



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

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Photo: Double-crested Cormorant © 2018 Susan Faulkner Davis All rights reserved.

Bird of the Month: Double-crested Cormorant

(Phalacrocorax auritus)

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

Double-crested Cormorants are large water birds that are often confused with Anhingas due to their closeness in appearance, wing-spreading habits and occasional foraging in the same freshwater locations. The Double-crested Cormorants (which rarely look noticeably crested in the field) differ in appearance, however, by their stocky stature, medium-length tail, thick neck, and hooked bill (compared to the Anhinga's slender stature, longer fan-shaped tail and dagger-like bill). Cormorants also have a yellow to orange gular (throat) pouch.

The Double-crested Cormorant is North America's most widespread and familiar cormorant and is found in both marine and freshwater habitats.

These habitats include lakes and rivers, marshes, coastal estuaries, bays and offshore islands. Cormorants are gregarious by nature and nest colonially on rocky cliffs or sandy substrates as well as marsh vegetation, mangrove swamps and artificial structures.

The cormorant's diet is varied, primarily consisting of more than 250 different species of fish, but also including insects, crustaceans (crabs, shrimp, and crayfish), amphibians, (frogs, salamanders) and, occasionally, snakes, mollusks, and plant material. Their foraging technique involves diving and chasing fish underwater with powerful propulsion from their webbed feet. After feeding, cormorants often go to

a nearby stump, dock, rock-outcropping or piling to dry their water-logged feathers, a behavior also seen in Anhingas. They do this by extending their outstretched wings to absorb the drying effects of the sun's rays. This behavior compensates for the ineffectiveness of their oil-gland to produce enough oil to prevent their feathers from becoming waterlogged. In flight, cormorants often travel in V-formations that shift and re-form as they alternate bursts of erratic flapping and short glides.

Photographers – please note that next month's July bird of the month is the Red Knot.

UPCOMING TRIPS

JUNE 2018

There are no trips scheduled for June.
Enjoy the summer!

Refuge Hosts Scoping Meetings to Examine Expanding Mandated Recreation Opportunities

by Scott Zucker

Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge hosted two scoping meetings last month to elicit public input regarding the future shaping of the Refuge's recreational opportunities. The implementation of more recreational opportunities for the public is required under the terms of the Refuge's recent lease agreement with the South Florida Water Management District. In addition, Secretary of the Interior Zinke is mandating that all Refuges look at how they can promote and provide more hunting and fishing opportunities on public lands.

Some 175 interested parties, including sportsmen, anglers, environmentalists, and the public attended the two meetings. Most of the Refuge staff and a representative of US Fish and Wildlife were there to greet the attendees and to answer their questions in an informal setting in the auditorium lobby.

When the Tuesday scoping meeting began, Rolf Olsen, Refuge Manager, made a short presentation about the goals for the meeting and some of the projected plans for the newly acquired 2586-acre Strazzulla tract. Afterwards, the attendees were given two minutes each to comment on the 25 proposed recreational enhancements and to make additional recommendations. Scott Zucker of Audubon Everglades, Drew Martin of the Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group, and Chris Lockhart of the PBC Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, conservation chairs of their respective organizations, Dr. Pete Lekos, President of the Audubon Everglades Photography Club, and a number of Refuge volunteers voiced their concerns about the incompatibility with the stated purpose of a wildlife refuge of some of the proposed activities, such as increased hunting, airboat use, and domestic pets. Instead of these activities, they

