



# EVERGLADE KITE

## newsletter

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES

Volume 56, No 5 – February 2016

### February Calendar

- ▶ **Feb 6 Sat. 7:30 am STA 1E**, Tropical Audubon joins us on our Shorebird Survey, Registration REQUIRED: send email to [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com).
- ▶ **Feb 7 Sun. 7:30 am STA 2**, Shorebird Survey, Registration REQUIRED: send email to [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com).
- ▶ **Feb 7 Sun. 4:30 pm Wakodahatchee Wetlands**, BEGINNING BIRD WALK, Delray Beach, 13206 Jog Road. Meet at top of boardwalk. (Chris Golia) **RESCHEDULED FROM 6 pm**
- ▶ **Feb 10 Wed. 7:30 am ARM Loxahatchee NWR**, Boynton Beach, 10216 Lee Road, \$5 entry per car. Meet at the Marsh Trail. (Rick Schofield)
- ▶ **Feb 12 Fri. 8 am Wakodahatchee Wetlands**, Delray Beach, 13206 Jog Road. Meet at top of boardwalk. (Valleri Brauer) **GBBC\***
- ▶ **Feb 13 Sat. 8 am Green Cay Wetlands**, Boynton Beach, 12800 Hagen Ranch Road. Meet outside Nature Center main door. (Paton White) **GBBC\***
- ▶ **Feb 14 Sun. Blue Cypress, CANCELLED**
- ▶ **Feb 14 Sun. 7 am STA 1E**, Registration REQUIRED: send email to [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com). **GBBC\***
- ▶ **Feb 15 Mon. 9 am Snook Island Natural Area**, Lake Worth. Meet at boardwalk by North side of Lake Worth Bridge (Linda Humphries) **GBBC\***
- ▶ **Feb 18 Thur. TM Goodwin/Broadmoor**, All Day Trip, Registration REQUIRED: send email to [ase@rschofield.net](mailto:ase@rschofield.net) (Rick Schofield)
- ▶ **Feb 20 Sat. 7:15 am STA 2** (Special new areas), Registration REQUIRED: send email to [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com). (Brian Garrett)
- ▶ **Feb 20 Sat. 8 am to 4 pm, 17th Annual EVERGLADES DAY FESTIVAL** "Songs of the Everglades", ARM Loxahatchee NWR, Boynton Beach, 10216 Lee Road, FREE
- ▶ **Feb 21 Sun. 8:00 am Winding Waters**, West Palm Beach, 6161 Haverhill Road. Meet at the entrance of Dyer Park off Haverhill (Leader TBA)
- ▶ **Feb 23 Tues. 8:30 am Wakodahatchee Wetlands**, Delray Beach, 13206 Jog Road. Meet at top of boardwalk. (Clive Pinnock)
- ▶ **Feb 24 Wed. 4:30 – 6:30 pm Grassy Waters Preserve**, "CANOE Fly In at Sunset", West Palm Beach, 8264 Northlake Blvd. Meet at Nature Center. Registration REQUIRED: send email to [grassywaters@comcast.net](mailto:grassywaters@comcast.net) space limited (Cindy Bush)
- ▶ **Feb 27 Sat. 9 am Green Cay**, "PLEDGE TO FLEDGE" free birding workshop and walk for beginning and non-birders, 12800 Hagen Ranch Road, Boynton Beach (Angel and Mariel Abreu)
- ▶ **Feb 27 Sat. "Wild Parrots of Miami Bird Walk"**, Registration REQUIRED: send email to [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com).space limited (Paul Bithorn)
- ▶ **Feb 28 Sun. 8:00 am Riverbend Park**, Jupiter, 9060 Indiantown Rd. Meet at south end of main parking lot near canoe rental trailer. (Ed Kaweck)

\*GBBC Great Backyard Bird Count

### Monthly Membership Meeting & Lecture: Tuesday, Feb 2, 7pm "Bird Migration & Everglades Restoration" by Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Florida Science Coordinator.

