



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades
VOL 59 | Issue 1 | September 2018



Photo: Peregrine Falcon © 2018 Anne Dupont. All rights reserved.

Bird of the Month: Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

The word “peregrine, “which means “wanderer,” is an appropriate name for the world’s most widespread falcon. Except for the Arctic and the Antarctic, peregrines can be found from coastal to mountain regions and from deserts to cities.

Like other falcons, peregrines are distinguished from hawks by their long, pointed wings. Females are larger than males, which are about one-third smaller. Because of their smaller size, males are also called “tiercel,” which means “third.” One of the most notable traits of the Peregrine Falcon is its speed. It is actually the fastest animal on the planet. A group of German scientists have clocked a peregrine in a dive, or “stoop,” at 217 miles an hour. The stoop refers to the bird’s hunting strategy of climbing in flight high above

its quarry, typically another bird, folding its wings and diving at staggering speeds towards its prey.

It is usually at this point that the peregrine will fold its talons into a “fist,” knocking the prey unconscious. It will sometimes grab the prey and take it to the ground, where it immediately decapitates it, using its notched, or “toothed,” upper mandible or beak.

Peregrines were virtually eradicated from eastern North America by pesticide poisoning (DDT) used in agriculture to eliminate crop-destroying insects in the mid- 20th century. The pesticide’s sinister effect on the environment became evident with the disappearance of peregrines and other birds. DDT not only found its way into birds catching and eating the infected insects

but also into canals and other waterways, where it was ingested by fish and other aquatic fauna.

Tainted prey such as the birds eaten by peregrines, were soon causing a cumulative buildup of toxins in their bodies, leading to females laying thin-shelled eggs. The weight of the incubating birds would then break and destroy the eggs.

After significant recovery efforts, Peregrine Falcons have made an incredible comeback from the brink of extinction and are now regularly observed in many large cities and coastal areas.

Photographers – next month’s October bird of the month is the [Red-breasted Merganser](#).

UPCOMING TRIPS SEPTEMBER 2018

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

08 SAT (8A-10A) Wakodahatchee
(Chris Golia) ● 🚶 <1 🚗 🚸

12 WED (8A-10A) Seacrest Scrub
(Sue Young) ■ 🚶 1.5

15 SAT (8A-10A) Frenchman's Forest
(Melanie & Steve Garcia) ■ 🚶 1.5

16 SUN (8A-10A) Spanish River Park
\$ (Linda McCandless/Kathy Walters) ● 🚶 1.5

22 SAT (5P-7P) Wakodahatchee
(Valleri Brauer) ● 🚶 <1 🚗 🚸

23 SUN (8A-10A) Juno Dunes
(Melanie & Steve Garcia) ◆ 🚶 >1.5

29 SAT (8A-10A) ★ Coral Cove Park
(Mark Cook) ● 🚶 1.5 🚗

30 SUN (8A-10:30A) Snook Islands
(Gael Silverblatt) ● 🚶 <1 🚗 🚸

30 SUN (8A-10A) Spanish River Park
\$ (Luis "Beto" Matheus) ● 🚶 1.5

OCTOBER 2018

The following advance registration field trips in October will become available for online registration on their corresponding dates during the month of September, e.g., registration for the October 06 trip begins September 06.

06 SAT (7A-12P) STA-IE 🚶
(Susan McKemy, coord.) ● 🚶 0

25 THU (9:30A-11:30A) ★ Lion Country Safari 🚶 🌍
(Clive Pinnoch) ● 🚶 0

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

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

OTHER

- ★ New and/or unique trips
- 🚶 Family-friendly
- \$ There is an associated cost
- ♿ Handicap Accessible
- 📅 Advance registration required
- 🌍 Audubon Everglades Friend priority

EMERGENCY AVIAN ALERT! Have you seen any Florida Scrub-Jays recently in Palm Beach County?