Profile: Scott Zucker and Mary Young

by Kristen Murtaugh

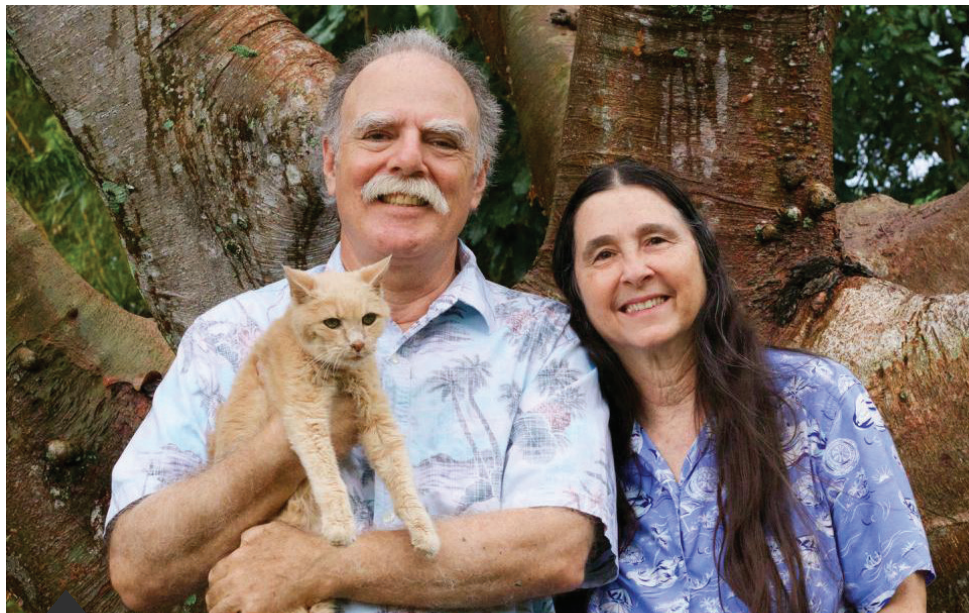


Photo: Scott Zucker and Mary Young standing in front of our giant Gumbo Limbo tree in our backyard with our cat Bum (she's 20 years old).

Mary Young and her husband Scott Zucker are among the most active volunteers of Audubon Everglades. Both are members of the chapter's Board, Scott is a Vice President, and they co-chair the Conservation Committee.

The focus of their efforts is on conservation education. One of their most successful projects has been The Conservation Stewardship Training Course, which will be in its third year next winter. They recently staged a volunteer opportunity for the 50+ graduates of their course. 10 government and non-profit agencies gave presentations and hosted tables showcasing their volunteer opportunities. Lots of interesting matches were made.

Mary and Scott are active advocates for the environment and work with other groups such as the Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group to encourage citizen action on important issues. They set up information tables at events around the county and they lead letter-writing campaigns. This year they worked hard and successfully with the Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group to raise support for the continued preservation of Palm Beach County's Natural Areas. The two groups got signatures on nearly 900 cards to present to the County Commission. One of their on-going major concerns is the unrelenting pressure on the County to allow more development of the Agricultural Reserve. Scott is a frequent speaker at Commission meetings, adding the environmental perspective to that of roads and land.

Their next project is exciting. They plan to work

with local agencies to set up a Youth Conservation Leadership Project. Both are former teachers and committed to helping the next generation become advocates for the environment.

Another one of Scott's significant contributions to Audubon Everglades has been the creation of the chapter's Photography Club. As the club's Vice President, he helps organize photo sessions in local natural areas and promotes the club's activities. Both Mary and Scott are accomplished photographers; it was photography that whetted their interest in birds. The two discovered birding about seven years ago. They often biked in Okeetchee Park after work and ate a picnic supper. While watching birds fly in to roost, they became fascinated with the juvenile Anhingas which would circle and make several tries before successfully getting a perch. They soon came back with their cameras to photograph the birds. Then they studied guides to identify what birds they were seeing.

The couple met in a class at Ballet Arts in 1979 and were married in 1985. They have two grown sons whom they home-schooled through 8th grade. They told me that Mary was the "teacher" and Scott the "principal."

Mary is a native Floridian, born and raised in West Palm Beach. She went to Palm Beach County schools and has degrees from Palm Beach Junior College, where she studied art, photography, and literature, and Florida Atlantic University. Scott was born in

Monthly MEETING and LECTURE: “Guano, Bones, and Hurricanes: Recent Surges in Wading Bird Nesting and Wildlife Effects in the STAs”

**Dr. Mark Cook, Lead Scientist, Everglades Systems Assessment
Section of the South Florida Water Management District**

by Sheila Hollihan-Elliott



Photo: Dr. Mark Cook

JUNE

05

Tuesday, June 5, meeting & lecture 7PM

Meeting and program are free and open to the public. Location for this month only: the Main Branch of the Palm Beach County Library System at 3650 Summit Boulevard, West Palm Beach, 33406.

Come hear a very special program “Guano, Bones, and Hurricanes: Recent Surges in Wading Bird Nesting and Wildlife Effects in the STAs” by Dr. Mark Cook.