Join us as Dr. Paul Gray tells us about Bird Migration & Everglades Restoration. This is a perfect prelude to the upcoming Everglades Day Festival Feb 20, with theme "Songs of the Everglades -- Celebrating Migratory Birds."

Dr. Gray, Science Coordinator of Audubon of Florida's Lake Okeechobee Watershed Program, provides technical support to Audubon's policy teams. He is working with various agency technical and policy teams designing and implementing restoration and stewardship plans in the region. Paul has been working in this area for more than 20 years and his educational background includes a BS from the University of Missouri, an MS from Texas Tech University and a Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 1993. Among his awards are the John Kabler Grassroots award from the Everglades Coalition and the Audubon of Florida Staff member of the year.

"Florida is a biologist's paradise and I like being with an effective conservation group and being part of the good we do. My hobbies are reading, gardening, and kayaking, hunting and fishing. Join me for a presentation mixing ecology, history, hydrology, politics AND BIRDS!" said Paul.

Doors open at 6:30 pm for light refreshments in rooms 101 and 102 at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, 6301 Summit Blvd, (near Jog Road) in West Palm Beach. Meeting is free and open to the public.

Also at the meeting – February Bird of the Month: Sanderling. Come to our February meeting to hear more about this bird from our expert, Clive Pinnock.

### Volunteers Needed for Florida Mid-Winter Shorebird Survey

The Florida Shorebird Alliance is coordinating statewide surveys to document shorebirds. This is an annual survey that occurs Feb 5-11 and could not be accomplished at a statewide scale without the help of citizen scientists. Local team leaders are organizing volunteer survey crew members to survey the STA's and walk miles of our beautiful coastline tallying numbers of shorebird and seabird species. *If you can readily identify these species and can walk along the beach for a minimum of 1-2 miles, We Need You.* Join other citizen scientists for Florida's 2016 annual winter shorebird survey!

**ASE will be participating in the Mid-Winter Shorebird surveys by conducting surveys in:**

- ▶ **STA 1E on Feb 6th** (Coordinated by Linda Humphries and Paton White)
- ▶ **STA 2 on Feb 7th** (Coordinated by Rick Schofield)
- ▶ **Coastal Areas** (Coordinated by Paul Davis)

To participate in the STA surveys, send an email to [asetripinfo@gmail.com](mailto:asetripinfo@gmail.com) and for the Coastal Area surveys, send an email to [pwdavis9@gmail.com](mailto:pwdavis9@gmail.com).

For more info, see: [www.flshorebirdalliance.org/field-notes/2015/12/03/winter-surveys.aspx](http://www.flshorebirdalliance.org/field-notes/2015/12/03/winter-surveys.aspx)

## ▪ President's Letter ▪

Paton White



Sanderling, photo by Don Mullaney

### Bird of the Month – Sanderling by Ben Kolstad

If last month's bird (Ruddy Turnstone) was our "rocky" feeder, this month's (Sanderling, *Calidris alba*), is our "sandy-shore" bird. It's also our baseline sandpiper, of medium size, one we can use for reference when separating it from the smaller sandpipers (the "peeps") in the genus *Calidris*. (Although separation is often not a problem—if there's only one small shorebird at the beach when you visit, it's probably this one.)

Paying attention to feeding behavior is one of the quickest ways to ID a distant shorebird, and this bird's habit of playing high-speed tag with the waves combined with quick pokes at the substrate in search of its small arthropod prey make it instantly identifiable. It doesn't appear to want to get its belly wet—if it misjudges an incoming wave, it'll take flight rather than get wet (or bowled over). When it flies, you'll see a bright stripe standing out in stark contrast to the otherwise dark wings.

If you're close enough to make out any type of color, the combination of pale white underparts (recall the specific epithet, *alba*, which means "white") and light gray uppers are also a dead giveaway. Most individuals also carry a characteristic "shoulder smudge" that helps cement the ID. It has dark legs, although they're frequently just a blur of motion.

