



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 53, Number 6

March 2013

CALENDAR

- Sat. Mar 2, 8:00 a.m. STA 1E.** Space limited. Call Linda to register 561-742-7791
- Sat. Mar 2, 7:30 a.m. ARM Loxahatchee NWR.** Meet at entrance to Marsh Trail. Entry \$5 per car
- Sun. Mar 3, 8:00 a.m., Green Cay Wetlands.** Meet at s above. Leader: Valleri Brauer
- Thur. Mar 7, 4:30 p.m. Peaceful Waters, BEGINNING BIRD WALK.** Meet as above. Leader: Linda Humphries
- Sat. Mar 9–10, Sanibel (Ding Darling).** Contact Valleri to register: 561-385-9787
- Sat. Mar 9, 8:30 a.m. Apoxee Park, 3125 N Jog Road (southern end of Grassy Waters).** Meet in parking lot. Leader: Claudine Laabs 561-655-9779
- Sat. Mar 16, 7:30 a.m. Tropical Audubon invites you to Everglades National Park.** Leader: John Boyd. \$10 entry per car. Meet in parking lot at Coe Visitor Center
- Sun. Mar 17, 8:00 a.m. STA 1E.** Space limited. Call Linda to register 561-742-7791
- Mon. Mar 18, 7:30 a.m. Wakodahatchee Wetlands.** Meet as above. Leader: Paton White
- Mar 22–28, Birding in Panama.** \$1695 includes airfare (3 days Rainforest, 3 days Cloud Forest) Contact Claudine Laabs for details (561) 655-9779 (Deposit due in November)
- Sat Mar 23 Backyard Garden Tour**
CANCELLED
- Sat. Mar 30, 6:00 p.m. Wakodahatchee, EVENING FLY IN.** Meet a s above. Leader: Linda Humphries
- AREA FESTIVALS (see page 3 for details on these non-ASE festivals in our area)**
- Sat. Mar 2, 10–4. Jonathan Dickinson S.P.** Fourth Annual Scrub-Jay Festival.
- Sat. Mar 2, 10–4. Gumbo Limbo.** Eighth annual Sea Turtle Festival.
- Sat. Mar 9, 6:30 p.m.–10. Okeeheelee Nature Center.** First annual Palm Beach County Dark Sky Festival.
- Sat. Mar 16, 10–3. J.D. MacArthur Beach.** Eighteenth annual NatureScaping Festival.

**General Meeting, Tuesday, March 5, 7:30 p.m.
Spring Warbler Round-Up**

Peter Merritt, Ph.D.

Join us March 5 for the first high-definition program to appear at ASE!

Ramp up your knowledge of warblers as warblers ramp up during spring migration. This fast paced presentation features original high-definition video of all species of warblers that breed in eastern North America. Learn to distinguish species based on behaviors, plumages, and songs. The presentation also includes split-screen video comparisons of similar species.

Peter Merritt received a Ph.D. from the University of Miami where his research focused on the singing behaviors of the Northern Mockingbird. He has served as President and Treasurer of the Florida Ornithological Society and Editor of the Florida Field Naturalist. He is the Executive Producer of the *Video Guide to Identifying Florida Birds*, and the children's video *Everybody Loves Birds*.

Peter is the Assistant Director at Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, where he has worked since 1986. The TCRPC is a not-for-profit organization created by and for local governments to provide planning and technical assistance services and assist in carrying out Florida's growth management programs. It was established in 1976 through an interlocal agreement between Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Palm Beach counties. Membership includes all four counties and 50 municipalities.

Peter's areas of expertise include endangered and threatened species, wetland and upland natural communities, evaluation of natural resources, design of greenways and preserve areas, ecosystem management, climate change and energy planning. He is the council's representative on the Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council.