About Dr. Mark Cook:

Dr. Mark Cook is currently a Lead Scientist for the Everglades Systems Assessment Section of The South Florida Water Management District. His research is on wading birds, with a focus on how wetland processes such as water levels and nutrient run-off affect wading bird foraging and reproductive success. The goal for this research is to help restore and manage wading bird populations in the Everglades.

Mark has over 23 years of experience studying the ecology of wild birds. Prior to working at the District, he spent four years as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied nesting strategies of a Neotropical passerine, the Pearly-eyed Thrasher, in the rainforests of Puerto Rico.

Born and raised in the United Kingdom, Mark has a PhD in Avian Ecology from Glasgow University, Scotland and a master's degree in Ecology from the University of Durham, England, where he

studied, respectively, the nesting behavior of Black Guillemots and Atlantic Puffins on remote Scottish islands. He also has a Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Zoology from the University of Bangor, Wales.

Mark has spent the past 14 years studying wading birds in south Florida. During his time here, he has authored and co-authored 25 peer-reviewed scientific publications and more than 30 professional reports on birds, fish, crayfish and exotic animal species. He is the chief editor of the annual South Florida Wading Bird Report, on which he collaborates closely with other wading bird scientists in south Florida, including those from Audubon Florida. This report is frequently reported in the local media.

In his spare time, he's a pretty good jungle gym and all-round plaything for his two daughters aged 6 and 8. However, whenever he can escape into the wilds, he likes to go birding and taking photos of wildlife in the more remote areas of Florida and Panama.

Also at the meeting, our expert, Clive Pincock, will speak about the May Bird of the Month, Great Blue Heron and June Bird of the Month, the Double-crested Cormorant.

“Bringing Nature Home” Doug Tallamy Presents 12 Things You Can Do

by Vicki Rogerson

The evening of May 16 was an important night for Palm Beach County. That was the night that Doug Tallamy spoke to an audience of over 300 environmental advocates. When I welcomed everyone that evening I spoke of the ripple effect of environmental good deeds. That ripple effect began before Doug Tallamy uttered a single word. It started with the benefits that come from Audubon Everglades establishing successful community relationships with our partners in this endeavor: PBC Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, Atala Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, and PBC Mounts Botanical Garden. It started when we reached out to the Florida Association of Native Nurseries, Florida Wildflower Foundation and Co-op, Master Gardeners, Gray Mockingbird Garden, Master Naturalists, PBC Keep America Beautiful, Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, National Audubon, Florida Audubon, Audubon chapters of Florida, Wakodahatchee Wetlands and Green Cay Nature Preserve and Pollinator Friendly Facebook groups, and many more. The list goes on and on, and so do the environmental ripples.

I hope you were able to attend and that you found Doug Tallamy's talk meaningful and inspiring. During check-in, I hope you picked up the two handouts we had available: *20 Easy-to-Grow Wildflowers* by the Florida Wildflower Foundation and *Guide for Real Florida Gardeners* by the Florida Association of Native Nurseries. These are excellent resources. I hope you had a chance to chat with Doug Tallamy. Maybe you

**July's monthly Program & Lecture will be held Tuesday, July 10 at 7PM
at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center.**

continued on page 6

Scott and Mary continued from page 2

Montreal and lived there until he was seven, when the family moved to Brooklyn, NY. He earned a BS and MS in Psychology from Brooklyn College and then, much later, an MA in English from FAU. Both Mary and Scott had interesting, varied work careers. Mary worked as a freelance photographer, news bureau photographer, and library page. She volunteered at Dreyfus H.S. while her sons were there. When one of their sons went to register at FAU, Mary went along. While the son decided against FAU, Mary re-enrolled after 20 years to finish her BA in English. Afterwards she taught at G-Star School of the Arts. Mary retired in 2017. Scott worked in a psychiatric hospital after getting his master's degree and then took off several years to explore a more spiritual life-style in California, living off the land in a simple cabin in the woods, meditating, and discovering that he loved literature. He eventually moved to Florida, where he taught psychology at Palm Beach Junior College and enrolled for his MA in English at FAU. After getting his

degree, he had a 30-year career in the Palm Beach County Public Schools, teaching high school English, Creative Writing, and Journalism, and working with students on performance ("page to stage") programs. Scott retired in 2015.

