

### EVERGIADE KITE NEWSLETER Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades VOL 60 | Issue 2 | October 2019

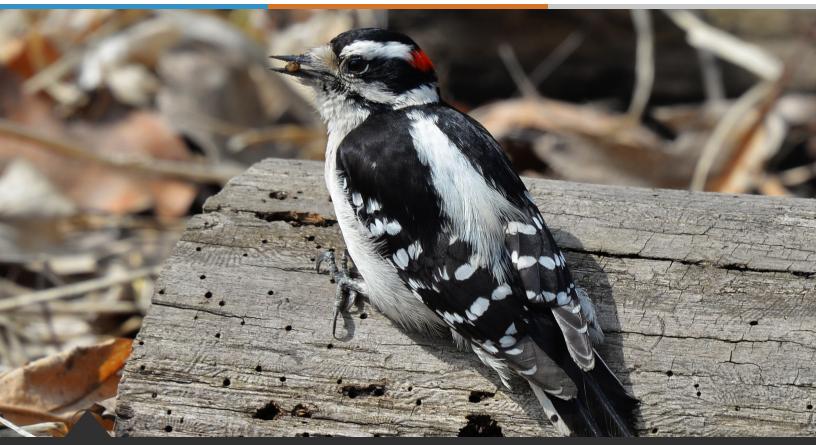


Photo: Downy Woodpecker © Mykola Swarnyk; Wikipedia

### **Bird of the Month: Downy Woodpecker** (*Picoides pubescens*)

Downy Woodpeckers are the smallest woodpeckers in North America. The black upper parts are checked with white on the wings, the head is boldly striped, and the back has a broad white stripe down the center. Males have a small red patch on the back of the head (the patch is absent in females), and the outer tail feathers are typically white with a few black spots.

These common and quite active little woodpeckers are generally seen in open woodlands, city parks, and residential and suburban areas. The preferred habitat is composed of deciduous trees and has brushy or weedy edges. They are also at home in orchards, willows, river groves, and shade trees. Their black and white plumage sometimes creates confusion with the similarly colored Hairy Woodpeckers where their ranges overlap. The smaller Downy Woodpecker measures 6 3/4", while the Hairy measures 9 1/4".

"Downies" are generally observed in trees, foraging for insects, such as beetle larvae that live in wood and tree bark. Their diet also includes a variety of caterpillars (including tent caterpillars), ants, corn earworms, and apple borers. Due to their small size,

#### by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

they are also able to search weed and grass stems and wildflowers, and they show particular interest in plant galls containing insect larvae. A small portion of their diet contains plant material, including berries, acorns and grains. It is not unusual to see Downy Woodpeckers at bird feeders feeding on black oil sunflower seeds and suet and occasionally drinking from hummingbird feeders. While foraging in trees, they characteristically lean against branches with stiffened tail feathers. In flight, they use the same undulating pattern as other woodpecker species.

### UPCOMING TRIPS OCTOBER 2019

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

05 SAT (7A-12P) STA-1E 2 (Susan McKemy, coord.) 9 0 SUN (8A-10A) Tall Cypress (Bruce Pickholtz) 12 SAT (7:30A-11:30A) Peaceful Waters (Big Sit!) (Linda McCandless / Al Pelligrinelli) 12 SAT (8A-10:30A) Peaceful Waters (Scott Zucker) 12 SAT (8A-10:30A) Peaceful Waters (Scott Zucker) 13 15 \$r.

IS SUN (8A-10.304) Peaceful Waters (Scott Zucker) IS SUN (8A-10A) Frenchman's Forest (Chuck Weber) IS SUN (9A-3P) ★ John D. MacArthur Beach SP (Hawk Watch) (David Simpson) IS SUN (9A-3P)

14 MON (8A-11A) Morikami Park (Gardens closed) (Sue Young)

25 FRI (8:30A-10:30A) Loxahatchee NWR (Clive Pinnock)

27 SUN (8:30A-10:30A) ★ Pan's Garden 2 \$ (Susan Lerner/Vicki Rogerson, coord.) 1 1 ↑ & 30 WED (6:30A-11:30A) Loxahatchee NWR (Fly-out) \$ (Rick Schofield) 1 12 15 ↑