What's the situation? Recently Audubon Jay Watch received some concerning news from Palm Beach County. It appears that the last of the Florida Scrub Jays on public lands surveyed through Jay Watch have vanished. Before they add Palm Beach County to the list of counties where there "once were FSJ" they would like our help to determine if there are any remaining on private or public lands. With Jay Watch surveys nearly completed, they are pulling data together for the annual recap that will happen in November.

[Vicki Rogerson](#) will be coordinating the search. The last known location was in Jupiter Ridge Natural Area located at 1800 U.S.Hwy. 1 in Juno Beach. Please, contact [Vicki](#) at 561-352-7835 if you have a recent sighting or would like to help.

If you'd like a little refresher about the Florida Scrub Jay, [watch this wonderful video](#) created by the Archibold Biological Center used for Florida Jay Watch training.



Photo: Florida Scrub Jay © Susan McKemy

Wilson's Phalaropes

by Chuck Hignite

With the hot summer weather upon us and many of our migrant bird species enjoying cooler climates to the north, it is tempting to let our birding enthusiasm wane a bit. Fortunately for us, this is the time of the year when farmers in Palm Beach and adjoining counties flood many of their fields to kill nematodes prior to planting seasonal crops. These flooded fields attract many shorebird species, some in large numbers, so the enthusiasm of many birders soars. Several birders have recently had great birding experiences along Browns Farm Road and have been successful in finding the Wilson's Phalarope(s).

The name Wilson is part of the names of five North American bird species, which is more than the two for Audubon. So who was Wilson? Alexander Wilson

(1766-1817) was born 19 years before John Audubon (1785-1851) and has been called the Father of American Ornithology. Like Audubon, he traveled widely, studying and gathering thousands of specimens of bird species. Like Audubon, he also documented the characteristics of birds in his illustrations. If you search the internet for "Alexander Wilson Ornithologist," you will see a number of sites, [including this Wikipedia page where you can read more about him.](#)

[This terrific video by Susan McKemy shows the characteristic foraging style of the Wilson's Phalarope.](#) As Susan explains, the birds spin to create a vortex which forces tiny crustaceans upward, thus delivering the Phalaropes' food closer to the surface.

AUDUBON ASSEMBLY SCHOLARSHIPS

All the Audubon Assembly partial scholarships were claimed. If you are still interested in having

one, please contact [Paton White](#) to add your name to the waiting list.

Monthly MEETING and LECTURE: “Restoring America’s Everglades: Current State of Affairs and Next Steps”

Celeste De Palma, Director of Everglades Policy, Florida Audubon

SEP

04

Tuesday, September 4 at 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 Celeste De Palma discuss the state of America’s Everglades restoration, and next steps to support the effort.

ABOUT CELESTE DE PALMA

Celeste De Palma is the Director of Everglades Policy at Audubon Florida, the oldest conservation organization in the state. In her role at Audubon Florida, Celeste shapes, leads, manages and implements strategies and actions to advance Audubon’s mission and conservation objectives for the Florida Everglades. A critical member of Audubon Florida’s senior leadership team, she oversees the Everglades science and policy team, coordinates and implements Everglades policy efforts with staff across Audubon Florida’s programs, and leads Audubon Florida’s advocacy efforts with Congress, federal agencies, the Florida Legislature, state agencies, and Everglades Restoration decision makers such as the Army Core of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to advance Audubon policy and appropriation priorities for Everglades Restoration. She engages grassroots, grassstops, and partners in this work to build a more diverse constituency of Everglades champions who can be mobilized to support Audubon’s Everglades priorities.

