



EVERGLADE KITE NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades
VOL 58 | Issue 7 | March 2018

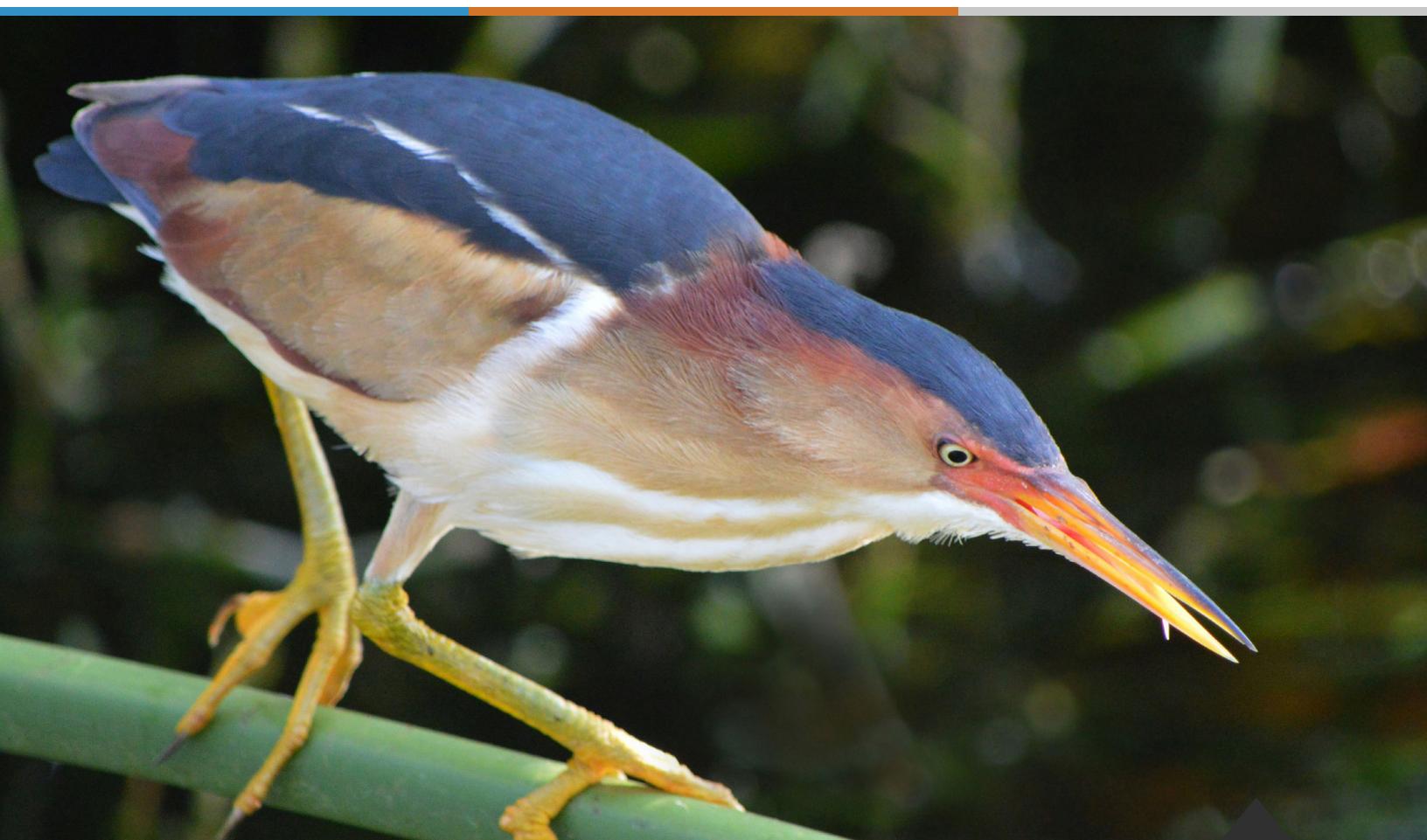


Photo: Least Bittern © Anne DuPont 2014. All rights reserved.

Bird of the Month: Least Bittern

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

Considered by some to be one of the most beautiful in the heron family, the Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) is the world's smallest heron. It showcases a combination of black, brown, yellow, and white streaks which help to mask the bird's presence in its marsh environment. It has a pointed yellow bill, yellow eyes, and long legs that are green in the front and yellow in the back. In adult males the back and crown are black; brown replaces the black in females and juveniles. Also, the streaking on the back and breast of juvenile birds is more pronounced.