In size, it's compact, but chunkier and larger than the "peeps," (the five smallest members of this genus). It has a dark, straight, stout, almost cylindrical bill, with a slight "bulb" near the tip.

In Palm Beach County, sanderlings are common on sandy beaches in all seasons except summer, when they are largely absent.

'Tis the season to be a citizen scientist. In January and February many of our members spend lots of time counting birds.

On January second we participated in the annual Christmas Bird Count. The Christmas Bird Count is a census of birds in the Western Hemisphere, performed by volunteer birdwatchers and administered by the National Audubon Society. The purpose is to provide population data for use in science. This data has been kept since 1900 and gives a picture of the change in bird populations over more than a century. This year we had low numbers of birds and an average number of species, but we did have our first white pelicans ever reported for our circle which is in eastern Palm Beach County and Valleri's group at Wakodahatchee had over 2000 white ibis!

In early February, shorebirds become our focus. See the info supplied by Paul Davis in this issue on how to volunteer. When you think shorebirds you may think the beach but in Palm Beach County the western parts of the county are also home to many wintering shorebirds.

And finally my favorite, The Great Backyard Bird Count! While the other counts require more knowledge and a real time commitment, the GBBC is for everyone. Anyone in the world can count birds at any location for at least 15 minutes and enter their sightings at [www.BirdCount.org](http://www.BirdCount.org). The information gathered by tens of thousands of volunteers helps track changes in bird populations on a massive scale. The GBBC is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society with partner Bird Studies Canada. Because the time commitment is short and you only need to report birds you are sure of, it is a wonderful way to introduce others, including children, to citizen science programs. Simply google Great Backyard Bird Count to get all the details. We have four GBBC walks February 12 – 15, join one and start your citizen science participation this year.

### ♪ SONGS OF THE EVERGLADES ♪ Everglades Day Saturday Feb 20

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Loxahatchee Everglades Tours and Audubon Society of the Everglades invite you to enjoy our 17th Annual Everglades Day Festival. The festival will be held at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR located on US 441/SR 7 south of Boynton Beach Blvd, rain or shine Saturday, February 20, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This festival focuses attention on the importance of America's Everglades to South Florida's people, animals, and habitats. It also provides education, entertainment, and direct experiences. This year's theme is Songs of the Everglades - celebrating 100 years of the Migratory Bird Treaty and will headline Florida singer/songwriters Dale Crider and Rod MacDonald.

Special features this year will include Rey Becerra representing the Seminole Tribe and Ron Magill of Zoo Miami with a special program. Live music, animals from Busch Wildlife and the Palm Beach Zoo, food trucks, kids' fishing, archery, canoeing, guided nature walks – and all of the fun filled activities that have made this Festival a must-visit event. Except for food trucks, the day is free with ample parking and shuttle buses to the Refuge.

So bring yourself, kids and grand-kids, friends, neighbors and students – and participate in the Songs of the Everglades!

Any questions, call Susan Snyder 561-701-7773, 561-627-7829 or Serena Rinker 561-735-6029.

### **• Pledge to Fledge •**

*Saturday, February 27 at 9 am*

A free event for all ages at Green Cay Wetlands sponsored by the Friends of Green Cay and Audubon Society of the Everglades

Are you a birder, or do you have an interest in nature and conservation? Please invite a friend, family member, neighbor or any non-birder between the ages of 5 to 85 to join us for the 2016 "Pledge to Fledge" -- including refreshments, a fun introduction to birding and the natural spaces at Green Cay Wetlands.

Angel and Mariel Abreu, owners and guides at "Nature is Awesome Birding & Wildlife Tours" and other South Florida birding experts will be on hand to share their enthusiasm and knowledge with all who attend.