Prior to her current role, Celeste was the Everglades Policy Associate, a position in which she successfully orchestrated the advocacy efforts of a consortium of non-profit environmental groups, including Audubon Everglades, in a year and half struggle culminating in the signing of a 20-year lease agreement with SFWMD in March 2018. This agreement ensures that our beloved Arthur R Marshall National Wildlife Refuge will remain intact and that all of its approximately 145,000 acres will remain managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She also previously served as Conservation Outreach Coordinator for Tropical Audubon Society, the Audubon grassroots chapter in Miami-Dade County. During her time at Tropical Audubon, Celeste specialized in land-use issues and led the revitalization campaign of the Hold the Line Coalition that focused on stopping urban sprawl into the Everglades. Celeste’s dedication to the protection of natural resources and habitats grew out of her direct experience with social issues related to the exploitation of natural resources. During her undergraduate studies, Celeste spent one month in the Peruvian Amazon on a research-based study abroad program, where she saw firsthand the dramatic effects of poor resource management and how critical it is for people to be informed and aware of the environmental impacts of human activity.

Born in Argentina, Celeste came to the U.S. as a teenager and made Miami her adopted city, where she proudly became an American citizen in August 2016. She holds a B.S. in biology from Florida International University. The first National Wildlife Refuge System Advocate of the Year (2018), Celeste has received many honors and recognitions, including the George M. Barley Conservationist of the Year Award at the 33rd Annual Everglades Coalition Conference in January, 2017 and the Audubon Florida Staff Member of the Year at the October 2017 Audubon Florida Assembly. She is a 2013 New Leaders Council Miami Alumna and was a Toyota Together Green Fellow. She writes and speaks on radio and in videos frequently about conserving the Everglades. We are thrilled to be welcoming her as our speaker at our September 4 “season beginning” monthly meeting.

Also at the meeting, our expert, Clive Pincock, will speak about the September Bird of the Month, the Peregrine Falcon.

AE PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUTSIDE EVENTS

Stop by and visit with us on **Saturday, September 22** at the “Explore & Discover Family Fun Day” from noon to five in the Mall at Wellington Green. This event is organized by the Palm Beach Museum of Natural History.

October’s Monthly Meeting will be held Tuesday, October 2 at 7PM at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center. The speaker will be Brian Mealey, PhD, Professor and Program Director at the Institute of Wildlife Sciences in Miami, Florida, and a Managing Director of Project Perch.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT UNDER ATTACK

by Scott Zucker

Last month, the Trump administration announced plans to gut the Endangered Species Act (ESA), throwing their support behind proposed congressional legislation that would make it easier to exploit public lands for profit. The administration has also authorized federal agencies to consider economic impacts before listing animals to be protected under the ESA. The new proposed guidelines by the Department of the Interior would allow corporations involved with mining, drilling, grazing, logging or other forms of extraction on public lands to proceed with projects that would formerly have been prohibited.

President Trump's proposal would also entirely strip protection for all threatened species, which currently comprise about 60 percent of the approximately 1600 species on the National Endangered Species List. They could be killed and their habitat could be destroyed, as happens with other unprotected species.

Formerly, the best available scientific research was the determining factor that determined whether a species was protected. Under the Trump proposal, economic priorities would become the determining factor. The economic impacts to activities like mining, logging and grazing, which are often the cause of species endangerment, would now be considered when evaluating whether an endangered species or its habitat could be destroyed.

Congressional groups like the Western Caucus have proposed numerous amendments over the past two years to weaken the ESA. Wyoming Senator John Barrasso, Chairman of the Committee on Environmental and Public Works, while speaking on behalf of a bill to amend the ESA, called the recovery of species under the Act a failure. His bill seeks to have the states, which traditionally lack the resources, infrastructure and political will or desire, lead wildlife conservation efforts and be responsible for developing species recovery plans. This proposal overlooks the fact that species are placed on the National Endangered Species List because state



Photo: © Scott Zucker. All Rights Reserved.

plans for preserving those species have failed and imperiled the species. The bill would also make it more difficult to place imperiled species on the List, allowing habitats to be destroyed that were protected to save the species and making it easier to ignore the impact that climate change may have on endangered species. It would also set the stage to give corporate interests a voice when making decisions regarding the protection of species.