Like its larger counterpart, the American Bittern, the Least Bittern may freeze with its bill pointed upward when alarmed. This behavior and its cryptic markings give the bird a distinct advantage over unsuspecting prey and hide it from the prying eyes of predators. Least Bitterns seem to prefer denser freshwater marshes than the American Bittern and most of these favored marshes are primarily composed of reeds, cattail, sedges, bulrushes and other marsh vegetation. The birds are occasionally observed on the fringes of the wetland while foraging and sometimes even in brackish water marshes.

Here in South Florida, resident populations of Least Bitterns are joined in the fall and winter months by northern breeding populations escaping the freezing effects of northern winters. Due to their secretive nature, it is challenging to observe the birds, and they are more easily identified at the start of the breeding season in spring, when the males become quite vocal.

Photographers – please note that next month's April bird of the month is the REDDISH EGRET.

UPCOMING TRIPS

MARCH 2018

Always check the website calendar for details, registration links and last minute changes. Unless otherwise specified, trips are "Just Show Up."

- 03 SAT (7:30A-12P) STA-1E (Rick Schofield, coord.) ● !! O
04 SUN (8A-10A) Tall Cypress (Bruce Pickholtz) ● !!<1
06 TUE (9:30A-11:30A) ★ Lion Country Safari (Clive Pinnock) ● !! O
07 WED (4P-6:30P) ★ Wellington Preserve (Birding by Bike Sunset Ride) (Scott Zucker) ■ !!>15 ♀
10 SAT (8A-10A) Winding Waters (Chuck Weber) ■ !!>15
11 SUN (3:30P-7P) Flamingo Quest (STA-2) (Susan McKemy, coord.) ● !! O
14 WED (6:30A-11:30A) Loxahatchee NWR (Fly-out) (Rick Schofield) ■ !!>15 ♀
17 SAT (8A-10A) Jupiter Ridge (Melanie & Steve Garcia) ■ !!>15
18 SUN (5P-7P) Wakodahatchee (Valleri Brauer) ● !!<1 ⚡
22 THU (10A-1:30P) ★ Jonathan Dickinson State Park (Wildflowers & Scrub-Jays) (Lori & Tony Pasko) ■ !!>15 ♀
23 FRI (6P-8P) Wakodahatchee (Fly-in) (Chris Golia) ● !!<1 ⚡
24 SAT (3:30P-7P) Flamingo Quest (STA-2) (Susan McKemy, coord.) ● !! O
24 SAT (4P-7P) Grassy Waters (Behind the scenes) (Walt Hakenjos/Paul Thomas) ■ !!>15
25 SUN (7:30A-10:30A) ★ Hungryland Slough (Bart Scott) ■ !!>15

MAY 2018

The following advance registration field trips in May will become available for online registration on their corresponding dates during the month of March, e.g., registration for the May 05 trip begins Mar 05.

- 05 SAT (7A-12P) STA-1E (Rick Schofield, coord.) ● ! O
12 SAT (6:30A-12:30P) ★ Pelagic (Rick Schofield) ■ !! O

TRIP KEY

EFFORT/DIFFICULTY

- **Easy:** Boardwalk or paved level surface; or birding mainly from bike / boat / auto
■ **Moderate:** Improved trail; dirt and uneven surfaces
◆ **Challenging:** Improved or unimproved trail; uneven, rocky, and/or wet surfaces

DISTANCE

- ! O **Sitting /Driving:** no walking required
!!<1 **Short:** less than 1 mile
!!>1.5 **Medium:** 1-1.5 miles
!!>15 **Long:** more than 1.5 miles

OTHER

- ★ New and/or unique trips
\$ There is an associated cost
📝 Advance registration required
BABY Family-friendly
♿ Handicap Accessible
Audubon Everglades member priority

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

March 2018

by Paton White

you review the materials promptly and bring any questions to us well before the April meeting.

We appreciate all of you who signed the petition cards that Scott Zucker passed out at the last general meeting in support of continued funding of Palm Beach County's natural spaces. Scott is an inspiring conservation leader, and he makes it easy for us to do our part to help the environment.



