



# EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Serving Palm Beach County, Florida

Volume 55, Number 4

January 2015

## CALENDAR

For trip info email: [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com)

**Jan 3 Sat. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT,**  
Coordinator: Chuck Weber [cweber4aves@comcast.net](mailto:cweber4aves@comcast.net)

**Jan 3 Sat. Pelican Island/Sunset Cruise,**  
Contact Claudine Laabs 561-655-9779

**Jan 4 Sun. 7:45 am STA 1E,** Contact Linda  
561-742-7791 or [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com) to  
register

**Jan 7 Wed. 7:30 am ARM Loxahatchee NWR,**  
Boynton Beach, 10216 Lee Road, \$5 entry  
per car. Meet at Boat Launch parking area,  
(Rick Schofield), entry fee

**Jan 8 Thur. "2nd Thursday Leader's Choice"**  
48 hrs before for details: Yahoo group  
([auduboneverglades](http://auduboneverglades.com)), Facebook (Audubon  
Society of the Everglades), and Website  
([www.auduboneverglades.org](http://www.auduboneverglades.org))

**Jan 10 Sat. JAMES CURRIE Leader, Special  
Fundraising Tour at STA 1E.** Space limited.  
Registration for "local" members only until  
Jan 1, Open to the public after Jan 1. Call  
Linda to register 586-854-0145

**Jan 11 Sun. 6:30 am Loxahatchee Slough,** (Dr.  
Gawlik) Call Linda for reservations 561-742-  
7791 or [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com).

**Jan 12 Mon. 7:30 am Wakodahatchee  
Wetlands,** BEGINNERS Walk 13026 Jog  
Road, Delray Beach, (Paton White)

**Jan 16 Fri 6 pm to 8 pm Okeehchee Nature  
Center, CANCELLED by Nature Center**

**Jan 17 Sat. 8 am Grassy Waters "Behind the  
Scenes"** West Palm Beach, 8264 Northlake  
Blvd (Walt Hackenjoes)

**Jan 18 Sun. 7 am STA 1E "PHOTOGRAPHERS'  
SPECIAL"** (Don Mulhaney)

**Jan 23 Fri. 3:30 pm Green Cay Wetlands,**  
Boynton Beach, 12800 Hagen Ranch Road.  
Meet outside Nature Center main door  
(Valleri Brauer)

**Jan 24 Sat. All Day Trip, Three Lakes/Joe  
Overstreet,** Contact Rick Schofield [ase@rschofield.net](mailto:ase@rschofield.net)

**Jan 25 Sun. 8:00 am Pondhawk Natural Area.**  
1501 Spanish River Blvd, Boca Raton. (Ben  
Kolstad)

**Jan 26 Mon. 10:00 am Okeehchee Nature  
Center, CANCELLED by Nature Center**

**Jan 31 8 am Peaceful Waters,** Wellington,  
11700 Pierson Rd. SW corner of Village  
Park. Meet at entry to boardwalk (Clive  
Pinnock)

**Jan 31 Sat. All Day Trip, Viera Wetlands,**  
Contact Valleri 561-385-9787 after 5:30  
M-F (Valleri Brauer)

## Monthly MEETING and LECTURE January 6 "BIRD ISLAND, Florida's Newest Critical Bird Area"

*Gregg Braun, Professional Consulting Ecologist*

Join us Tuesday, January 6 7:00 p.m. (earlier meeting time this year) as Greg Braun speaks to us about Bird Island.

Greg Braun, who was instrumental in establishing the newly protected and restored Bird Island, is a professional ecologist with over 20 years of experience in environmental projects in Florida, the Bahamas and the Caribbean. He specializes in avian and coastal ecology, and habitat restoration projects.

A Certified Environmental Professional, Greg's Jupiter-based company provides ecological consulting services to governmental agencies, non-governmental conservation organizations and private property owners. He serves on the Steering Committee of the SE Florida Scrub Ecosystem Working Group, Martin County's Land Acquisition Selection Committee, and the Board of Directors of the Treasure Coast Chapter of the Florida Association of Environmental Professionals. Greg was awarded the William Hornaday Award for Distinguished Service in Conservation in 2007, and the Distinguished Services Award from the Martin County Conservation Alliance in 2001.

A graduate of Florida Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in Oceanography, Greg works with a variety of threatened and endangered animals and plants, including Florida Scrub-jays, manatees, gopher tortoises, Johnson's seagrass and a variety of beach and dune species.

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 6:30 pm. Meeting is free and open to the public.