Republican President Richard Nixon signed the landmark ESA in 1973 to provide a framework to conserve and protect endangered species and their habitat. The ESA has been a success story, and the federal government needs to continue to set the standards and provide the funding necessary to preserve endangered species. Nearly 85 percent of the species on the domestic endangered species list have improved their numbers. Species we commonly see in Florida that were once listed as endangered, such as the Bald Eagle, American Alligator, Peregrine Falcon, and Brown Pelican, have successfully recovered because Federal Government protections under the ESA have worked.

[Audubon has created an action page which makes it easy for you to contact your Members of Congress.](#) Please share your concerns with them and ask them to oppose any efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the backbone of Audubon Everglades.

As an all-volunteer organization, we depend on volunteers for every part of our organization - birding field trips, citizen science, community events, conservation and advocacy, education, photography club, programs, and all the supporting functions - communications, graphics design, membership, newsletters, social media, etc. Audubon Everglades simply could not do everything we do without you, our valuable volunteers, and we appreciate every one of you.

If you enjoy Audubon Everglades and its programs and activities and want to see them continue to thrive, we need you to get involved and give back by volunteering your time and talents. We look forward to having you become part of our volunteer team.

Volunteer Needs/Opportunities

You can apply for these specific current opportunities by emailing us.

- Kite Newsletter Coordinator
- Social Media Coordinator & Volunteers
- Speakers Bureau Speakers & Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Website Update Support (Wordpress)
- Writers for various articles and needs
- AE representative to the LWV Solar Co-op Steering Committee

Community Event Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to volunteer or would like more information about these events, please contact [Vicki Rogerson](#) at 561-352-7835.

- **Oct 13** - Palm Beach County Employee Picnic
- **Nov 10** - Green Cay Migration Celebration - Year of the Bird
- **Nov 11** - Annual Native Garden Tour
- **December** - Preparing for the Purple Martins 2019 Season

Blue-green Algae Is NOT Algae

by Reinaldo Diaz and Vicki Rogerson

For a more in-depth explanation, be sure to check out [The Lake Worth Waterkeeper Talks about Blue-green Algae and What We Can Do About It](#) by Reinaldo Diaz.

WHAT IS BLUE-GREEN ALGAE? Blue-green algae is the common name for a freshwater bacterium known as cyanobacteria. It is called blue-green algae because it is aquatic and can photosynthesize like an alga, but it is not an alga.

WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT CYANOBACTERIA? Under normal circumstances we don't. They are naturally occurring organisms. It is only when they get out of balance within their ecosystem that they are problematic.

WHAT CAUSES CYANOBACTERIA TO GET OUT OF BALANCE? The perfect condition for cyanobacteria reproduction is slow-moving, warm water with enough nutrients. A rapid increase of cyanobacteria in the water is called a "bloom."

WHY ARE NUTRIENTS IMPORTANT? They feed the reproduction of cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria thrives on nutrient pollution, phosphorus and nitrogen from fertilizer and septic tank runoff.

WHERE DO THE NUTRIENTS COME FROM THAT FEED THE CYANOBACTERIAL BLOOMS FROM LAKE OKEECHOBEE? Phosphorus and nitrogen, key ingredients in fertilizer, come from agricultural and urban runoff around the lake and from decades of legacy nutrients that have taken over the bottom of the lake.

HOW DO CYANOBACTERIA GET FROM LAKE OKEECHOBEE TO THE COAST? When there is a high amount of rain or a weather event like a hurricane that raises the water level of Lake Okeechobee, the Army Corps of Engineers authorizes water releases that go to the west coast via the Caloosahatchee River and to the east via the St. Lucie River. Palm Beach County gets water from Lake Okeechobee via the L-8 canal, which intersects with the G-51, also known as the West Palm Beach Canal. ([See Map](#))

HOW LONG CAN CYANOBACTERIA LIVE? Under the right conditions of warm fresh or brackish water and abundant nutrients, they can theoretically live indefinitely. Cyanobacteria don't last long in saltwater, but, when there are freshwater releases from the lake, the salinity of water decreases, extending the bacteria's life.