Scott Zucker collects more petitions at Everglades Day

The annual meeting is in April, and for the past two years we have presented the slate, budget and, if needed, by-law changes at the March meeting. We will be doing so again this year. Your board feels this gives you time to review and ask questions before we vote in April. We will also be sending each member a letter with the same information. We ask that

Profile: Susan & Roy Snyder

by Kristen Murtaugh



One of the perks of writing these monthly Volunteer Profiles for the Kite is the chance to meet and get to know the wonderful people who make Audubon Everglades the strong and vital chapter that it is. I once again felt grateful for this unique opportunity when I sat down recently with Susan and Roy Snyder for an interesting and enjoyable conversation about their lives and their association with Audubon.

Born in New Jersey, Susan spent her childhood and early teen years there and in upstate New York. She moved to Florida just before her senior year in high school. Her undergraduate degree is in education from Florida State University, and she earned her master's degree in education from the University of Florida. Susan started her lengthy career in education

in Atlanta and then spent 30 years in the Palm Beach County Schools, first as an elementary school teacher, then as an assistant principal. Roy was born in Maine and moved to Florida when he was three and lived in the Orlando area and in Kissimmee. He started out at the University of Florida as a chemistry and biology major, then transferred to the University of South Florida, where he got a degree in Psychology and Sociology. He joined the Air Force during the Vietnam War and spent four years in the service as an aircraft maintenance officer. When he came back from the service, he took advantage of the GI Bill to enroll in graduate courses in business at the University of Florida. There he met Susan; they were both staying in off-campus housing nicknamed "Sin City" for its less than salubrious location in Gainesville. Roy eventually got a second bachelor's degree at Florida Atlantic University in business and computer science. He had an eclectic career, using his broad education in various settings - non-profit, for-profit, and public. The Snyders were married in 1970 and, after living in various parts of Florida, they settled in Palm Beach County. They retired fifteen years ago and currently live in Juno Beach.

The Snyders have been active members of Everglades Audubon since 1980. They are probably the current longest tenured members of the chapter, and, active continued on page 4

Monthly MEETING and LECTURE: “Shorebirds and Seabirds of Southeast Florida”

Ricardo Zambrano, Regional Biologist, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

MAR
06

Tuesday, March 6, meeting & lecture 7PM

Meeting and program are free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:30PM 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. We look forward to seeing you there!

Come hear Ricardo Zambrano discuss what species of shorebirds and seabirds nest and winter in southeast Florida and where they occur. He will cover the threats these species face, their status and population trends, and how the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is protecting them and learning more about them. He will also talk about the Florida Shorebird Alliance, which is a statewide program composed of multiple organizations and agencies that are partnering together to protect and monitor these species.

Zambrano is a popular speaker, and members and attendees will remember his exciting overview of “Lake Worth Lagoon and Oyster Catchers” presented to Audubon Everglades several years ago. Don’t miss his new program!

About Ricardo Zambrano:

Ricardo Zambrano has a Bachelor’s Degree in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution from the University of California, San Diego and a Master of Science Degree in Biology from Florida Atlantic University. Zambrano

has over 27 years of experience as a wildlife biologist. He has radio-tracked coyotes in Yellowstone National Park’s backcountry, spent three years in Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula researching and conserving endangered sea turtles, and is currently employed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a Regional Biologist. He specializes in shorebirds, seabirds, wading birds and burrowing owls and is responsible for the management, conservation, recovery, research and monitoring of endangered, threatened and declining species of wildlife in south Florida. Ricardo is a former board member of the Loggerhead Marinelife Center of Juno Beach, a former Council member of the Waterbird Society, and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Loxahatchee Group of the Sierra Club.

Also at the meeting, our expert, Clive Pinnock, will speak about the March Bird of the Month, Least Bittern.

[If you missed any of Audubon Everglades' prior programs, you can view many of them online.](#)



Photo: Ricardo Zambrano and pelican rescue



Photo: Ricardo Zambrano and skimmer chick

KIDS GBBC: Introducing Kids to the Excitement of Birding

by Vicki Rogerson



I often ask people how they got into birding. Some, like myself, came to it a bit later in life. Others mention teachers or parents who introduced them to birding. There is no one pathway to an interest in birds just like there is no one type of birder.

I spent Monday, Feb 19, the last day of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), with a wonderful teacher and the 80 or so students from her classes. The GBBC is a collaboration between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. It is a citizen science project open to everyone in the world. For four days people are asked to submit bird reports to [ebird](#) or the Cornell Lab of Ornithology where the data is compiled for use in scientific research.