Both Scott and Mary have a history of volunteer involvement with soccer. Scott spent 15 years refereeing youth soccer and training soccer referees all over Florida as the Sector Director of Referee Instruction for AYSO. Mary started out coaching her son's soccer team and then moved on to coaching girls' teams. She played in a women's soccer team until an injury sidelined her. When she isn't working on one of their many conservation projects, Mary enjoys weaving and dyeing with native plants.

The two love riding their bikes (they "bike to bird") and hiking. They are particularly fond of natural sites with water and are never happier than when simply sitting beside a waterfall, a creek or a brook, picnicking, reading and writing. They also enjoy

watching independent foreign movies. They live near Peaceful Waters Sanctuary, so that is perhaps their favorite birding locale, but they told me about another spot they enjoy that was new to me – the South Florida Water Management District's headquarters on Gun Club Road. Apparently, there's a nice path around a marsh pond there that attracts wading birds and, during migration, a good number of warblers.

The last few summers Scott and Mary have rented cottages in northern New York State to be near their sons. This summer they will be staying at a place near the Ashokan Reservoir, and they look forward to exploring the many natural water features in the area. After another year of hard work and effective advocacy on behalf of Audubon Everglades and the natural places we love in Palm Beach County, let's wish them a restful and restorative summer!

AUDUBON GREEN SCHOOLS AWARD

Audubon Everglades awards Habitat Improvement Award to Elbridge Gale Elementary School at May 16 FAU Green Schools Ceremony

by Sheila Hollihan-Elliott



Photo: at podium Susan Snyder, Audubon Everglades Left to right : Elbridge Syndie White, Jackie La Platte, Nicole Crane, Laura Arena, Emily Savogac, and Marggy Joyner; FAU Anne Henderson, Director of Education and Lauren Butcher, Green Schools Recognition Program Coordinator

Audubon Everglades has just awarded their \$500 "Habitat Improvement" Judge's Choice Award to Elbridge Gale Elementary School in Wellington, Palm Beach County. Already rated exceptionally high in academic achievement of their PK-5th grade students, Elbridge has been recognized as a Certified National Wildlife habitat, dedicated to teaching and promoting environmental conservation and

sustainability. Student projects included designing and painting six bird houses, protecting bird nesting habitat, improving butterfly gardens, and planning and implementing numerous other habitat improvements. This reflects Audubon Everglades' own mission: "Educating and inspiring people to conserve wildlife, especially birds, and the environment that supports them."

With the awarded funds, the Elbridge students hope to enhance and add bird nesting boxes and do a grounds survey to improve their habitat for migratory bird and year-round feathered friends.

Susan Snyder, long-time education administrator in Palm Beach County, presented the award. She has continued after her retirement to champion educational outreach and enrichment now as Board Member of Audubon Everglades. She was deeply committed from the beginning to the Green Schools Recognition Program, which is an initiative of Florida Atlantic University's Pine Jog Environmental Education Center in collaboration with the school districts of Palm Beach and Martin County and coordinated by Lauren Butcher. From 21 schools initially, now on the 10th year Anniversary, the Green Schools program covers 122 schools and over 100,000 students in Palm Beach and Martin Counties.

Podium decoration included native plants from Audubon Everglades member Kat Rahla's own yard: *Salvia coccinea*-which feed Painted Buntings and hummingbirds and Tickseed *Coreopsis Leavenworthii* which feed pollinators like native and honey bees.

made recommendations for more passive wildlife viewing, photography, and educational projects. These included creating a tree island for wading bird nesting in one of the impoundments and a wet prairie habitat in another with dedicated drawdowns in the dry season to attract more wading birds. Walkways, blinds, or interpretative trails in these new areas, a tower or elevated walkway in the Cypress Swamp, and platforms on the interior fringes for overnight camping were also suggested.

The chief recommendation of the many sportsmen who spoke was to allow airboat access to hunting and frog gigging areas in the refuge. The duck hunters, however, voiced opposition to airboat use as harmful to waterfowl populations.

As part of this scoping process the Refuge will develop a detailed Visitor Services Plan. The plan will outline the goals, objectives, and strategies for implementing and managing existing and expanded wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities determined to be compatible with the purpose of the Refuge and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Refuge is asking their partners and the public to provide suggestions for evaluation and inclusion in the plan. The plan will outline a range of management alternatives based on the input received. Public comment will be accepted until Aug 3, 2018. Mail your comments to A.R.M. Loxahatchee VSP, P.O. Box 924, Freeport, FL 32439, or send by email to armloxvsp@fws.gov.