### Bird of the Month for January: Bald Eagle

Even if no one can spell its taxonomic name without triple-checking it, everyone is familiar with *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, the official bird and animal of the United States of America. This iconic raptor is widespread across the continent nowadays, although its population plummeted in the mid-20th century, and for a while in the 1960s and 1970s it looked like it, along with other top avian predators like the Peregrine Falcon and Osprey, might be extirpated from the continent. The famous ban on DDT in 1972 allowed populations of many of these endangered animals to recover, and now the Bald Eagle's IUCN conservation status is "species of least concern," meaning that it is considered stable.

These large raptors can be found year-round in Palm Beach County, usually in the western portions. If their size alone isn't a strong enough field mark for you, in flight they hold their wings dead straight (see photo) and they appear to be nailed to the sky, so little do they move or rock (compare that to the notoriously unsteady Turkey Vulture). One might say that these birds are unflappable, were one given to wordplay. Adult plumage takes several years to develop; immature birds, while they lack the white head and tail, have a rather diffuse mottling that is hard to confuse with any other Florida raptor. Come to our January meeting to hear more about this bird.



Photo by Larry Hess

## The Everglade Kite

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

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Facebook: Audubon Society of the Everglades	
Yahoo group: auduboneverglades	

Audubon Society of the Everglades, incorporated in 1966, serves communities in Palm Beach County. Our mission is inspiring people to conserve wildlife, especially birds, and the environment that supports them.



Photo by Sandi Smolker

## President's Column

Paton White

*"When you count birds, birds count" Eric Draper, Executive Director, Florida Audubon*

In a nutshell, that is what the citizen science programs we participate in do: make birds count. Not in one quick survey, but over years, decades, and in the case of the Christmas Bird Count, where in a century of collecting data, a picture emerges of the changes that have taken place. These changes in bird populations reflect the changes in the environment, land use and climate change. Scientists use this data to project the future (National Audubon's 2014's "Birds and Climate Change" report) and help individual bird species (bald eagle and osprey recoveries) and guide conservation efforts throughout North America.

By the time you read this ASE will be preparing for Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on January 3rd. Coordinated by Chuck Weber, teams of volunteers will search for birds in a circle 15 miles in diameter from predawn hours to dusk. The circle location remains the same over the years and in the case of our ASE circle, reflects the change from rural to suburban terrain. The CBC is done throughout the western hemisphere in the same 3-week period and has now also been started in other areas of the world.

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is administered by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and is the easiest of all the projects to participate in. Each and every one of us can add to its success so from February 14 through 17 grab a grandchild or a friend and go for a walk, count the birds from your window for as little as 15 minutes, or join one of our scheduled GBBC walks that extended weekend. Done throughout the United States on the same weekend, by thousands of volunteer bird watchers, this count gives an overview of where the birds are. To participate just go to [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org) or call me (561-818-7574) to get started!

Our chapter participates in two programs focusing on single species: the Eagle Watch that Susan McKemy has written about in this *Kite* and FL Audubon's Jay Watch. Volunteers survey scrub jay populations focusing on the young during the summer. The scrub jay is Florida's only endemic bird and due to habitat loss is on the brink of extinction.

ASE members have started to participate in the Florida Shorebird Alliance and several members are active participants in the Breeding Bird Atlas (see May/June 2014 *Kite*.) Last, but perhaps the most important of all is e-bird which Susan McKemy wrote about in the October *Kite*. Much of the information gathered by the other programs is entered into this data base as well as reports from individuals. You will notice that many of our field trip reports have links to e-bird. If you reread Susan's article you will see that not only will you be helping gather data but the program will also help you keep your own records.

As individuals we often feel there is so little we can do to make a difference but by participating in these programs, you will both make a difference and deepen your enjoyment of birding!

Paton

### 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](http://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)

### PELICAN ISLAND CRUISE, Saturday JANUARY 3

Cruise around the country's first National Wildlife Refuge, Pelican Island (near Sebastian, FL just north of Vero Beach). This time of year we will be out on the water as hundreds of birds fly in for the evening—pelicans, herons, gulls oystercatchers and many more. We will carpool early to have a late lunch over the water to see dolphins and birds chase the bait fish.

The boat departs from Mulligan's dock in Sebastian.

\$30/person. For reservations, please call Claudine 561-655-9779

### Exciting Saturday January 10th fund raiser with James Currie at STA-1E

Call Linda (586-854-0145) to see if there is still room!

Local members have priority until January 1st; after January 1, the trip is open to all.

Chapter-only members not only get to sign up early but pay \$25 instead of the regular \$30 if payment by check or PayPal is received by January 1. Make sure you have renewed your local membership by the first of the year so you can participate in this special adventure!

Register for this fundraiser by calling Linda (586-854-0145).