FREE APP: Nature Viewing along the Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail

"Identify birds, butterflies and flowering plants seen along the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Viewing Trail and throughout Florida. Designed with non-experts in mind, this free tool is perfect for young nature lovers, visitors to Florida and seasoned explorers. Child-friendly icons lead the user to beautiful color photographs and basic descriptions of each species. It's like having three field guides right in your pocket. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Florida Wildflower Foundation have created a free app – Nature Viewing along the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail. Included are all Trail sites, searches by location, searches for birds, butterflies and plants through filters such as color, size, etc. and much more. Download the free application at [iTunes.com](#) or [play.google.com/store](#)." Information taken from flier received from FFWCC.

EVERGLADES DAY 2013 WRAP UP

Everglades Day 2013 was a great success helped by the great weather and the interesting presentations and guided walks. Over 4000 people attended and no waits for the bus at the end of the day! The Cypress Swamp Boardwalk tours were a big hit, as were the animal programs. Programs ranged from research being done at the refuge to pythons to an Everglades Health Panel with Sylvia Pelizza, Nick Aumen and Steve Davis. There was something for everyone with 14 guided walks, 25 presentations or entertainment, and canoeing. Thanks go to GStar School of the Arts for music and Wellington High School for videoing the event and to the many ASE volunteers who came to help out.

Bird-of-the-Month Photos for April

Please send April Bird-of-the-Month Barn Swallow pictures (jpg format) to be posted on the [auduboneverglades.org](#) web site by March 15 to SheilaElliot@yahoo.com. Identify the name for credit, and if there is anything specific to look for in your picture (like banded, in molt, etc) feel free to add a few words for the caption. Please check out and enjoy this month's picture gallery of the Cedar Waxwing at the end of the March 5 meeting announcement on the web.

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.

Consider ASE In Your Giving Plans

Please consider a donation to Audubon Society of the Everglades as part of your charitable contributions this year. Your company might have a matching gift program; whether it does or not, please remember ASE in your charitable contribution plans. Thank you!

SFWMD Report Shows More Trouble for Birds in the Everglades

Audubon Florida's Everglades Conservation Team

In January 2013, the South Florida Water Management District released their annual South Florida Wading Bird Report (<http://bit.ly/ZcUStU>), indicating the third consecutive year of relatively poor nesting efforts across the Everglades. In response to this report, Audubon Florida has issued species-specific recommendations and restoration priorities to help curb these poor nesting trends. Please see our Audubon Fact Sheet here: <http://bit.ly/ZcUKdQ>.

Audubon uses key indicator species to measure Everglades restoration success. While many wading bird species are well below restoration targets, two of these species, the Roseate Spoonbill and Wood Stork, have suffered greater population declines.

"Wood Storks rely on shallow wetlands to initiate nesting. If this naturally occurring habitat is not available to them, they will fail to nest or begin nesting later, making success more difficult," said Jason Lauritsen, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Director, adding, "If we hope to recover the largest historic colony in the US, immediate focus must be put on restoring and protecting short-hydroperiod wetlands in the Western Everglades."

In Everglades National Park, restoration goals aim for 50% of nesting effort to occur in the southern estuarine mangrove zone (where 90% of the effort occurred in the 1930s and 40s). While 2012 nesting effort in this zone was higher than in recent years, the 5-year running average of nesting effort in this zone is still dramatically below restoration targets at 17%.

"Roseate Spoonbills fared better in Florida Bay this year than in recent years, although populations are still far below restoration targets. We need projects increasing the flow of water from the Central to Southern Everglades to bring more freshwater to Florida Bay's fragile estuary. And maintaining reliable, boots-in-the-water research can tell you how these projects are working and what needs to be changed," said Jerry Lorenz, State Director of Research, Audubon's Everglades Science Center.

For more information, please see Audubon's comprehensive fact sheet on the 2012 South Florida Wading Bird report: <http://bit.ly/ZcUKdQ>.

The South Florida Water Management District's South Florida Wading Bird Report is available here: <http://bit.ly/ZcUStU>.

