



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 54, Number 9

July / August 2014

CALENDAR

Sat. Jul 5, 7:00 and Sat. Aug 7, 7:00 a.m. STA 1E. Car pool around Storm Water Treatment Area managed by South Florida Water Management District. Space limited. Contact Linda to register: 561-742-7791

Birds of the Month July: Green-winged Teal; August: Blue-winged Teal

July's bird of the month is our smallest duck, a dabbling (as opposed to diving ducks): *Anas crecca*, the Green-winged Teal. The male in breeding plumage is quite handsome, with a rich brown head broken by a green mask, and a white bar on the shoulder (his close cousin the Common Teal from Eurasia, should you chance to meet him, has a bold white outline around the mask, and lacks the white bar on the shoulder). Common in our local wetlands in the winter, I'm not quite sure why we're talking about him in July, so if you're like me, come to our July meeting to find out!

August's bird is the counterpart to July's: *Anas discors*, the blue-winged teal, is only considered large when next to his cousin *A. crecca*; when you see him or his mate close to one of our boardwalks, you'll often be surprised by just how small a duck can be. The male has a black head enlivened by a bright white crescent moon; his eye is where the center of the moon would be, and the edge of the moon delineates the bill-to-face intersection.

With both these ducks, it's the drake that catches the eye; hens are cryptically colored, brown and resembling the male more in shape than anything else (apart from the color of the speculum, those feathers in the wing that provide each species its common name).

Come to our July and August meetings to hear our own bird expert, Clive Pinnock, tell us more about these characteristic (and charismatic) south Florida winter residents. (Perhaps it's something we don't want our snowbirds to find out about?)

Please send September NORTHERN PINTAIL Bird-of-the Month pictures (jpg format) to be posted on the ASE web site 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. Meanwhile please enjoy our growing on-line gallery of member pictures on the web site (click Bird of the Month on left side scroll-down topic list)

July 1, 2014 People of the Water: Pre-Columbian Everglades Inhabitants

Christian Davenport, Archeologist

Join us as Chris Davenport, Historic Preservation Officer/Archaeologist, Palm Beach County, takes us back 3,000 years to hear about the people living and succeeding in south Florida from Kissimmee to Belle Glade to Boynton Beach. These amazing groups mastered their environments and lived complex lives in a challenging environment. By 1763, when the Spanish left Florida, those who had ruled the watery world of central and south Florida for over 3,000 years were no more. Learn the newest information about the culture, artifacts and excavations!

In Chris's words "I have been taking part in archaeological investigations since age 7 when a local archaeologist took me under his arm. By 16, I was supervising archaeological field schools for the local parks and recreation department. Since then I have taken part in archaeological investigations stretching from Maine to Oaxaca, Mexico and as far west as Memphis, Tennessee. I received my BA from Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire where I specialized in the identification of human and animal remains from archaeological sites." Chris has worked at private sector jobs in Cultural Resource Management in Mid-Atlantic States. He did his graduate studies at U. of Tennessee and has taught at U. of Baltimore and Johns Hopkins University. Chris has been the Palm Beach County Archaeologist for seven years.

Please join us for this entertaining and educational program in rooms 101 and 102 at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, 6301 Summit Blvd, (near Jog Road) in West Palm Beach. Refreshments at 7pm. Meeting is free and open to the public.

August 5, 2014 Members' Photo Show

As anyone who's visited our website recently knows, ASE is blessed with a number of extremely talented photographers. If you haven't been to one of their exhibits around town, you need to come to our August meeting to see their work up close and in person. If some of the best bird photography in the state isn't sweet enough for you, we're also throwing our annual ice cream social. So come join us! Peruse your photos to pick out a few of the best to share. Natural subjects only (and birds by preference!) We know you photographers are out there! A digital projector is available, but be sure your photos are in an easily accessible format such as a thumb drive. Large prints and paintings are also welcome. Doors open at 7:00 to make your OWN SUNDAY and enjoy cookies, beverages and camaraderie.