The Refuge system and their managers are likely feeling pressure to satisfy some of the demands of the anglers and sportsmen, so it is important that the public share concerns they have about the proposed Refuge recreation activities listed below. The public can also suggest additional recreational activities they feel are compatible with the goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System. We expect that good science will show that the proposals for recreation at ARM LNWR found unacceptable by the environmental community are incompatible with the other goals of the refuge. Please comment and stay engaged.

Goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System

- To fulfill our statutory duty to achieve refuge purpose(s) and further the System mission.
- Conserve, restore where appropriate, and enhance all species of fish, wildlife, and plants that are endangered or threatened with becoming endangered.
- Perpetuate migratory bird, interjurisdictional fish, and marine mammal populations.



Photo: Members of 2018 Audubon Everglades Conservation Stewardship Class on Cypress Trail boardwalk at ARM Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. © Scott Zucker. All rights reserved.

- Conserve a diversity of fish, wildlife, and plants.
- Conserve and restore, where appropriate, representative ecosystems of the United States, including the ecological processes characteristic of those ecosystems.
- To foster understanding and instill appreciation of fish, wildlife, and plants, and their conservation, by providing the public with safe, high-quality, and compatible wildlife-dependent public use. Such use includes hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-zinke-creates-new-council-hunting-and-shooting-sports-conservation>.

The proposed recreational enhancements (from Appendix C of the new License Agreement with SFWMD):

Recreation Enhancements - Immediate Time Frame:

- Provide specialty hunts, fishing, and other recreational opportunities for youth, veterans, and active military; Host additional Kids Fishing Days
- Increase number of alligator quota permits
- Open remainder of L-40 and L-7 to hiking and bicycling
- Allow leashed pets
- Participate in the District and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission python removal programs from levees and roads

Recreation Enhancements - Short-term Time Frame:

- Establish a canoe trail on south end of Refuge
- Provide camping adjacent to the L-7 levee by permit
- Expand the total number of days of hunting allowed during alligator season
- Provide bank fishing opportunities by constructing a fishing pier at Loxahatchee Road Entrance
- Provide for nontraditional uses such as weddings, yoga, and other similar activities

Recreation Enhancements - Mid-term Time Frame:

- Expanding the number of days available for waterfowl hunting from 5 days per week to 7 days per week
- Allow hunter access from additional locations including the L-39, L-40, and L-7 levees
- Provide specialized deer hunting opportunities (youth and/or wounded warrior hunt) on lands owned in fee by the Department of the Interior
- Expand existing hunt area
- Establish a small mammal and hog hunting season in interior of Refuge in accordance with State regulations for listed game species
- Provide camping on platforms in the Refuge interior
- Provide concession operation at the south end Loxahatchee Road Entrance for canoe and kayak rental, john boat rental, bike rental, commercial fishing guides, bait, snacks, and drinks and guided tours for wildlife observation
- Provide bowfishing opportunity per State regulations in current areas open to fishing except the A, B, and C impoundments
- Open perimeter canal to alligator hunting
- Provide an entrance at Wellington and Delray Regional Park to the L-40
- Allow air-cooled outboard motors and jet drive motor boats in perimeter canals; Allow airboat use within the designated waterfowl hunting area and within perimeter canals excluding the L-40
- Provide horseback riding along the L-40, L-39, or L-7 levees
- Authorize frog gigging within perimeter canals and the hunt area
- Build an observation tower along the canoe trail for additional wildlife viewing opportunity