Here are some of the overall goals of Audubon's Everglades work:

- Improve the hydrology of the Northern Everglades while improving the quality of water entering Lake Okeechobee, using the Southern Bald Eagle as an indicator of progress toward reaching these goals.
- Manage Lake Okeechobee in a way that balances the needs of consumptive users and the environment and reduce pollutants flowing south from Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Agricultural Area. Restore flows through the Water Conservation Areas that connect Lake Okeechobee and ENP using the Everglade Snail Kite, Roseate Spoonbill, and other wading birds as indicator species.
- Protect and restore the watershed of Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, the Big Cypress National Preserve and surrounding areas in the western Everglades. Restoration and conservation activities in this area, which is a key part of the native habitat for the Wood Stork, can be measured by that species' population in the region.

ASE Invites you on a Peruvian adventure / AMAZON CRUISE

May 18 through May 25, 2013

Visit the Pacaya-Samiria Reserve, birding and botanizing through the flooded forest of the Upper Amazon in Peru. See toucans, macaws, monkeys, sloths, caimans, blooming orchids, medicinal plants and ,yes, PINK DOLPHINS!

\$2600 plus airfare

- includes seven days and six nights on a riverboat
- A/C cabins with private baths
- All meals on board
- Purified drinking water always available
- Daily guided excursions by launch
- Nocturnal symphonies and a full moon

\$1300 deposit holds reservation – limit 12, balance and airfare due January 30

Make check payable to Audubon Society of the Everglades and mail to Claudine Laabs – PO Box 2022 – Palm Beach, FL 33480. For more information contact Claudine at 561-655-9779

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 Gail Tomei (561-969-7567/blackgrouper@comcast.net). You will always be able to read the *Kite* on our website, www.auduboneverglades.org

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 Gail Tomei and let her know if you prefer to receive your *Kite* by mail or by email. Gail Tomei (561-969-7567/blackgrouper@comcast.net)

Happenings in Palm Beach County: March Is Festival Month

March 2: Scrub Jay Festival at Jonathan Dickinson S.P.

The fourth annual Florida Scrub-Jay Festival will be hosted by Jonathan Dickinson State Park on March 2nd, 2013. The festival will include guided walks, hay rides, kids activities, entertainment, presentations, and a Scrub-Jay Q&A with a panel of experts. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Admission is free.

This festival travels around the state from one year to the next and this is likely to be its closest stop to Palm Beach County. Don't miss it!

Jonathan Dickinson State Park is located at 16450 SE Federal Hwy in Hobe Sound.

March 2: Sea Turtle Festival at Gumbo Limbo

The eighth annual Sea Turtle Festival will be held at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center in Boca Raton on March 2nd, 2013. This fun-filled family day of environmental education will be packed with exciting things to see and do, including live animal presentations, face painting, tank feedings, children's theater, guided tours, sea turtle rehabilitation, kids crafts, exhibit booths, and food! The theme this year is "Say No to Sky Glow." Light pollution is harmful to sea turtles, birds, and other animals, and can even affect YOUR health! Together we can make a difference...find out how. Celebrate the dark, come out to our park! 10 a.m.–4 p.m. *Gumbo Limbo Nature Center is located at 1801 N. Ocean Blvd (A1A) in Boca Raton.*

Conservation Group To Sue USFWS over Sparrow and Skink

The Center for Biological Diversity filed a formal notice of intent in February to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over the agency's failure to protect the MacGillivray's seaside sparrow and the Florida Keys mole skink under the Endangered Species Act. Both species are severely threatened by sea-level rise: The sparrow depends on marshes that are threatened by rising seas, while the mole skink is found only on Florida's low-lying keys, at risk of inundation. Driven by climate change, sea-level rise of three feet to six feet in Florida is highly likely within this century.

