July - August 2017 Calendar

July Monthly Membership Meeting and Program:

“Conserving the Florida Burrowing Owls at South Florida Airports”

Tuesday, JULY 11, 7pm (one week later than usual due to July 4 Holiday)

Please join us at the July 11 meeting of the Audubon Society of the Everglades (ASE) and learn about a Project Perch Florida Burrowing Owl translocation. A South Florida Audubon Society conservation program, Project Perch is working to stabilize and increase the Burrowing Owl populations in Southeastern Florida, principally through passive attraction to nearby schools and parks. In December 2015, Project Perch volunteers, in partnership with the Ft Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL), the South Florida Wildlife Center in Ft Lauderdale, and the Town of Davie, relocated the burrowing owl colony from FLL to West Ridge Park.

In urban settings, Burrowing Owls often choose airports as their habitat. Owls see airports as wide-open grasslands relatively free of predators and with ample insects and other prey. But airports with owls are not safe for owls or airplanes. The goal of Project Perch is to provide the owls with safe homes in suitable habitat. FLL is a step ahead of the other South Florida airports in their proactive effort to conserve the owls, which recently were given the status of “Threatened” by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC.)

There will be four speakers with a Q&A at the end, time permitting:

Mat Natali will speak about his job as wildlife biologist at the FLL airport and about the interactions between the people, animals and airplanes that use that large piece of land. He will address why the translocation has been successful from the airport’s perspective, how we can improve on it, and some of the limitations that we face.

Dr. Renata Schneider, Director of Wildlife Rehabilitation at the South Florida Wildlife Center in Ft Lauderdale, will talk about the owls as they go through the center and the translocation process. She will also speak about the testing of each owl, part of a genetic/gender study in the effort to learn more about these birds.

Kelly Heffernan, avian biologist and the founder and director of Project Perch, and Paul Kragh, an Owl Guardian and Project Perch coordinator in Broward County, will describe the habitat that was created for the owl colony at a park in suburban Davie. They will also discuss releases, local owls the project attracted, airport recaptures, and reproduction rates for the translocated colony.

PATHFINDER AWARD 2017

CONGRATULATIONS TO JESSICA YOUNG!

Graduating from Palm Beach Central High School, Jessica is the winner of the 2017 Audubon Society of the Everglades Ruth and Seymour Miller $3,000.00 Pathfinder Scholarship Award.

Jessica has a long history of activities, studies, and research focused on water quality and the South Florida environment. In fact, at last year’s 2016 Green Schools Award luncheon, Jessica, a Pine Jog Fellow, was named Green School Student of the Year for Palm Beach/Martin County. Jessica was unable to be at the 2017 Pathfinders Award ceremony held at West Palm Beach’s Kravis Center on May 17, since she was a finalist presenting her research at the Intel international Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles, California.

ASE has been a proud participant of the Palm Beach Post’s Pathfinder Scholarship for many years.

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President's Letter   •   •   •  Paton White

I hope each of you is having a wonderful summer and that the birding is wonderful wherever you are.

Our BIG birding news happened in the lower Lake Worth Beach parking lot! A Tropical Mockingbird (the second ever in the US and the first in Florida!) was sighted by Chuck Weber on June 4. Because of our heavy rains it remained for many other birders to see!

Your board had an annual retreat to assess the past year and prepare for the 2017-18 season. The Photography Club and Scott Zucker’s Stewardship Class were the high points of the year. Most of the participants have joined one of several new subcommittees, and some are taking leadership roles. Our new areas of development include creating a birding class, a special speakers program on climate change, and a major update of the website.

I am working on developing strong working committees and I need the support of each of you! More on that later, but for the short term we need a new membership data-entry volunteer. If you are proficient in Excel, we can teach you the rest. This is a very important position. Contact me if you can help. The membership committee already has people who serve at the membership table at general meetings, deal with the name tags, pick up the mail, and send the data-entry person the information needed. Paton 561-818-7574

ASE 2017 GREEN SCHOOLS AWARD GOES TO PALM BEACH CENTRAL HIGH

The Green Schools Recognition Program, coordinated by FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center in partnership with Palm Beach and Martin County school districts, held its annual luncheon and awards ceremony on Thursday, May 25th, 2017. Hundreds attended the celebration, including teachers, principals, District representatives, government officials, community members, business leaders and green school advocates. Audubon Society of the Everglades’ $500.00 Habitat Improvement Award to Palm Beach Central High was among this year’s School District of Palm Beach County Judge’s Choice Award Winners.

ASE NOTICES and OPPORTUNITIES:

Citizen Science - Project Perch

WANTED: Burrowing Owl Sightings!

Have you seen Florida Burrowing Owls within the past 12 months in Palm Beach County? Please contact Susan (susandavisdesign@gmail.com) with location of your sighting. We know about the FAU owls, we are looking for others.

Photographers

Please send your best bird photographs to Sheila Hollihan-Elliott (sheilaelliott@yahoo.com) for publication in the Audubon Society of the Everglades website and/or the Everglade Kite newsletter. Northern Bobwhite's needed for September.

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In 2017, ASE funded a Palm Beach County chapter of Project Perch. The Broward owl population is stabilizing and the goal is to increase the population. We hope over time to do the same here in Palm Beach County, to grow “our” owls.