Bringing Nature Home continued from page 3

purchased his book and he signed it for you. I hope you noticed that we used the photos of an Audubon Everglades chapter member, Shelley Rozenberg, as the background for quotes from Doug Tallamy and others. These slides were created by another chapter member, Sheri Felipe, who created all the beautiful graphics for this event. Maybe you noticed the native plants on stage. You guessed it, another member, Kat Rahla, provided those and helped make possible the Florida Wildflower seed packets. Kat was integral from the very beginning in making this event happen. Possibly you saw Pete Lekos filming Dr. Tallamy's presentation or Lora Lekos and Susan McKemy photographing the event. Susan McKemy also set up and monitored our Eventbrite page for ticket sales. Louann Dillon advised on our event finances and helped check people in. Paton White provided invaluable support and encouragement without which we might not have even had this event. Doreen LePage and Sue Revie set-up and staffed our Audubon Everglades table. Marcia Yeip helped with the break-down. Karen Lindquist was everywhere, helping where needed. Cathy Hanson directed people. Gerry Felipe provided technical support. Scott Zucker and Mary Young made sure Doug Tallamy not only got to see Swallow-tailed Kites but was also able to photograph them with Eastern Lubber Grasshoppers grasped in their talons. Sheila Hollihan-Elliott did publicity, and so much more. Kristen Murtaugh edited all my articles making me sound so much better. So many people helped to make this a truly wonderful event. I hope you enjoyed it, but we are just beginning. What Doug Tallamy has started, Audubon Everglades is going to continue!

Doug Tallamy talks a lot about terrestrial birds. A recent article in the PB Post, "Our beloved Lake Okeechobee is sick: This is how it got that way" quotes Paul Gray of Audubon Florida responding to the question "What happened to the lake?" He explains that Lake Okeechobee has lost over 50% of its aquatic

vegetation since 2012. "Plants are the base of the food chain." "Plants clean the water and provide a place for bugs to live, which are then eaten by the fish, which are food for bigger fish and birds." Whether you are a wading bird, shorebird, songbird, raptor or a human, our food chains all rely on native plants and insects.

2018 is the Year of the Bird. That means 12 months of examining how our changing environment is impacting birds around the globe. Thomas Lovejoy said that, if you take care of the birds, you take care of most of the big environmental problems in the world. After hearing Doug Tallamy, I would add that, if you take care of the bugs and native plants, you will take care of the birds - and most of the environmental problems in the world.

What is next, how do we build on what we learned, how can we learn more, and what can each of us do right now to be part of the solution? I know many of you have already begun taking action, because you have called and told me so. I have been getting a lot of questions, and my next step is answering those questions and making that information accessible to everyone on the Audubon Everglades website. If you attended Bringing Nature Home: Renewing Our World with Native Plants, you will notice that the title tells us where to begin.

12 Things You Can Do to Help:

1. Read "Bringing Nature Home" by Doug Tallamy.
2. Plant a native plant. Need tips for plants that grow well in your area? [National Audubon's Plants for Birds native plants database](#) will give you information based on your zip code for plants, birds, native plant nurseries, and other local resources. [The Institute for Regional Conservation has a great website](#), and a tool for finding Natives for Your Neighborhood (NFYN). They have some of the most accurate information available for South Florida.
3. Visit a native nursery. Here are a few in PBC to

get you started: [Indian Trails Native Nursery](#), Lake Worth; [Meadow Beauty Nursery](#), Lake Worth; [Native Choice Nursery](#), Boynton Beach.

4. Don't spray insecticides in your yard. No insects = no baby birds. Every bug out there is food for something! Birds need insects for food to fuel their migration and reproduction and to feed their young. We need bees for pollination and wasps for keeping some of our bugs in balance. Take away insects and the ecosystem collapses.
5. Replace an exotic ornamental plant in your yard with a native ornamental. For example, replace your Crape Myrtle with a Jamaica Caper. All plants are not created equal. Most insects are specialists and can eat only the native plants they co-evolved with. Get some great ideas from our [PBC Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society](#).
6. Plant a wildflower garden. [The Florida Wildflower Foundation](#) is a great resource for learning what wildflowers to select and how to plant them. Wildflowers are great because they supply nectar and seeds to birds and food for the caterpillars birds feed their nestlings.
7. Learn more about the caterpillars that are so important in feeding 96% of our land birds. Check out a meeting of the [Atala Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association \(NABA\)](#). They do a July 4th Butterfly Count just like we do a Christmas Bird Count, and their quarterly meetings are at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center.
8. Remove an invasive plant. The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC) compiles the [Florida list of invasive plant species](#). Learn the difference between a Category I and a Category II plant.
9. Reduce the amount of lawn you have. Lawns are about as useful as AstroTurf. They require resources to be maintained and provide next to no value to wildlife. Consider using grass just for pathways, borders, play areas for children and activities where needed.
10. Ask your favorite nurseries and box stores to carry natives. Let them know you will have to go elsewhere to get what you need.
11. Don't buy cypress mulch. Cypress mulch comes from 2nd and 3rd growth cypress stands. Soon there will be no cypress stands if we continue using it at this rate. These trees are a valuable and irreplaceable habitat for countless numbers of species. They also provide a great service like our mangroves by greatly reducing the force of a storm surge.
12. Share what you've learned with friends and family. Ask your government representative to change landscape codes to incentivize the use of native plants, wildflower plantings, and wildlife corridors.