Meetings are held in Rooms 101 and 102 at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, 6301 Summit Blvd, (near Jog Road) in West Palm Beach.

Phil and Ann Weinrich Honored

As their careers in Palm Beach County come to an end, ASE honored Phil and Ann Weinrich for their many contributions to environmental education in Palm Beach County over the last two decades. Phil has been the lead teacher and developer of curriculum in Jupiter High School's Environmental Research and Field Study Academy.

Under Phil's leadership JHS Envirothon Teams won the Palm Beach championship 19 times, state competition 7 times, and placed in the top ten nationally 3 times. Working at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, Ann developed and coordinated Pine Jog's field trip program to Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge enabling thousands of students to have an Everglades day experience. To honor their contributions ASE made a donation in their names to Jupiter High School Environmental and Research Academy.

Audubon thanks them for all the contributions they have made to our community and wishes them the best in North Carolina!

FALL MIGRATION SPECIAL PANAMA STYLE!

October 8-12- birds and whales, too!
\$1740 – if booked in early July
(plus \$100 donation to Audubon)
Includes r/t airfare from Miami – hotel with breakfast and ferry boat ride to Contadora Island – hotel and all meals
Depart Miami – arrive in Panama City – 4 nights hotel on Causeway near Frank Gehry designed Biomuseum
-options – Museo de Biodiversidad
- - aerial tram in Metropolitan Park
- - Panama Viejo and/or Casco Antiguo
- - new tower at Gamboa
- - Summit Gardens w/Harpy Eagle exhibit
- - Miraflores Locks
Ferry boat ride to Las Perlas – Contadora Island –
two nights at a hotel on Galleon Beach – all meals
- options – boat rides for whale watching
- - bird walks around island
Airfare and deposits are due the first week of July
call Claudine for more information 561-655-9779

The Everglade Kite

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

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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.

Items left at past ASE dinners

Contact Susan Snyder 627-7829 or roysue@bellsouth.net

Very long knife with serrated edge and prong on one end

Large Serving Spoon, Mount Vernon Pattern

Server for cake or pie, Lareaux Pattern

Doris Anderson's white handle cake or pie server

President's Column

Paton White

I want to start by congratulating the Field Trip Committee. This year they organized and found leaders for 117 trips! Twenty-three of our members lead these trips. Thank you, Valleri Brauer, Chuck Webber, Linda Humphries and Claudine Laabs and each of our very dedicated leaders. Chuck also organizes the annual Christmas Bird Count, which documents changes in bird populations, due primarily to habitat loss.

Don Mullaney sent this information about what his community, Quail Ridge, does. "Our community, in its own small way, have participated in creating habitat. As a member of the Quail Ridge Audubon Committee, we have been busy. Over the last 3 years, we have placed 2 Purple Martin houses, now fully occupied, 4 Eastern Screech Owl boxes, and just yesterday, an Osprey nesting platform. In addition, several bird feeders and a bird bath have been placed in a park like area of our community. We are proud of our accomplishments and hope that communities, throughout this country will do their share in creating habitat for our challenged feathered friends." Each of us can increase the habitat in our own back yards, but the results are magnified when a community buys into it. I am going to follow up and see if we can start a similar group in Atlantis. Does anyone else live somewhere where it might be possible? Let me know.

I just received NAS' June Policy Call. "On September 9th National Audubon will announce our climate model, a major new study that offers important information about how we can help birds adapt to and survive a warming climate. This announcement ushers in a major and exciting initiative by Audubon on climate change." Remember two winters ago we saw numerous Razorbills off our coast -- thousands were reported but by early 2013, hundreds had washed up along our East Coast beaches, as well as 40 puffins. Why were they here? 2012 was the warmest recorded spring in the North East and the Gulf of Maine's waters got too warm for the fish that Puffins and Razorbills eat, leading to a disastrous breeding season and the birds' abandonment of their natural territory in search of food. Climate change in action?