HOW DO CYANOBACTERIA HARM US? They can kill aquatic vegetation by forming mats that block sunlight. They reduce the oxygen available to other life forms such as fish, causing fish kills. They can also produce a variety of toxic compounds like microcystin, which is a liver toxin harmful to humans and wildlife.

CAN I SEE CYANOBACTERIA? Generally, cyanobacteria will be at least minimally visible in the water. They may also look like scum, foam or "algae" mats. But, it is important to understand that only testing will tell you if what you see is toxic. The cyanobacteria can be barely visible but still producing toxins beyond safe levels. The water can look like split pea soup and be safe or look clear and be toxic. Testing is a must.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD WE TAKE WHEN WE SUSPECT THAT CYANOBACTERIA ARE PRESENT? People and their pets and livestock should not drink, bathe or swim in the water or eat fish from the water.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE TO CYANOBACTERIA? Inhaling vapors from wind- and wave-swept cyanobacteria can cause asthma attacks or other respiratory problems. Ingesting cyanobacteria by drinking the water or consuming fish can lead to nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, other gastrointestinal problems, and headaches. These symptoms can begin within hours of consumption.

WILL BOILING THE WATER KILL THE BACTERIA? Boiling the water will not kill any of the toxins. Simply being near cyanobacteria-laden water can bring on skin rashes and other irritations around your eyes, nose or mouth.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS IF THE WATER HAS MICROCYSTIN PRESENT? Nausea, vomiting, and in extreme cases severe liver failure.

HOW DO CYANOBACTERIA AND MICROCYSTIN AFFECT BIRDS? Jan Landsberg, research scientist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), says that waterfowl such as ducks can swim through a heavy green scum, retain the toxins on their feathers, and then ingest small quantities of it when they preen. In other cases, the birds might ingest large quantities of toxic cyanobacteria when dabbling or foraging in scum. The microcystin produced by cyanobacteria can be lethal to birds if high quantities are consumed. Most species of

birds are not affected by cyanobacteria unless they come into direct contact with high concentrations. Microcystin can accumulate in fish. Birds can be affected if they eat fish that has been infected, and their habitat is affected when there are aquatic plant die-offs and fish kills.

IF WE SEE CYANOBACTERIA, WHERE SHOULD WE REPORT IT? [The Florida Department of Environmental Protection \(DEP\) has an excellent website, where you can report details and even include photos.](#)

WHERE SHOULD WE REPORT WILDLIFE ILLNESS, UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR OR DEATH TO IF WE SUSPECT IT IS RELATED TO CYANOBACTERIA? Fish: dead, diseased or abnormally behaving fish can be reported to the FWC Fish Kill Hotline at 800-636-0511 or to the FWC website. Birds: [FWC encourages members of the public to contact them if they see unusual behavior or deaths of birds in areas with cyanobacterial blooms and to report the information to this website.](#) To report other wildlife injuries, call FWC's Wildlife Alert at 1-800-404-3922.

WHERE SHOULD I REPORT THAT I AM SICK FROM AN EXPOSURE TO CYANOBACTERIA? Human illnesses or symptoms from cyanobacteria can be reported to the Florida Poison Information Center at 800-222-1222.

WHERE CAN WE GO TO GET MORE INFORMATION? [Florida DEP has a website with general information regarding algae blooms.](#)

For information specific to Palm Beach County, it is best to rely on the [Lake Worth Waterkeeper](#).

The Department of Health has many links, [but this is a good place to start.](#)

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

The Board is pleased to announce that our talented branding and graphics design guru Sheri Felipe was appointed to the Board of Directors at the August Board meeting. Sheri has been working on Audubon Everglades branding, handouts, presentations, apparel, newsletter and more and we are excited to have her join the board. Welcome, Sheri!

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 here.](#)

Your NAS membership does not grant you the special privileges and discounts afforded to those who 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 _____