I am hoping that maybe one or more of the students at Bright Futures Academy, the acclaimed Green School, looks back, and says they remember the day their teacher, Ms. A (Savannah Artusi), took them out birding around the school campus with Miss Vicki from Audubon Everglades. Four ebird reports were submitted with a total of 19 species for the day. A Gray Catbird and a Brown Thrasher refused to come out and be counted while our citizen scientists were around. Each group of students saw from 17 to 40 birds. Best birds were the Blue-headed Vireo and Yellow-throated Warbler. Best drama was whether the European Starling or the Red-bellied Woodpecker would prevail over the other for nest cavity ownership. I could go on with how much we learned, and how much fun we had, but really I would just like to say that this is very much worth doing again. See you next year!

EVERGLADES DAY FUN

by Vicki Rogerson



At this year's Everglades Day Festival on Saturday February 10, Audubon Everglades asked children and adults two important questions. The first: What do you think baby birds eat? We heard "worms" and "seeds" a lot. The answer is insects, and the most popular insects are caterpillars. 96% of all land birds feed their chicks insects! The second question: How many caterpillars do you think a baby bird eats in one day? We accepted any number over 50, but the answer is much closer to 100, and that is per chick per day! Doing the math for four chicks who don't fledge for 12 days, you have 4,800 caterpillars (spiders are good, too, but they eat mainly caterpillars).

After answering the questions, children were able to make their own caterpillar, and then they got to eat a caterpillar (gummy worm)! We took the caterpillars and attached them to a "vine" to illustrate how many caterpillars it would take to feed our chicks. We taught people how they could help birds simply by planting a native tree or getting their HOA to do so, and by not using pesticides. Why native? Our insects coevolved with our native plants and trees. Trees from other countries are alien to the insects here, and so they don't attract any or very few insects. In contrast, an Oak tree is the larval host to over 500 species of caterpillars. That's a lot of baby food! If you'd like to know more about this subject, read the book, *Bringing Nature Home*, by Douglas W. Tallamy.

We also gave out Claudine Laabs's wonderful posters and our field trip, chapter meeting, and birding hotspots brochures. A big thanks to the Audubon Everglades volunteers who helped make this happen - Paton White, Bill and Judy Munro, Kat Rahla, Debbie Smith, and Fred Quan.



Snyders continued from page 2

in the conservation movement for decades, they have been important volunteer leaders of the chapter. In the early years they brought refreshments to chapter meetings and organized and led field trips. Susan went on to become a chapter president and has been a long-term member of the Board of Directors. I told them that I had heard she was a "driving force" for the organization; Roy preferred the term "guiding force." Susan was a leader in the development of Everglades Day. She had attended a workshop given by Florida Audubon about ways conservation organizations could celebrate the 2000 millennium and had come back with the idea of partnering with the Loxahatchee NWR. Susan, Carol Shields (the president of Audubon Everglades at the time), and Serena Rinker at Loxahatchee created the event together, and it has been going strong ever since. I asked Susan what she was most proud of about Everglades Day. She said it was the number of people who attend - 3,000 plus! The festival brings in nationally known keynote speakers for the celebration. This year the famous birder/photographer Richard Crossley was one of the speakers. Susan also helped start the chapter's Green Schools Recognition Program, and she has testified on conservation issues before the Board of County

Commissioners on behalf of Audubon Everglades. Roy is chair of the Investment Committee of Audubon Everglades. He brings to this work the knowledge he has gained about financial planning and investments in taking care of his family's finances. He set up the present investment system with Janice Schreiber, then Treasurer of the chapter, as a defensive move against the economic uncertainty during the last recession. As a result, the chapter is no longer dependent on CDs and Treasury bonds for growing its investment funds.

In their retirement the Snyders travel frequently, especially by RV. They enjoy the drive and the opportunity to see new natural wonders and new people whose initial strangeness eventually reveals similarities across cultures. Highlights of their travel include Australia, New Zealand, and the American West. They enjoyed the birding trips led by Claudine Laabs in Belize and Panama and along the Amazon. Last summer they attended the National Audubon Society's 2017 Convention in Park City, Utah. They took our chapter's brochures to share with other attendees and received glowing praise for them. In addition to his volunteer work for Audubon Everglades, Roy has been a volunteer for 13 years at the Loggerhead Marinelife Center in Juno Beach. He particularly likes

being a greeter there and helping visitors interpret the displays in the Exhibit Hall.