TANNER WATERS- 2014 WINNER

ASE Ruth and Seymour Miller \$3000 SCHOLARSHIP

For more than 40 years ASE has honored conservation visionaries Ruth and Seymour Miller by funding a scholarship at the Palm Beach Post's Pathfinder Awards for a science nominee with outstanding achievement in the field of Environmental Science. This year's winner is Tanner Waters of Palm Beach Central High School, ranked number one in his class academically. He founded and has been president of the school's Environmental Club, creating campus gardens, a recycling program, campus energy savings, Earth Day events, and helping the school earn the Green School of Quality award for two consecutive years. Tanner plans to attend Duke University for undergraduate and graduate studies in Environmental Policy and Law. One day he hopes to be a part of the Environmental Protection agency, hopefully rising to the level of administrator or EPA Director!

"Dear Audubon Society, Thank you so very much for the Pathfinder scholarship. It means so much to me that all my work has been recognized by such a prestigious environmental organization. This scholarship is going to greatly help me pursue my environmental education. I can't wait to come to the meeting so I can personally thank you. Sincerely, Tanner Waters."

ASE awards \$500 to Jupiter Middle School

At the Green School Awards Luncheon, ASE gave a \$500 Judge's Choice award for HABITAT RESTORATION to Jupiter Middle School. This grant rewarded their efforts to create an outdoor learning lab in a 2 and 1/4 acre wetland and natural area between school property and Military Trail. The mission of the outdoor classroom is to provide in-field experiences for student learning, focusing on wetland ecology, collecting, analyzing data and problem solving. With support from principal Cheryl Huey and approval from the School District Risk Management Department, they upgraded the 2 ¼ acres by holding a community Saturday Clean-up Day to remove exotics and debris. They identified curriculum goals and won \$6500 in grants to pay for waters, nets, rubber boots, teacher training and student field trips.

Seventy Palm Beach and Martin County schools participated in the Green Schools program and competed for cash prizes. www.ourgreenschools.com

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)

Meet a Regal Florida Family With a Ten-Million-Year Pedigree

Russ Martens

We see them on campus, on the golf course, in the backyard and on the perimeter of soccer fields—but rarely do we pause to reflect on the mystery of one of Florida’s oldest year-round families: the Florida Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis pratensis*).

According to the International Crane Foundation, “a Miocene crane fossil, thought to be about ten million years old, was found in Nebraska and is structurally identical to the modern Sandhill Crane, making it the oldest known bird species still surviving.” The fossil was a wing bone discovered in the 1920s. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology suggests that the earliest identifiable Sandhill Crane fossil, “estimated to be 2.5 million years old, was unearthed in the Macaspahlt Shell Pit in Florida.”

Unlike the migratory subspecies of Sandhill Cranes which breed in the Northern United States, Canada, Alaska and Siberia, the Florida Sandhill Crane is a non-migratory species, numbering around 4,594 individuals as of 2003 with an approximate 40 percent reduction in suitable habitat between 1974 and 2003 (Nesbitt and Hatchitt 2008).

Every winter, some 25,000 migratory “Greater” Sandhill Cranes (*G. c. tabida*), which nest in the Great Lakes region, join the Florida Sandhill Crane in the state, potentially confusing residents into thinking this is all one species. The “Greater” is slightly taller, at 4.5 to 5 feet, versus the year-round resident who typically measures in at approximately 4 feet.

The range of the Florida Sandhill Crane has been dramatically shrinking over the last century. While there were once breeding populations in Alabama, southern Louisiana, and coastal Texas, today the species is mostly limited to peninsular Florida from the Everglades (where it is believed they have always been present) to southern Georgia in the region of the Okefenokee Swamp (Bennett 1989, Nesbitt and Williams 1990). The range narrowing is typically attributed to overhunting and land development.