### EVERGLADES BIRDING FESTIVAL

Join ASE member Paddy Cunningham at the Everglades Birding Festival, January 15th through 19th, where you may find up to 170 species while gaining advanced birding skills. Journey through America's Everglades searching for beautiful and rare birds in ancient moss-covered cypress swamps, prairies, and brilliant marshes.

Paddy Cunningham 754.201.1141

[www.birdadventure.com](http://www.birdadventure.com)

[www.evergladesbirdingfestival.com](http://www.evergladesbirdingfestival.com)

### PANAMA TRIP

Join Claudine Laabs for three days in Panama's rainforest at Gamboa and three more in the cloud forest where finding the Resplendent Quetzal is 99% guaranteed. This eight day, seven night trip includes one night in Panama City on the causeway near the new biomuseum. Call Claudine for details, 561-655-9779.

### COMING SOON—Everglades Day Festival "ROMANCE OF THE EVERGLADES"

February 14, 9 am to 4 pm rain or shine

Mark your calendar for this free, fun, educational 16th Annual Everglades Day Festival at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

Part-time volunteers are always needed.

Contact [Xavier\\_Cathey@fws.gov](mailto:Xavier_Cathey@fws.gov) for info and to sign up.

[www.auduboneverglades.org/everglades-day-2/](http://www.auduboneverglades.org/everglades-day-2/)

### Bird of the Month Photos

Please send February Bird-of-the Month Everglades **Snail Kite** pictures (jpg format) to be posted on the AudubonEverglades.org web site to [SheilaElliot@yahoo.com](mailto: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).

### AUDUBON EAGLEWATCH

Susan McKemy

Bald Eagles, one of the largest birds in North America, are native only to our continent and are proof that protection under the Endangered Species Act works.

With over 1,400 nesting pairs, Florida has one of the largest populations of Bald Eagles in the United States, excluding Alaska. The nesting season extends from October 1 through May 15, with individual pairs often returning to the same nesting territory year after year.

Florida's rapidly changing environment currently finds Bald Eagles nesting successfully in urban areas. This increased exposure to human activity and its resulting pressure on the eagle population prompted the Audubon EagleWatch Program.

Audubon EagleWatch seeks information about Bald Eagles, active nest locations and possible disturbances or threats to nesting activities. The program is designed to educate volunteer participants in general eagle nesting biology, applicable laws, the identification of nest threats, monitoring techniques and the verification of previously unrecorded active eagle nests.

This data is compiled and used to assist the state's Midwinter Annual Bald Eagle Nesting Survey by documenting both urban and rural eagle nesting activity, successes and failures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also utilizes EagleWatch data to enhance their conservation and law enforcement efforts.

Bald Eagle nesting season started in October with eagles all over the state refurbishing last year's nests. Eggs are typically laid in late November and early December, and are incubated by the adults for 30–33 days.

Twenty-nine nests have been recorded in Palm Beach County since 1995, 13 of which were known to be active in the past year. FWC no longer surveys all nests annually, and that's where we can help. ASE is working closely with the Florida Audubon EagleWatch program. We have volunteered to assist in locating and registering eagle nests on both public and private lands in Palm Beach County. Once located, volunteers will be assigned to monitor nest activity weekly during nesting season until May 15th.

If you are aware of a nest anywhere in Palm Beach County or want to volunteer to "watch" a nest, please contact either Marta Isaacson (Coordinator) or Susan McKemy at [PBCEagleWatch@gmail.com](mailto:PBCEagleWatch@gmail.com).



© SUSAN MCKEMY

Photo by Susan McKemy

### TIME TO RENEW

If you missed renewing your ASE Membership, which expires on 12/31/2014, you can renew at the January meeting (cash or check), mail your check and application to the P.O. box listed in the *Kite*, or pay online with your credit card via PayPal <http://www.auduboneverglades.org/membership>. If you are a national member (receive the *Audubon Magazine*) you can also be a chapter-only member. After the first year as a national member your dues no longer support our chapter and in fact it costs ASE if you don't become an ASE member after the first year. If you have questions about membership, please contact Gail Tomei at (561) 969-7567 or [blackgrouper@comcast.net](mailto:blackgrouper@comcast.net).

Audubon Society of the Everglades  
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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](http://www.auduboneverglades.org). AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES is a 501 c-3 organization #59-6019854. We gratefully accept any donations or bequests. <http://www.auduboneverglades.org/donate/>

**Articles NEEDED! Send to [auduboneverglades@gmail.com](mailto:auduboneverglades@gmail.com) before 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](http://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 (or to use PAYPAL go to [auduboneverglades.org](http://auduboneverglades.org)) 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:

<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Everglades Day
<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications

Audubon Society of the Everglades general meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. (refreshments at 6:30) 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.