"Help can't come too soon for the seaside sparrow, Florida Keys mole skink or many other plants and animals on our vulnerable coasts," said Jaclyn Lopez, a Center attorney based in Florida. "Sea-level rise threatens all of us — the status of these two species should be a wake-up call to coastal Florida and the rest of the U.S. that we need to cut greenhouse gases now."

The sparrow once ranged from North Carolina south into Florida's Volusia County, but has not been spotted south of Duval County in Florida in years. The sparrow is one of four seaside sparrows remaining in Florida; since the dusky seaside sparrow was declared extinct in 1987, the MacGillivray's represents the southernmost Atlantic subspecies. The mole skink is a tiny, colorful lizard found mainly along the sandy shoreline of Dry Tortugas and the Lower Keys, though it may also occur among other Florida keys. It was once locally common, but its population has declined up to 30 percent, and the lizard is now considered rare. It's also the southernmost subspecies of its species, precariously dependent on suitable sandy shoreline habitat.

"The sparrow and skink have already seen their habitats lost and fragmented by coastal development. Now, with sea-level rise, even what little remains to them is at high risk," said Lopez. "Without Endangered Species Act protection, the sparrow and skink will go extinct. And if sea-level rise continues unchecked, Florida as we all know it will also disappear."

In 2011, a year after the Center petitioned for the species' protection, the Service determined that the sparrow and mole skink "may warrant" federal protection as endangered or threatened species; yet it has failed to make the required 12-month findings to decide whether protection will be granted.

Both the sparrow and mole skink are extremely vulnerable to sea-level rise, more frequent and powerful storms and storm surge, and coastal squeeze, which occurs when habitat is pinched between rising sea levels and coastal development that prevents landward movement.

March 9: Dark Sky Festival at Okeeheelee Nature Center

"Celebrate the Night and Turn Down the Light" at the first Annual Palm Beach County Dark Sky Festival on March 9 at 6:00 p.m.! This free, fun-filled family event will have many exciting and educational opportunities to experience and learn about the night sky and how to preserve it. There will be stargazing, live animal presentations, guided nature tours, speakers, film screening, crafts, educational booths, and more. The event is sponsored by Palm Beach County ERM and the Palm Beach County chapter of the International Dark-Sky Association. *Okeeheelee Nature Center is located at 7715 Forest Hill Blvd. in West Palm Beach.*

March 16: NatureScaping at John D. MacArthur Beach S.P.

For 2013 JDMS and Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management bring you the NatureScaping & Dark Skies Festival! Park entrance is FREE to the public for this annual event. 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

Join us for a free educational day of family fun, with native plant vendors, live animal show, guest speakers, artwork for sale, children's crafts, face painting, local environmental organizations, a raffle, photography contest, live music and food!

For more information call (561) 776-7449, ext. 109.

John D. MacArthur Beach State Park is located at 10900 Jack Nicklaus Drive in North Palm Beach.

Bird of the Month: Cedar Waxwing

The bird of the month for March, *Bombycilla cedrorum*, is one of only three species worldwide in the family Bombycillidae. This starling-sized bird with a vaguely flycatcher appearance looks like neither bird when seen adequately, and sounds like nothing else. This black-masked brown gray and lemon-colored bird enjoys eating fruit; indeed, specializes in it to such an extent that it provides the red waxy bits that gave it its common name. Despite their rather outré appearance, which



John James Audubon's "Cedar Bird"

one would think makes them easy to spot, they're like parakeets in that regard: a whole flock can disappear right into a bare tree! Often the easiest way to detect their presence is by sound: their high-pitched "hissy whistle" is characteristic.

If you get a chance, you should read the entry in John James Audubon's 1831 *Ornithological Biography* (available online at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Ornithological_Biography/Volume_1/Cedar_Bird); it's quite entertaining, and poses a question that researchers have answered today to their satisfaction (about the lateness of their breeding efforts compared to most other birds). Come hear more about this interesting winter resident of Palm Beach County at our March meeting!

Audubon Society of the Everglades
PO Box 16914
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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 10th 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.