



EVERGLADE KITE

newsletter

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

Volume 57, № 5 - February 2017

February 2017 CALENDAR

- 04 Sat (7:30a-12p) **STA-1E**, Easy/Drive, **RR** (Linda Humphries)
- 05 Sun (8a-11a) **Riverbend Park**, Moderate/Long (Ed Kawecki)
- 08 Wed (7:30a-11:30a) **Loxahatchee NWR**, Moderate/Long, \$ (Rick Schofield)
- 11 Sat (8a-4p) **Everglades Day (18th Annual)** (Serena Rinker / Sue Snyder)
- 11 Sat (8a-12p) **STA-2**, Easy/Drive, **RR** (Susan McKemy)
- 11-12 Sat-Sun (all day) **Viera Wetlands / Merritt Island**, Easy/Drive, \$, **RR** (Valleri Brauer) (**SOLD OUT**)
- 12 Sun (6:30a-12p) **Belle Glade / West County**, Moderate/Medium, Meet at Costco for carpool (Chuck Weber)
- 17 Fri (8a-10a) **Wakodahatchee (GBBC)**, Easy/Short (Patton White)
- 18 Sat (all day) **Blue Cypress Lake**, Easy/Sitting, \$, **RR** (Rick Schofield) (**SOLD OUT**)
- 19 Sun (7:30a-12p) **STA-1E (GBBC*)**, Easy/Drive, **RR** (Linda Humphries)
- 19 Sun (9a-11a) **Snook Islands (GBBC*)**, Easy/Short (Gael Silverblatt)
- 21 Tue (8:30a-12p) **DuPuis WEA**, Easy/Drive, Meet at Gate 5 (Clive Pinnock) (**RESCHEDULED**)
- 23 Thu (4:30p-6:30p) **Grassy Waters** (Sunset Canoe Fly-in), Moderate/Sitting, \$, **RR** (Cindy Bush)
- 24 Fri (8:30a-12p) **DuPuis WEA**, Easy/Drive, Meet at Gate 5 (Clive Pinnock) (**NEW DATE**)
- 25 Sat (8a-10a) **Wakodahatchee**, Easy/Short (Chris Golia)
- 25 Sat (8:30a-12p) **Kissimmee Prairie Preserve SP**, Moderate/Short, \$, **RR** (Paul Gray) (**SOLD OUT**)

Always check the web site calendar for details. Field trips listed in italics are new and/or unique.

*\$ There is an associated cost; see website calendar for details

*RR advance registration required. Trips, unless otherwise specified, are "Just Show Up."

*GBBC Great Backyard Bird Count

Monthly Membership Meeting & Lecture:



"Florida's Forgotten Wading Bird: American Flamingo"
with Frank Ridgley, DMV, Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarian in
Zoo Miami's Conservation and Research Department
Tuesday, Feb 7th at 7pm

Join us for an opportunity to learn more about the resurgence of Florida's American Flamingo.

Dr. Frank Ridgley's childhood was divided between rural Indiana and southeastern coastal Georgia. He received his B.S. in Animal Science and his D.V.M. from Purdue University. After graduation from medical school in 2001, he moved to New York and spent a brief time in private practice in Orchard Park before becoming the Senior Veterinarian at the Buffalo Zoo. While in Buffalo, Dr. Ridgley also taught at Canisius College, served on several boards for veterinary medicine and wildlife organizations, and was an adjunct faculty member for the residency program in laboratory animal medicine at SUNY at Buffalo. In 2007, Dr. Ridgley accepted a position at Zoo Miami as an Associate Veterinarian in the animal clinic. In 2011, Dr. Ridgley shifted his focus from clinical medicine to field conservation and research efforts and became the Director of Conservation and Research at Zoo Miami. He is currently a graduate faculty member at Florida International University, the Chair of the Zoo Miami Animal Care and Use Committee, and the Chair of the Zoo Miami Conservation Committee. He serves on the Steering Committee of the Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area, on the Steering Committee of the Florida Imperiled Butterfly Working Group, on the Conservation Committee of the Florida Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and as a member of the Florida Bonneted Bat Working Group.

Also at the meeting, our expert Clive Pinnock will tell us more about the February Bird of the Month: Brown Pelican.

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. The meeting is free and open to the public.

ASE NOTICES and OPPORTUNITIES:

Volunteers Needed for the following 2 events:

Everglades Day - Loxahatchee NWR, February 11th 9am-4pm
<http://signup.com/go/wWB93o> to signup

Florida Scrub-Jay Festival - Jonathan Dickinson State Park, February 18th 10am- 4pm. Contact Susan McKemy at sos2organize@gmail.com

Photographers - Ospreys for March, please!