### **DECEMBER 2019**

The following advance registration field trips in December will become available for online registration on their corresponding dates during the month of October, e.g., registration for the December 07 trip begins October 02. 07 SAT (7:30A-12P) STA-1E 2 (Rick Schofield, coord.) 12 THU (4P-8P) ★ Evening Barn Owl Prowl 2 (Richard Raid) 13 FRI (8:30A-11A) DuPuis MA 2 (Clive Pinnock) 14 SAT (8A-11A) ★ Lakeside Ranch STA 2 (Rive Pinnock) 15 SUN (8A-12P) STA-2 2 (Susan McKemy, coord.) 19 THU (ALL DAY) T.M. Goodwin / Broadmoor Unit 2 (Rick Schofield) 21 SAT (6:30A-9:30A) ★ Osprey Pond Lane 2 (Dave Smith / Doreen LePage / Bob Dieterich) 22 SUN (8:30A-10:30A) ★ Pan's Garden (Susan Lerner/ Vicki Rogerson, coord.)

### TRIP KEY

### **EFFORT/DIFFICULTY**



#### by Mary Dunning

# Wading birds in the Everglades: Different responses to living in troubled waters

### Dale E. Gawlik, Ph.D., Director of Florida Atlantic University's Environmental Science Program in the Department of Biological Sciences at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL



### Tuesday, October 1 at 7PM

Meeting and program are free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:30PM for light refreshments. Origin Church, 6073 Summit Blvd., West Palm Beach. We look forward to seeing you there!

Come hear Dr. Dale Gawlik speak about the wading birds in the Everglades. Dr. Gawlik's research focuses on waterbird ecology and conservation, wetland and intertidal ecosystems, restoration ecology, and the use of birds in aquatic ecosystem management.

Dr. Gawlik has published over 70 papers, many focused on how hydrologic processes control wading bird populations in the Everglades of Florida, and he and his students have developed heron, stork, and ibis habitat models that link bird populations to the hydrologic management and restoration of the Everglades.

Dr. Gawlik serves on the IUCN Heron Specialists Group and IUCN Stork, Ibis, and Spoonbill Specialist Group, and he is also a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wood Stork Working Group. Dr. Gawlik has held a number of elected leadership positions in professional ornithological and scientific societies,



including his current positions as Secretary of the Association of Field Ornithologists and Councilor for the Waterbird Society.

Also at the meeting, our expert, Clive Pinnock, will speak about the October Bird of the Month, Downy Woodpecker.

November's Monthly Meeting will be held Tuesday, November 5 at 7PM at Origin Church, 6073 Summit Blvd. Nature-loving couple Marc Kramer & Eliana Ardila will share their epic stories and photos from their Florida to Alaska road trip in their VW Bus to discover birds and the wild places of North America.

#### Woodpecker continued from page 1

Downy Woodpeckers nest in dead trees or in the dead parts of live trees. They often make their nest cavity in the underside of a branch growing away from the main trunk. Nests are generally made in deciduous trees where the wood is infected with a fungus, making it easier for excavation. The cavity, usually 12 to 30 feet above ground, is excavated by both the male and female. 3 – 6 white eggs are incubated by

both sexes for about 12 days. Both parents participate in rearing the young, bringing their beaks full of insects at each feeding. The young fledge about 20 - 25 days after hatching and are cared for by the parents for a few weeks afterwards. One brood is typical for northern populations of "downies," while, in the south, two are more common.

# Profile: Valleri Brauer

by Kristen Murtaugh



Valleri Brauer grew up in the New York City area -Brooklyn, Queens, Oceanside, L.I. - and attended college at Farmingdale. She spent time as an adult in other parts of the country, including Ohio and Colorado, until 36 years ago, when she settled here in Florida. She lives in west Lake Worth in a villa with a glass-enclosed porch overlooking a lake. She and her indoor rescue cat Ozzie spend many happy hours in the porch looking out at the butterflies visiting the garden she has planted around the porch and at the many common birds visiting her feeders. Valleri also feeds the squirrels and enjoys watching them bury and then dig up their peanuts. Ozzie has made a friend with one of the squirrels; the two go nose to nose on either side of the glass.