If you would like to do more consider joining the Audubon Everglades Plants for Birds committee. [Contact Vicki Rogerson](#).

Photography Club Season Concludes by Honoring the Best of the Best Member Photos

by Scott Zucker



Photo: Award winners present from Left to right: Robert Decuir, Edwin Wilke, Ron Frendreis, Lora Lekos, Julie Zambory, Club President Dr. Pete Lekos, Susan McKemy, Harvey Mendelson, Susan Stechnij, Karen Lindquist, Scott Zucker and Mary Young © 2018 Rich Raphael All rights reserved.

The final meeting of the 2017-18 season Audubon Everglades Photography Club was a visual feast for club members and guests who gathered to view the Best of the Best End of Year Competition. The competition featured the ribbon winners from our previous four Open Nature and Assigned Nature Subjects (Botany, Zoology, Macro, and Black & White), Novice and Advanced members. In addition, members were able to add a limited number of outstanding previously entered non-winning competition images to the mix.

Club President Dr. Peter Lekos opened the festivities by reflecting on this year's Club accomplishments and describing what the Club has planned for next year. Club Vice President Scott Zucker then introduced former board member, artist and photographer, Susan Faulkner Davis, who graciously offered to serve as our guest judge for the evening's main event. Her first task was the Assigned Subject Novice group images, which would be followed by the Assigned Subject Advanced group images and then the Open Nature Novice and Advanced group images. Through the course of the evening, Susan would be viewing, scoring and providing insightful feedback for approximately 130 wonderful images, which would be shown anonymously.

As the images were projected on the large screen, it was obvious to all in attendance that Susan was going to have a difficult time choosing the winners.

In fact, she had to ask for multiple reviews of the highest scoring images in order to choose the final ribbon award winners and the Image of the Year in each category. The Assigned Nature Subject Image of the Year Award winners were Susan Stechnij (Macro, Novice) and Karen Lingquist (Black & White, Advanced), while the Open Nature Image of the Year Award winners were Julie Zambory (Novice) and Audubon Everglades Vice President, Susan McKemy (Advanced).

Susan completed the memorable evening by choosing the outstanding bird image of the year named in honor of former Audubon Everglades President and professional photographer, Claudine Laabs. That honor went to Tom Rasmussen for his exquisite image of a Great Blue Heron. A full list of all the winners is provided below.

It was apparent from the superior photographic quality of the work of the Novice members, which has improved so much over the year, that some would be stepping up to join the Advanced group in the 2018-19 season.

Please join the Audubon Everglades Photography Club 2018-19 season starting in September for our exciting new speakers, workshops, field trips and competitions.

[For list of winners click here.](#)

Project Perch Seeks Volunteers and Donations of Supplies

by Susan Faulkner Davis



Photo: Florida Burrowing Owl Nursery
© 2018 Susan Faulkner Davis All rights reserved.

Here's how you can help. Project Perch is an Audubon Everglades and South Florida Audubon Society collaborative project, whose mission is to protect and nurture the owls in southeast Florida. Specifically, we educate "caretakers" for as many owls as possible and we promote the population by working with public and private landowners to provide artificial burrows.

Summer rains have arrived early, and we are in need of both supplies and volunteers. Burrow entrances need to be kept free and clear of encroaching grass and weeds all summer long, so we are in need of a good battery powered string trimmer. We can also use shovels for installing burrows and mallets for driving stakes. We need volunteers to learn how to construct, assemble, install and monitor burrows for the owls.

Have you seen Burrowing Owls in Palm Beach County? (Please ask your friends, too.)

Let us know how you can help by contacting Anne Hctor, Susan Davis, Chris Golia or Mary Young at ProjectPerchPBC@AudubonEverglades.org.