The Florida Sandhill Crane has a state designation of “Threatened” and is protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Unknown to

many residents of Florida, in 2002 it became illegal to feed Sandhill Cranes in the state of Florida. (Florida Fish and Wildlife Code 68A-4.00(3)).

While feeding our ancient cohabitants might seem like a kindly act to those unfamiliar with wildlife needs, it is, in effect, putting the birds in harm’s way. Cranes often risk life and limb crossing crowded highways to get to the human doing the feeding. Backyards increase the threat of predation from dogs. Heavy pesticide use in suburban landscapes is a major concern as young Sandhill Cranes have died from pesticide poisoning.

Equally important, cranes benefit nutritionally from a natural, diverse diet. Cranes are omnivorous, with some of their favorite menu items including seeds, berries, plant tubers, insects, earthworms, mice, snakes, lizards, and frogs.

Sandhill Cranes can be distinguished from herons in flight by their long necks extended out and legs trailing straight behind. (Hérons fly with heads in an “S” shape.) Cranes have a dramatically different wing beat as well, with a rapid upward beat and a slow, lingering downstroke. The wing beat of herons is a rhythmic up and down stroke.

Sandhill Crane chicks are precocial: they are hatched with down feathers, open eyes, and the ability to leave the nest and walk within hours of hatching. Parents typically stay with the juvenile, assisting it with food, for the better part of a year.

At Peaceful Waters Sanctuary in Wellington, Florida, the non-migratory Sandhill Crane has been observed for the past two years successfully nesting in a sea of Pickerel Weed in the middle of a manmade wetlands. Unfortunately, a visitor was observed feeding the family, very likely unaware she was breaking the law. A wildlife volunteer gently explained the negative ramifications to the visitor.

Recently, we were reminded of why we should never take a bird species for granted, even if its population is currently stable. In March, Alex Shoumatoff wrote at Smithsonian Magazine that “99 percent of species that ever existed are now extinct.”

References

- Bennett, A.J. 1989. Movements and home ranges of Florida Sandhill Crane. *J. Wildl. Management.* 53:830–836
- Nesbitt, S.A. and J. L. Hatchitt. 2008. Trends in habitat and population of Florida Sandhill Cranes. *Proceedings of the North American Crane Workshop* 10: 40-42.
- Nesbitt, S.A. and K.S. Williams. 1990. Home range and habitat use of Florida Sandhill Cranes. *J. Wildl. Management.* 54(1):92-96.

Audubon’s Aviary: Parts Unknown at The New York Historical Society Stephanie Radus

Memorial Day Weekend marked the end of Audubon’s Aviary: Parts Unknown (Part II of The Complete Flock), the second exhibition in the three-part series staged by The New York Historical Society at 70 Central Park West in Manhattan. By time the exhibition is complete, all 474 watercolor models for the book, *The Birds of America*, will have been shown in the order in which they were engraved. They were displayed in the sets of five prints—one large, one medium, and three small—that were received by the original subscribers to the Havell prints.

The New York Historical Society, although located (or maybe because it is located) directly next door to the Museum of Natural History, seems to be one of the city’s best-kept secrets. Even on a Sunday, the exhibit was not crowded. Visitors were allowed to get really close to the paintings, and if that wasn’t close enough, magnifying glasses were provided. Also available were audio recordings provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology of the calls of each of the birds with a reminder that birdcalls are an essential part of bird identification.

It may be too late to see the first two parts of the exhibit, but mark your calendars for next spring and try to make Part III of *The Complete Flock*. It’s well worth a detour for those of you heading back to the Northeast.



Florida Sandhill Crane Preens Juvenile at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary, Wellington, Florida

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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.

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 state of Florida at <http://ccfcorp.dos.state.fl.us/search.html> and searching by name Audubon Society of the Everglades or calling in Florida 850-245-6052. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

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.