Nature and the outdoors have been an important part of Valleri's entire life. She remembers annual vacation trips with her parents to a farm in the Catskills, where she fell in love with the animals there. Her home in Colorado had six acres. She had a horse and rode bare backed. She also raised Basset Hounds there. She was enchanted by the Abert's Squirrels and Snowy Owls of Colorado. She loved the mountains in Colorado but was attracted to the vivid colors of Florida - in the foliage, flowers, and sunsets. Early in their lives Valleri took her son and daughter on walks and introduced them to the delights of nature. Her three grandchildren grew up loving nature and animals, too. The various family households have a diversity of pets, including cats, dogs, gerbils, a prairie dog and a chinchilla (!).

30 years ago, a friend of her mother's invited her to attend a meeting of Audubon Everglades, held in those days in a building near the Science Museum. Audubon gave Valleri opportunities to indulge her love of birds and her enjoyment in meeting new people. Ten years ago, she was asked to volunteer as a field trip leader. For eight years she led the overnight Merritt Island-Viera trip. She has led other overnight trips, and she volunteers for the Christmas Bird Count.

What Valleri is most proud of, however, is being a regular leader of Audubon field trips at Wakodahatchee and Green Cay. She especially enjoys new birders and the opportunity to educate and inspire them to love birds and to want to come back. She has a wellarticulated philosophy and approach as a leader. She herself learned to identify birds slowly, focusing on a few birds each trip, photographing the ones she didn't know, and then looking them up in field guides. She wants her trip participants to know the steps they can take to improve their birding skills. Her trip venues have larger birds, which are easy to see and not apt to fly off. This is less exasperating for the novice birder and gives Valleri the opportunity to teach her participants about bird habitat and behavior and to point out the important identifying characteristics of birds and their differences from similar birds. She is constantly learning as much as she can about the local flora and other fauna so she can enrich her walks with that knowledge. She says her walks are slow. She wants to teach people how to use their eyes and their ears and how to focus. She enjoys the sociability side of birding and is often told her walks are "fun." The sunset walks are her favorites.

Valleri has worked as the manager of a dental office in Lake Worth for eleven and a half years. She works three days now and loves her job and her dentist's patients. Her hobbies are on the creative and artistic side – music (she plays the piano and guitar and used to sing), dancing (she goes to '50s places to dance!), painting, coloring, and photography. She has art in her genes; her mother was a sculptor and her uncle a professional artist with a gallery in New York City. During our interview Valleri showed me some of her photographs. They are the work of a highly talented artist. She has created strikingly beautiful images of birds and flowers. She also loves photographing dogs and often goes to dog parks, where she gets some great shots.

Valleri loves to travel. She went on an elevenday birding cruise with Gail Tomei four years ago. James Currie was on the trip, filming it for National Geographic. The trip went to Cartagena, Colombia, Panama, Belize, Grand Cayman Island, Cozumel, and Costa Rica. Guides met them at each port and took them to local hot spots. They had over 100 species. It sounded like a wonderful experience! Valleri and her daughter have started traveling together and have taken some special trips in the last three years. Two years ago, they went to the Grand Canyon and Zion and Bryce Canyons; last year they went to Mt. Rushmore, Jackson Hole, and Yellowstone; this year they went to Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the Bay of Fundy. They are planning a trip to Costa Rica for next year.

Valleri told me that, when she moved to Florida, she decided she wanted to focus on something in nature. Lucky for Audubon Everglades, that focus turned out to be on birds! I greatly enjoyed interviewing Valleri for this profile. She is enthusiastic, energetic, and eager to expand her knowledge and to share it with others. She loves the natural world, birds, and people. What could be better in a volunteer for Audubon Everglades?!

# AUDUBON EVERGLADES PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB



Photo: Pete Lekos shows some advanced Photoshop tricks to Nancy Freeman, who was promoted to the Salon group this season. © Lora Lekos

The room was full of excited photographers on Sept. 16, ready to learn the secrets of Photoshop, Lightroom, Elements, and Photos (a Mac program) from Club President Pete Lekos and his special Postprocessing Workshop. He introduced, explained and demonstrated techniques that would help participants optimize their images. Some participants brought laptops, and most came ready with images on flash stick drives. Some of the advanced club members offered their expertise when those present broke up into small groups.