I could have spent the whole day happily chatting with the Snyders. Roy and Susan are an interesting and energetic couple, engaged with the world around them, and always eager to learn. I was fascinated by their comparison of the sugar cane industry in Australia with that in Florida. The crops there are grown with green methods. For example, after harvest, the stalks are tilled under the ground, not burned. They told me about the results of a survey that the National Audubon reported on at the Convention last summer. It showed that Audubon currently struggles to achieve diversity in the race and age of its members. On the other hand, the organization attracts members across the political spectrum. As Roy remarked, we all want to support our fragile planet, we just have different ideas on how to do that. While Susan is the one with degrees in education, both Roy and Susan are teachers. They have worked hard and with dedication for almost 40 years to educate the residents of Palm Beach County to be advocates for wildlife and our valuable natural habitats. Audubon Everglades is deeply indebted to them for their efforts to advance the chapter's goals.

Budget Cuts Threaten Birds and the Environment

by Scott Zucker

The current budget that President Trump has proposed to Congress could significantly impact our local birds and their habitats. Your representatives in Washington need to hear from you, their constituents. Please take the time to contact them about your concerns. Overall, the cuts to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would be \$214 million or 14.2 percent of their budget. Additionally, the budgets of many agencies, departments and programs that support conservation and the environment are threatened. Here is how budget cuts will impact our region.

The National Wildlife Refuge System, which has been critically underfunded since its inception, would be cut by \$13.8 million dollars, and, according to Defenders of Wildlife, "This would put funding for the Refuge System at more than \$90 million below the level needed just to keep up with the FY 2010 level adjusted for inflation." The work of our dedicated ARM Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge staff members, who face enormous challenges from invasive species, climate change, pollution, encroachment from urbanization, and even crime, would be made even more difficult. Additionally, the National Wildlife Refuge Fund, which provides \$13.3 million in discretionary spending to local counties like ours, would be eliminated. These cuts to the National Wildlife Refuge System shortchange the future of our wildlife heritage.

Numerous programs protecting threatened and endangered birds would be impacted. The Endangered

Species Recovery Program, which seeks to recover threatened and endangered species such as our Everglades Snail Kite, Florida Scrub Jay, and Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, would be cut by 5.2 percent, and the Endangered Species Act Program, which prioritizes listing decisions for birds, would be cut by \$3.4 million or 17 percent. The Ecological Services, which protects listed and at-risk birds, plants and their habitats, would be cut by \$14.8 million or 6.2 percent.

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, which nationally funds the conservation of threatened and endangered species in Florida, would experience one of the worst cuts, since its budget would be slashed by \$34.2 million or 63.9 percent, eliminating all land acquisition programs that support the protection of endangered species.

Programs protecting migratory bird populations, such as the Migratory Birds Management Program, would be cut by \$4.1 million or 8.1 percent, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, which protects waterfowl and migrating birds, would be cut by \$4.5 million or 11.8 percent. The wetlands store vast amounts of carbon, limiting global temperature rise and protecting future generations of migratory birds.

Programs supporting Renewable Energy and Climate Resilience would suffer the worst cuts. Eliminated would be the Bureau of Land Management's renewable energy program, the U.S. Geological Survey's research

on climate change impact on wildlife adaption, the EPA Global Research Program, which provides lawmakers with climate change adaptability research, and 15 state and local partnership Climate Energy Programs. Additionally, DOE's Efficiency and Renewable Energy Program would face a massive 69.6 percent cut.

Other programs with avian or regional impact are slated for cuts. The US Geological Ecosystems program that supports science in the service of biological resources would have its Endangered Whooping Cranes captive breeding effort and all its research in conjunction with the Dept. of Interior for avian studies of large, rare birds eliminated. The US Forest Service, which manages 193 million acres and is home to 420 endangered and listed species, many of them birds, would have its Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program that restores forests and watersheds eliminated, and their land acquisition programs would be cut by 87.1 percent.

Additionally, the Land and Water Conservation Fund would be cut by 85 percent, the National Park Service Land Acquisition Program would be cut by 65 percent, and the Department of Energy programs focused on biological and environmental research would face 43 percent cuts.

TAKING ACTION

by Scott Zucker

There are several ways to express your views about budget priorities, ranging from sending a tweet to scheduling a face-to-face meeting with a legislator. While you are free to contact any member of Congress, you will be most effective when you contact legislators who represent you directly.

Contacting your US Representative or Senator is easiest by phone or email. Here's how to find your contact information.

[Click here to find your member of Congress.](#)

To contact your legislators, Google "contact Rep. or Senator so and so" and follow the link.