President's Letter • • • Paton White

*Our biggest event of 2017 is just around the corner - **Everglades Day** on February 11th. Please support Everglades Day by volunteering for a few hours. Susan Snyder's article below requests volunteers for the whole event. We also need four people to sign up with Vicki (vlrogerson@gmail.com) to help at the ASE table and at our event "The Great Migration Challenge."*

Here are some highlights of current ASE activity:

1. Project Perch. We officially became a Project Perch partner.
2. Public Relations. Due to Sheila Elliot's work, the Palm Beach Post featured a picture of us receiving our big Chapter of the Year award, and Natural Awakenings magazine ran an article on our awards and the chapter in general.
3. Wakodahatchee Purple Martin House. Vicki Rogerson has researched buying and installing a specially equipped Martin House at Wakodahatchee. We hope our many friends who use Wakodahatchee will join the board in funding this \$275 installation project.
4. Budget: Your board is working hard to create a new budget. Because of our rapid growth and the many new projects started last year, we are totally revamping the budget. If there is something you think we should consider, please contact Louann (aselouann@gmail.com) before Feb. 6.
5. Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Update: The Town of Palm Beach voted unanimously to support Loxahatchee. Scott Zucker, Mary Young, and Robert Franzio represented ASE and joined Nathaniel Reed, former Under Secretary of the Interior, and David Houghton, President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, in opposing the loss of the Refuge as it is now.
6. Six ASE members attended a symposium titled "Your Everglades and Clean Water" sponsored by the Everglades Trust and Everglades Foundation. Held at the Society of the Four Arts on Palm Beach, it featured a great lineup of speakers including acclaimed Florida wildlife and conservation photographer, Mac Stone, who gave the keynote address.

EVERGLADES DAY FESTIVAL: Calling Visitors and Volunteers!

Saturday February 11, 9am-4pm

Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge 10216 Lee Road, Boynton Beach

Don't miss this year's 18th Annual Everglades Day Festival, the fantastic free outdoor, family and age friendly festival co-sponsored by ASE. "Mother Nature's Magic Show" is the theme for this full day of live wildlife presentations, interactive games, guest speakers, conservation exhibits, demonstrations, *plein air* artists, canoeing, live music, food trucks and, of course, the chance for a guided hike or two into our natural treasure, America's Everglades. It's the perfect venue to learn about the magic and history of the Everglades' strange creatures, archaeology, and more. Of special note are the following speakers: Dr. Paul Gray, Dr. Richard Raid, NOAA, Reinaldo Becerra, and Edward Mercer. Florida singer/songwriter Grant Livingston will provide musical entertainment. There will be a free shuttle and special needs transportation.

We will sponsor a special education experience for kids. Learn about the magic of birds with Audubon Society of the Everglades, and play The Great Migration Challenge game. While playing the part of a bird in this family-friendly activity, you will discover the challenges faced by migrating birds. Take flight with us, and remember, migration is a risky business!

We encourage all ASE members to volunteer their time and expertise at the Everglades Day Festival. Check out the many different opportunities available at <http://signup.com/go/wWB93o> and sign up!

www.thepalmbeaches.com/top-event/everglades-day-festival or call 561-734-8303 *article by Susan Snyder*

Annual Florida Scrub-Jay Festival

Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Jupiter- Saturday February 18th, 10am – 4pm

*The colorful Florida Scrub-Jay is a true Florida native. They are Florida's **only** endemic bird and they have occupied their special Florida Scrub habitats for at least two million years. Jonathan Dickinson State Park plays host to one of the larger populations of these beautiful, charismatic and endangered birds in southeastern Florida.*

*This free, family event includes guided nature walks, swamp buggy rides, kids' activities, music, hay rides, a keynote presentation, and Q&A session with a panel of experts. **Come learn fascinating characteristics of this bird and its special habitat. Hope to see you there!***



ASE Project Perch Is Helping Threatened Florida Burrowing Owls

The Audubon Society of the Everglades gave a \$250 grant to expand Project Perch into Palm Beach County. Project Perch provides safe homes in safe places for our feathered urban neighbors, the Florida Burrowing Owls.