Also at the meeting, our expert Clive Pinnock will tell us more about the July Bird of the Month: Red Cockaded Woodpecker. 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.

August Monthly Membership Meeting:

Members’ Photos and Ice Cream Social

Tuesday, August 8, 6:30 p.m.

Everyone’s favorite meeting of the year. Make YOUR OWN ICE CREAM SUNDAE followed by a picture show! Share your best nature photos and tell us your stories.

Limit your photographs to 6 digital images (original jpgs, or jpg scans of prints or slides) and email the images as attachments to Gerry Felipe by Tuesday July 18 at gerrysemail@gmail.com for pre-loading to the digital projector. Email subject should say “Audubon Ice Cream Social Photos” and should include the photographer’s full name and image title(s) if applicable. Large prints and paintings brought to the meeting for display are also welcome.

As anyone who’s visited our website knows, ASE is blessed with a number of extremely talented photographers. Some of the best bird pictures we’ve seen have been at the photo sharing meeting, so don’t miss this one! And, 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!

Also at the meeting - August Bird of the Month: Bachman’s Sparrow. Come hear more about this fascinating bird from our expert, Clive Pinnock. Doors open at 6:30 for the fun and camaraderie. 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.
July - Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) FE (Federally Endangered)

This endangered woodpecker kicks off our series of Pine Woodland birds. Like the Florida Scrub-Jay, the RCWO is a social species that lives in family groups, often called clans, with a cooperative breeding system. Multiple generations of young remain in the cavity tree cluster and assist their parents in raising new broods of young. The factor responsible for this behavior is the lack of suitable nesting cavities in its preferred longleaf pine habitat. It takes an immense amount of effort and a long time (one to three years!) for these rather slight woodpeckers to excavate their nest. They are not equipped with the demolition tools of the Pileated Woodpecker, and they excavate in living, not dead, trees. They do this because the resin that exudes from excavations in live pine trees helps defend the nest from their most common predator, the rat snake, which loves to climb trees and prey on eggs and nestlings. The birds even drill extra resin-dripping holes above and below the nest entrance to ensure that there will be plenty of sticky resin (although sometimes things go wrong and the resin gets into the nest entrance itself, with lethal results for the birds that demonstrate such subpar engineering skills).

Efforts to reintroduce this species in areas where it has been extirpated (DuPuis, Corbett) have been relatively successful through the use of nest boxes installed into, rather than on, the tree. (You can see a very good series of photos in one of the SFWMD press releases about a recent wave of introductions of the birds at DuPuis: [http://sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/xrepository/sfwmd_repository_pdf/nr_2015_1008_woodpecker_release.pdf](http://sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/xrepository/sfwmd_repository_pdf/nr_2015_1008_woodpecker_release.pdf))

Here’s a description of the bird, from a different SFWMD write-up about the reintroduction at DuPuis:

“About the size of the common cardinal, the red-cockaded woodpecker is approximately 7 inches long (18 to 20 centimeters), with a wingspan of about 15 inches (35 to 38 centimeters). Its back is barred with black and white horizontal stripes. The red-cockaded woodpecker’s most distinguishing feature is a black cap and nape that encircle large white cheek patches. Rarely visible, except perhaps during the breeding season and periods of territorial defense, the male has a small red streak on each side of its black cap called a cockade, hence its name. The red-cockaded woodpecker feeds primarily on beetles, ants, roaches, caterpillars, wood-boring insects, and spiders, and occasionally fruits and berries.”

August – Bachman’s Sparrow (*Peucaea aestivalis*)

This is one of two species that Audubon named for his friend, the Reverend John Bachman (pronounced Back-man, not Bock-man). The other species, Bachman’s Wood Warbler, is extinct. The sparrow still hangs on in its original southeast habitat of mature open pinewoods, although it is a species of special concern because of the increased rarity of its preferred ecosystem. It can often be “seen” (the bird is elusive, more often heard than seen) at a couple of locations in Palm Beach County: the Corbett WMA and DuPuis. For an extraordinarily well-written introduction to the species, I refer you to Cornell’s Birds of North America online (a paywalled resource, but the introductory page of many species accounts is free to view): [https://bird-sna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/038/articles/introduction](https://bird-sna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/038/articles/introduction)

The following description is from the U.S. FWS species account:

“Bachman’s Sparrow, endemic to North America, is described as a “plain sparrow,” distinguished by “buffy” brownish-gray under-plumage that is tinged with reddish streaks. It has a large bill with a darker upper mandible, and darker tail feathers that are long and rounded. The crown is reddish-brown and contains a thin dark line extending from the eye towards the back of the head as well as a thin dark streak extending back from its cheek. This sparrow is more easily identifiable by its simple yet beautiful song than by plumage characteristics. Individuals of this species exhibit a lot of terrestrial locomotion such as walking, hopping, running; often they appear to be reluctant to fly. This species is considered to be one of the most rapidly declining bird species in North America ([Butcher and Niven 2007 [Audubon State of the Birds 2007]])). Fire suppression, and the associated loss of optimal habitat, is considered to be one of the greatest causes of such decline.”
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 September 1, 2017 and anyone who renews after that date are paid up until December 31, 2018. 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. 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 to you by contacting Gail Tomei at blackgrouper@comcast.net or call her at 561-969-7567.

Yes, I want to become a chapter-only member of ASE. Go to http://www.auduboneverglades.org/about-ase/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 __________________