PHONE CALLS

Call your US Senator or Representative directly or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at [202-224-3121](tel:202-224-3121). Store the numbers on your contact list for later ease of use. Always state your name, the city you live in, and your zip code. State the reasons for your call, the name of any specific bill or program, details about personal or local impact, and be clear about what action you'd like your legislator to take. Always be courteous.

EMAIL

Always be sure to include all the information required on the contact form. All messages should start with Dear Senator/Representative. When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it

is appropriate to begin letters with "Dear Mr./Madam Chairman/woman" or "Dear Mr./Madam Speaker." Your message can be just a few paragraphs about a single issue. Try to write in your own words. State the reasons for your email, the name of any specific bill or program, details about personal or local impact, and be clear about what action you'd like your legislator to take. Always be courteous.

TO CONTACT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Comment Line: 202-456-1111

[Send an email message here.](#)

Audubon Everglades' Purple Martin Program

by Vicki Rogerson



The Purple Martin Team from l to r- Scott Fletcher from the Village of Wellington, and the amazing Katie Antoniou and her invaluable assistant Carlo.

When they say it "takes a village" they might have been talking about the Village of Wellington!

Watch for more houses in this location.



Scott and Carlo are putting the Raptor Guards back on after setting this house up for occupancy. The white tube is a Baffle that you will see on all the poles and is another essential item to keep predators like snakes and raccoons from climbing the pole.



There are now four houses at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary. We lowered all the houses so they could be inspected and cleaned out. Carlo is adding pine needles for nesting material. The martins will add twigs, and lastly leaves to the nest. As we worked we had four Scouts supervising us!



Shelly Rozenberg has been photo-documenting the Purple Martins at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary since our program began. This is one of the Scouts that she just photographed February 18, and I think you can see why Purple Martins are her favorite birds.

Please contact Vicki Rogerson for more information on our Purple Martin Program, acquiring a Purple Martin house, or becoming a landlord for one of our existing homes! Audubon Everglades works with [Nature House](#), and is honored to receive special pricing. (Contact Vicki for price quote.) Vicki Rogerson at Education@auduboneverglades.org.



These two 24-room castles are located at Wellington Environmental Preserve. They are sited near the entrance so they receive a maximum amount of human activity. It is thought that martins consider humans a deterrent to predators and prefer to nest near us. Please, go by and check out this new location!



Photo: Members of the Audubon Everglades Photography Club visited Butterfly World on Feb. 18 to perfect their macro photography skills on butterflies and plants. © Lora Lekos 2018. All rights reserved.



Photo: Sheri and Gerry Felipe join other birders on an Audubon Everglades field trip observing a beautiful Green-winged Teal at Peaceful Waters Sanctuary. © Mary Young 2018. All rights reserved.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Make sure to stop by our table at these upcoming community events:

Mar 3 Sat. 10am-3pm. Second Annual Outdoor Adventure Day at John Prince Park, Smyth Pavilion, Lake Worth. [See flyer here.](#) (Vicki Rogerson Education@AudubonEverglades.org)

Mar 10 Sat. 7:30am-2pm. Natural Areas Festival at Winding Waters, West Palm Beach. [See flyer here.](#) (Vicki Rogerson Education@AudubonEverglades.org)

REMINDER: memberships expired 12/31/17. Renew your membership either online with PayPal or use the form below and mail your check.

JOIN AUDUBON | MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

There are two ways to join Audubon Everglades:

CHAPTER-ONLY MEMBERSHIP: An annual membership that starts on January 1 and runs through the calendar year. All your membership dues are put to use supporting local conservation projects and educational programs. You receive 12 issues of the Kite newsletter and priority for some special trips and events.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP: includes membership in Florida Audubon and Audubon Everglades plus one year of the Audubon magazine. Join online at Audubon.org by selecting JOIN. Or send a check for \$20 per person along with your address and email to National Audubon Society, PO Box 97194, Washington DC 20090-7194.

The Audubon Everglades Kite newsletter is available by email only.

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

Join now using a credit card: Go to AudubonEverglades.org/membership to complete the application.

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: \$25 (Regular) \$20 (Student) \$20 (Senior) \$35 (Household) \$75 (Patron)

Please accept my additional contribution of \$ _____

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

*If you selected Household or Patron Membership, please provide the names of all members living at the same address.
(2 adults and children under age 18)

Household/Patron Additional Names _____