Photo: Plant a burrow © 2018 Susan Faulkner Davis
All rights reserved.

BARN OWL PROWL

by Mary Young



Photo: Young Barn Owls © Mary Young. All rights reserved.



Photo: Dr. Richard Raid showing the subsidence marker and the amount of soil lost since 1924
© Mary Young. All rights reserved.

An enthusiastic team of twenty-five Audubon Everglades members, armed with cordless drills, met in Belle Glade at the UF/IFAS Everglades Research and Education Center on March 28.

Following the instructions of Dr. Richard Raid, Associate Center Director and Professor of Plant Pathology, we built nineteen Barn Owl boxes to be offered to farmers in the Everglades Agricultural Area who understand the value of having owls catch rodents that would otherwise be eating their crops, rather than killing those rodents with poison that would seep into the water. A bonus will be an increase in the Barn Owl population.

Afterwards, we drove a short distance to where Dr. Raid took down a Barn Owl box and revealed six furrily-feathered owlets piled on top of each other. While most of us were “oohing” and “aahing,” many cell phones and cameras documented the remarkable experience.

Pulling ourselves away, we drove to the nearby “subsidence marker,” a 9-foot concrete post that was driven to bedrock in 1924, its top set level with the soil surface. 84 years later, in 2008, it was 6 feet above

ground showing the loss of approximately 1 inch of soil per year. Recently, the decline has been reduced to about a half inch soil loss per year, due in part to local farmers using best management practices.

In addition to the thorough education we received outside, sixteen bird species, including a Bald Eagle, were observed.

Inside, we were served a delicious dinner made from vegetables grown in the Glades and cooked by staff from the plant pathology department (including Dr. Raid) with the assistance of interns and students staying at the dormitory. And for the adventurous, there were various flavored insects that could be added to our meal. Sheila Hollihan-Elliott, editor of Audubon Everglades’ Kite, took up the challenge, ate a bug, and said it was “crunchy salty like Japanese savory rice snacks.”

The Everglades Research and Education Center developed this insect food program two years ago to introduce people to the idea of entomophagy, the human consumption of insects as a food source. Ann Hartman, Agriculture Assistant Supervisor, said that they predict it will be a growing trend in the coming years. “As the population continues to increase,

farmers will have to supply more food, with less land and more environmental restrictions. So, we will have to look at alternate food sources.”

Eighty percent of the world consumes insects on a regular basis. Parts of the Western World are being introduced to entomophagy as companies create new food products such as [cricket energy bars, chips made from cricket flour, cricket protein powder, cricket chocolate, etc.](#) Ms. Hartman said, “It really is mind over matter. Most of the people that have tasted them think they have a ‘nutty’ flavor.”

At dusk, in fading light, we walked down the road and watched twenty-three Barn Owls flying out to catch their own dinner.

Then, as with all underfunded programs lacking enough help, while the last of our members were leaving the parking lot with hearts soaring and stomachs filled, Ann and her husband were seen cleaning the kitchen, and Dr. Raid vacuuming the dining hall.

[See more Owl Prowl pictures here.](#)

**We are changing the dates of our membership year. 2018 members will receive 5 additional free months.
The 2018 membership year runs from January 1, 2018 - May 31, 2019. Join Friends of Audubon Everglades today.**

JOIN AUDUBON

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

There are two ways to join Audubon Everglades:

FRIENDS OF AUDUBON EVERGLADES MEMBERSHIP:

All your membership dues and contributions are put to use supporting local conservation projects and educational programs in Palm Beach County. You will receive 12 issues of the Kite newsletter, priority for some special trips and discounted rates at some events and vendors. Join using the PayPal link off our website or by mailing the attached membership application. The Audubon Everglades Kite newsletter is available by email only.

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. Your NAS membership does not grant you the special privileges and discounts afforded to those that are local Friends of Audubon Everglades members. If you choose to join us through National Audubon Society, please also consider becoming a Friend of Audubon Everglades to support local conservation and education initiatives.

Yes, I want to become a member of FRIENDS OF AUDUBON EVERGLADES

Join now using PayPal. 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 (Single) ☐ \$20 (Student) ☐ \$20 (Senior) ☐ \$35 (Household*) ☐ \$75 (Patron*)

Please feel free to give above the membership amount with a 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 _____