Later in September a large group of new and veteran club members were inspired by Art Silvergate, an award-winning photographer and previous presenter for the club, who shared the magic of creating beautiful "Black and White Photography in the Digital Age" using modern digital equipment. Peaceful Waters Sanctuary will be the site of our first instructional field trip of the year on Saturday, Oct. 5, when Club members will roam the boardwalk and berms looking for great photos in the early morning light. We will be meeting in the parking lot at 7:15 AM.

And, on Oct. 19 at 9AM, club members will meet at Butterfly World in Coconut Creek for an opportunity to photograph thousands of butterflies, many exotic birds, and the flowers that grace the facility. Admission for members is only \$10. Pete and some of the more experienced members will be offering oneon-one instruction during both field trips.

These two field trips should have you ready to take winning photos for our first friendly assigned-subject competition of the year on Monday, October 22: Botany. We will also have a Nature Open subject competition. There will be plenty of ribbons to go around since the competition levels are divided into three groups: Beginner, Advanced, and Salon. There will be at least one award of merit and multiple honorable mentions for each level. For both competitions that evening. Steven Roth, an expert botanical photographer and previous presenter on the subject, will be judging.

To learn more about the October competition and the presentations, competitions, and field trips scheduled for this year and to find out more about membership and meetings (time and place), <u>please visit our</u> informative club section on the Audubon Everglades website. Refreshments are served at all meetings.

While Audubon Everglades Photography Club membership is encouraged, it is not a requirement. Guests may attend up to two club meetings. However, entry in club competitions and attendance at field trips require membership. You can join online or at any club meeting.

### Wetland Preserves at Wellington Mall on Verge of Destruction

by Scott Zucker

by Scott Zucker



On Oct. 7 the Wellington Village Council will vote on whether to allow Brefrank Inc. to destroy two thriving wetland conservation easement preserves containing Pond Cypress and Pond Apple trees on the Wellington Green Mall property that were granted in perpetuity and that the developer is obligated to maintain. The developer has been spinning a false narrative that these two wetlands are unhealthy (mitigation property is "promised" elsewhere), but, in fact they have simply been suffering from neglect that some gardening and invasive species removal would remedy.

On the first preserve site, the developer would destroy the existing canopy of the 5 acre preserve to the West of Starbucks on Forest Hill Blvd. and put up a 10.000-square foot BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse or Cooper's Hawk Winery (Of course, no actual hawks will be visiting the site, since the tree canopy will be cut down.) and a "marshy lake." On the second preserve site, they plan to cut down the existing canopy of an 18-acre parcel adjacent to the current Axis apartments and put up a 5-building, 185-apartment complex on 8 acres of the 17-acre preserve and create a shallow drainage lake surrounded by mostly monoculture vegetation with a few pond cypress trees sprinkled in. Currently, both these preserves are thriving green canopies and home to an abundance of wildlife, birds, and mostly native trees and vegetation.

This short-sighted action would effectively rid the entire expanse of the Wellington Green Mall property of any natural storm mitigation and water management, destroy historical remnants of the Northern Everglades, and eliminate a natural ecosystem that supports birds, wildlife and native vegetation. In short, they would be eliminating the "green" from Wellington Green Mall. <u>Please call or</u> <u>email</u> the five Wellington Town Council members and tell them how you feel about this important issue before they vote on Oct. 7.

# THE BIRD NERD: WELCOME TO A NEW SEASON

We're entering a new season as the weather changes and birds are undertaking their fall migration southward. The heat and doldrums of summer are over, and birds are returning to their wintering grounds, where they can settle after an intense breeding season raising the newest generation. Birders can enjoy a new wealth of species at this time of year, though fall-plumaged birds can be frustratingly difficult to identify.