We will start with coffee, juice and nibbles in the lecture hall and have a quick Birding 101 class on Bird ID, how to use binoculars and field guides. (Loaner Binoculars are available as long as patrons sign a waiver and leave a driver's license.) Then out onto the boardwalks and bird watching with the experts!

***What a wonderful opportunity to spend a special morning with your child, relative, neighbor or friend!***

*Green Cay Wetlands: 12800 Hagen Ranch Road,  
Boynton Beach, FL*

### **Bird of the Month Photos**

Please send March Bird-of-the Month Western Sandpiper 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. If you have hi-res versions of what you send, including .tiff files, please send these duplicates for occasional ad-hoc media photo requests from ASE. 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).

### **Green Schools Recognition Program Volunteer Judges Needed**

Help us score GREEN SCHOOLS applications, a competition open to all public and private schools in Palm Beach and Martin County where cash prizes are given. ASE was a member of the original planning team 9 years ago. Pine Jog Environmental Education Staff holds a luncheon training session Friday, March 4th (mandatory for new judges; highly recommended for past judges). A week later, Friday, March 11th: Schools' Applications are sent to the volunteer Judges -- each judge receives three electronic applications to score. Scoring is due Monday, March 28th when Judges' Score Sheets are due back to Pine Jog.

For more details contact Andrea Lazzari [alazzari2014@fau.edu](mailto:alazzari2014@fau.edu), Susan Snyder [roysue@bellsouth.net](mailto:roysue@bellsouth.net) or call Pine Jog at 686-6600. [www.ourgreenschools.com](http://www.ourgreenschools.com)

### ***A Global Perspective on the Egyptian Goose (Alopochen aegyptiaca) Ten Interesting Tidbits by Corey T. Callaghan***

Egyptian Goose, actually a type of Shelduck, has been present in Florida since the 1960s. The first documented nesting effort was in 2004 in Martin County. Since this time, Egyptian Geese have become a permanent fixture of our South Florida avifauna and are now common to very common, locally. Below, I present ten interesting tidbits about the Egyptian Goose to provide a global perspective on this newly established exotic in South Florida.

- 1) Egyptian Geese were domesticated by the ancient Egyptians because they were considered sacred. Romans and Greeks also domesticated Egyptian Geese.
- 2) Egyptian Geese are native to sub-Saharan Africa and the Nile River where they are a locally common species occurring in large numbers that range from hundreds to thousands of birds in a flock.
- 3) Egyptian Geese are successful colonizers not only in Florida, but also in Europe where they inhabit England (East Anglia) and the Netherlands. Estimates are up to 26,000 pairs present in Europe, with the majority from the Netherlands.
- 4) Throughout North America, in addition to Florida, there are self-sustaining populations in Texas, California, and Arkansas. The Florida population is the largest.
- 5) Egyptian Geese are one of the leading gamebirds hunted in southern Africa, and recent literature has investigated the quality of Egyptian Goose meat.
- 6) Egyptian Geese are mainly herbivores, but are generalists. They feed on a range of items that include: grass, aquatic plants, oats, corn, and some small forms of animal matter. Throughout their native range, problems of Egyptian Geese feeding on agricultural crops has been reported.
- 7) Ecological, economic, or social impacts of Egyptian Geese are undocumented at this time. However, in England, a risk analysis is favorable for management action against the species.
- 8) Life span in captivity is documented to be 14 years, but life span in the wild is undocumented.
- 9) Egyptian Geese are considered a nuisance on golf courses in South Africa, where they occur in particularly large numbers. They may damage turf, foul lawns, and cause eutrophication of water through excessive defecation.
- 10) Pairs of Egyptian Geese mate for life and flocks often consist of family groups.

Unfortunately, little is known about the Egyptian Goose population throughout Florida. If you have any observations, photos, or information you think is interesting and would be willing to share, please feel free to email me ([ccallaghan2013@fau.edu](mailto:ccallaghan2013@fau.edu)). I am particularly interested in observations of what they feed on and any antagonistic interactions between Egyptian Geese and native species.