*Crystal Lakes Elementary School Environmental Studies students
"Give a 'Hoot" for Florida Burrowing Owls!*

Our partnership with South Florida Audubon Society's Project Perch began in mid December 2016. Of the first four burrow installation projects, two were at schools with resident owls on their playgrounds - Boca Raton Middle School and Crystal Lakes Elementary School. A pair of owls live near the Crystal Lakes ball field and can be seen during the day. Teacher Deven Soto's Environmental Studies students eagerly participated by helping to install the sturdy artificial burrows that provide safe underground protection for "their owls". T-perches set nearby give the tiny, nine inch tall owls an elevated lookout. The area was roped off and a new sign warns passersby not to disturb their habitat.

Two other installations have been completed at locations that hope to attract owls. One, Freedom Shores Elementary School, has vacant land suitable for owl habitation, The other is Mirror Lakes, a community where owls lived for many years until recently. The residents are very interested in attracting their owls to return. They say that they loved watching the owls but also

say the rodent population skyrocketed once the owls departed. Florida Burrowing Owls are nature's pest control experts.

The status of the Florida Burrowing Owl was recently moved to "threatened" by the FWC because of the owls declining population. By partnering with the Palm Beach County School System and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, ASE Board member Susan Davis is certain that ASE can help the burrowing owls in a very positive way in Palm Beach County. She welcomes volunteers as more installations are planned. To contact Susan: (susandavisdesign@gmail.com)

February Bird of the Month: Brown Pelican by Ben Kolstad

a familiar character of our coasts, but the population of this large bird was near extinction in the 1950s and 1960s. As with many other large and charismatic birds, the culprit was DDT. Almost as soon as that chemical was banned, the birth rate improved and the pelican population recovered to historic levels, culminating in complete removal from the endangered species list in 2009. The main threats these days seem to be fishing lines and oil spills.

However, the history of Brown Pelican conservation efforts goes back much farther than the 1970s. This bird was, in fact, one of the earliest targets of conservationists, just up the coast from us in Florida's Indian River Lagoon, where President Theodore Roosevelt established the 5-acre Pelican Island as the first national wildlife refuge. Perhaps coincidentally, the Florida population of the birds became the donor population from which the birds were eventually reintroduced to Louisiana ("the pelican state"), from which they had been extirpated.

Remarkably clumsy-looking on land, the pelican is by contrast an elegant flier and can often be seen in large squadrons cruising above our coastlines looking for fish to fill their voluminous bills, soaring above our beachfront condos, or skimming just above the surface of the water. When a suitable school of fish is located, they plunge dive to take them in their large bills. (This is the only one of the eight worldwide pelican species that plunge dives, although it also employs the scoop-feeding technique of its cousin, the American White Pelican, when in mixed groups with other piscivorous birds.)

Most of the birds we see in Palm Beach County are juveniles, recognizable by their grayish bodies, white bellies, and, of course, their giant bills. When mature, their plumage is still gray and brown, but with a black belly, yellow head, and cinnamon nape (duller and whiter in the summer months, vivid in breeding). Although Lake Okeechobee has, or had, a breeding population of these birds, Stevenson and Anderson (1994) list only summer and winter sightings of Brown Pelicans for Palm Beach County.



Photograph of Brown Pelican by Walt Hackenjos

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We offer Amazon Smile and eBay fundraising programs, as well as direct giving.

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

JOIN AUDUBON

ASE APPLICATION

There are two ways to join **Audubon Society of the Everglades**.

Chapter-Only Membership: An annual membership that starts on January 1 and runs through the calendar year. **New members who join after Oct 1, 2016 and anyone who renews after that date are paid up until Dec.31, 2017.** All your membership dues are put to use supporting local projects and educational programs. You receive 10 issues of the Kite newsletter and priority for some special trips and events.

National Audubon Society Membership: It also includes membership in Florida Audubon and Audubon Society of the Everglades. You receive 6 issues of the Audubon magazine. Cost is \$20.00 a year. Please enclose a check for \$20.00, include our chapter code C9ZE000Z and mail it to: National Audubon Society, 225 Varick St., 7th floor, New York, NY 10014 Attn: Chance Muehleck.

As a NAS member you will need to request that the Kite newsletter be emailed or mailed to you by contacting Gail Tomei. Call her at 561-969-7567 or email to blackgrouper@comcast.net.

Yes, I want to become a chapter-only member of ASE.

Join us online at auduboneverglades.org/membership and pay with a credit card.

Or, complete this form and mail your check to: Audubon Society of the Everglades, PO Box 16914, West Palm Beach, Florida 33416-6914

Please check one:

\$20 (Regular) \$15 (Student/Senior) \$25 (Household) \$50 (Patron)

Please accept my additional contribution of \$ _____

I would like to help the environment, and see the cost of printing and postage used for conservation and education instead; please send my Kite newsletter via email.

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____