Audubon Everglades starts its cycle of field trips in the fall to acquaint its members with the wide diversity of bird life found in south Florida, and this diversity includes resident species as well as seasonal and winter visitors. One of the most fruitful endeavors in this schedule is the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). hosted by National Audubon across the continent. Thousands of groups from Canada to Mexico and the Caribbean attempt to create inventories of their local bird populations that are then entered into a master database which can be useful in assessing the health of those populations continent-wide. Audubon Everglades conducts the Palm Beach County CBC, which covers ground from Loxahatchee Refuge in the west to the Lake Worth Pier and Boynton Inlet in the east to Dreher Park in the north and Lake Ida in the south, as well as everything in between. This Count has a history going back to 1950 and an uninterrupted database that exceeds 60 years. In succeeding installments of this column. I'll look a little more deeply into what these data can tell us, but I'll start here with some introductory observations.

The PBC CBC has documented more than 300 species of birds since 1950 and traced population status and changes among those species. A typical CBC here achieves a species total in the mid-130s to the high 140s. Last year's Count had a near record 150 species, boosted by the presence of several unusual pelagic species, from Common Eider to Masked Booby, Blacklegged Kittiwake, and Parasitic Jaeger. Land birds like Blue-winged Warbler and Western Tanager were also pleasant surprises.

It's interesting to note, though maybe not a great surprise, that over the years we have recorded eight exotic parrot species on the PBC CBC. The two

best known are the Monk Parakeet and the Nanday Parakeet. Monks were first recorded on the CBC in 1976 and have been on the list every year since 1988. Nandays first showed up in 1991 and have been increasing in frequency ever since. Both species are now well-established in our area, but several other parrots have been recorded only once or very rarely: Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, White-winged Parakeet, Red-lored Parrot, and Turquoise-fronted Parrot. This latter group may just represent odd escapes from captivity. Two species, Red-crowned Parrot and Yellow-headed Parrot, follow a different pattern. They were first recorded in the mid-1970s and seemed to become regular thereafter, until eventually petering out. Red-crowned Parrot was last recorded in 1999. and Yellow-headed Parrot has been absent from the CBC since 2007.

The bird with the longest record on the PBC CBC is the Bald Eagle. Their sightings have not been abundant nor an annual occurrence, but they have been regular through the years. This helps establish that, during the peak of the DDT poisoning crisis, south Florida maintained a viable population of this national symbol along the East Coast, as did coastal Maine and the Chesapeake Bay region.

There remain many more stories to be told with this wealth of information gathered by folks out just to have a good time birding, so stay tuned.

### CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

by Susan McKemy

### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE Volunteer with Audubon everglades

Do you have some free time to share? Would you like to get more involved with Audubon Everglades? We have plenty of volunteer opportunities and are sure to have a place where you can make a difference. Remember, YOU are what hope looks like to a bird - get involved!

If you have a special interest or talent or simply want to give back to Audubon Everglades as a volunteer, please check the list of volunteer opportunities. If your interest area is not listed but you would like to volunteer, get in touch with us and let us know your interest. There are new ways to get involved all the time.

If you would like more information or are ready to get involved, please send an email to <u>President@</u> <u>AudubonEverglades.org</u>. We look forward to having you on our team!

### **CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Community Science Projects** (bird surveys, habitat projects, etc.)

**Community Events** 

**Conservation Advocacy Team** 

**Education and Outreach** 

Social Media

**Volunteer Organizer** 

# Save the Date! The 2019 Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 28



Since its beginning more than a century ago, the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) has relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteers like you. This annual Audubon-led census is one of the longest-running bird-monitoring projects in the world. Its data has helped researchers gauge how species will adapt to climate change and identify shifting population trends in rare and common wildlife. The West Palm Beach Christmas bird count has been an annual event since 1956; this will be our 64th year of consecutive counts.

Again this year, we are fortunate to have Chuck Weber serving as our CBC Organizer and Data Compiler. Our 15-mile diameter "count circle" is subdivided into "count areas," each with a team leader. Teams include both experienced birders, less-experienced birders (who can help with keeping the tally of the birds the other team members call out), and photographers. If you are interested in participating in the CBC, please contact us ASAP at <u>info@AudubonEverglades.org</u>. There are many areas where you can help.

