & Animal Mysteries! Don't forget to check out the food sale booths and live music. Includes free off-site parking and shuttles to the Information Booth. Come join us!

Wear Your Walking Shoes!

CHECK OUT THE ASE WEB SITE FOR DETAILS ON THIS EXCITING FREE EVENT!

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.

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES IS A 501(C)3 ORGANIZATION. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

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.