In accordance with event rules, birders must stay within a 15-mile radius, while they scramble to observe as many bird species as possible within that radius. West Palm Beach's count area extends from just south of Southern Boulevard in West Palm Beach to Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach. It encompasses part of the coastline and about 10 percent of the 226-square-mile Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. The terrain of our circle has evolved over the years as farm areas west of Military Trail have become residential communities. There are many gated communities with good habitat for birds within our count circle now, and we would like to include these areas in our count again this year. If you live in one of these communities, you could help us out tremendously by paving the way for one of our teams to gain access to your community and by offering to escort them around for a quick survey for birds. Several of our golf communities include habitat certified by Audubon International, such as Quail Ridge in Boynton Beach, where Jen Estan has offered to set up a team and survey their large community. Other communities of interest to us include Wycliff Country Club, The Fountains, Hunter's Run, Indian Springs Country Club, Pinetree Golf Club, The Isles, and Olympia. Please contact us if you are willing to help us survey your community at info@ AudubonEverglades.org.

After a busy day of birding, we will have our annual CBC Compilation Gathering. Audubon Everglades will again cater a dinner for everyone who participated in the count. Teams will report their findings, and we will get a quick glimpse of our successful day. Please consider volunteering at the event -another opportunity to support the Christmas Bird Count. The Gathering is always a festive Audubon Everglades event. We are pleased to announce this year's event will be held at HATCH 1121 in Lake Worth Beach. Keep an eye open for future information about registering for the dinner. We look forward to another successful CBC this year. Please consider joining the fun!

## Human Health and Wildlife Impacted by Recent Executive Actions by Trump Administration as it Continues to Put Profits First

by Scott Zucker



could be affected by changes to the Endangered Species Act. © Scott Zucker

The Endangered Species Act, which is one of the most important Federal regulations protecting wildlife and their habitat, has been gutted by David Bernhardt, Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Influenced by mining, agribusiness, and development interests, the significant new changes will now consider economic factors prior to the listing of a species, decrease the protection to threatened species, and limit designations of what constitutes critical habitat to areas already occupied by a listed species, thus ignoring the effects of climate change or other disturbances that may affect the movement of endangered species. A number of states are bringing legal challenges against the Department of the Interior. Florida, which has the highest backlog of species waiting for protected status, is not among them.

Again, bowing to pressure from mining, agribusiness, and development interests, Andrew Wheeler,

Administrator of the Department of Environmental Protection (EPA), formally announced that they are tossing out Obama-era regulations that had increased wetland and small waterway protection under Waters of the United States. This will allow the Trump Administration to redefine what waters deserve federal protection. The expectation is that a new rule will be finalized sometime this winter that would protect only wetlands adjacent to a major body of water or ones connected to waterways by surface water. This could undermine the protection of nearly 50% of America's wetlands. (Florida has already lost nearly half of its 20.3 million wetlands because of draining, diking and filling since the 19th century.)

The EPA is knuckling under Monsanto and refusing to approve warning labels for products containing glyphosate even though the International Agency for Research on Cancer has labeled it a "possible carcinogen." Glyphosate in products like Roundup may be 1000 times more toxic to humans and wildlife because of the other active ingredients in them; it may also affect fish and wildlife, because killing the plants alters the animals' habitat. Recently, Miami banned the use of glyphosate, and Costco stopped selling all products containing the ingredient in its stores.

The EPA also refused to ban chlorpyrifos, a chemical related to sarin nerve gas, which is found in many pesticides commonly used in agriculture and has been linked to neurological damage in children and agricultural workers who may be exposed to or consume the chemical. In addition, in 2016, the EPA found that chlorpyrifos is "likely to adversely affect" 97 percent of all threatened and endangered wildlife, including more than 100 listed bird species. (The severely endangered Florida Grasshopper sparrow is on that list.)

These and other recent actions by the Trump Administration continue to put the health of Americans and our wildlife and habitat at risk.

## 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 available to members of Friends of Audubon Everglades. 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.

(2 adults and children under age 18)	please provide the names of all members living at the same address.
State	ZIP
City	
Address	
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New Member Renewal	embership amount with a contribution of \$
Please check one: $\Box$ \$25 (Single) $\Box$ \$	ake checks payable to Audubon Society of the Everglades) 20 (Student)  \$20 (Senior)  \$35 (Household')  \$75 (Patron') embership amount with a contribution of \$