

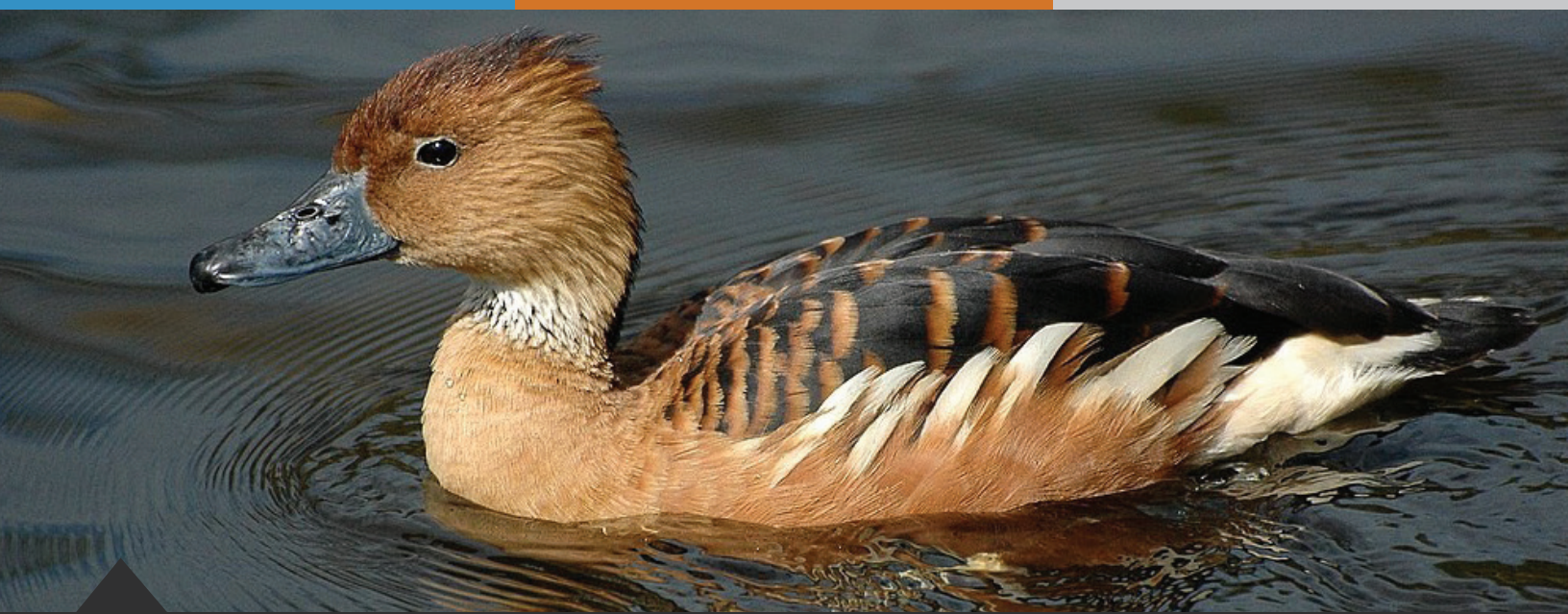


EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

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Fulvous Whistling Duck © Wikipedia

Bird of the Month: Fulvous Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

The 2020 Bird of the Month series will focus on species of waterfowl that permanently reside in or are seasonal visitors to our state. To assist our members in viewing these birds more readily, efforts will be made to indicate possible locations where they might be seen. Some of these locations may currently be inaccessible due to the current pandemic.

Native to warm freshwater marshes of Africa, Asia and South and Central America, Fulvous Whistling Ducks began arriving in numbers in the southern portion of Florida in the 1960s. The species is currently classified as a rare to common resident of our state. They inhabit shallow freshwater marshes, flooded rice fields, agricultural fields and pastures, and lakes, where they forage (dabbling) for aquatic invertebrates, glean insects from plants, and consume vegetation (including rice, grass seeds, sedges, knotgrass, wheat seeds, etc.). They are occasionally observed in deeper than usual bodies of water, where they dive for food.

Because of their habit of roosting in trees, they were once called tree-ducks. Flocks are often seen and heard flying between roosting sites and foraging locations at dawn and dusk, giving repeated whistling calls.

These ducks are goose-like in appearance, with long necks and legs. Their plumage incorporates rich tawny and cinnamon colors overall, interspersed with a black crown and nape, a buffy colored head, and a pale throat. They have broad black bars on the wings and back, and the sides of the neck have fine white speckling. The flanks have long white stripes, the tail is black, and the rump and under-tail feathers are white. The legs and bill are dark gray.

Although mated pairs maintain their pair-bond through their adult lives, there is evidence that some males will occasionally mate with multiple females during the breeding season. By mid-April, mated pairs begin nesting and spending time away from the flocks

they normally associate with. The pairs do not establish or defend a territory but will defend the nest site. After determining and establishing the nest location, both male and female make ready for building the nest (made by the female). Made of woven grass, sedges, and cattail, it is placed on the ground near water or in the marsh just above the water. Unlike other ducks, Fulvous Whistling Ducks do not use down feathers to line the nest.

Twelve to sixteen eggs are laid and incubated for 24 to 26 days. Females may lay their eggs in each other's nest or in the nest of other duck species ("egg dumping"). Some of these nests can contain 60+ eggs. Incubation duties are shared by both male and female, unlike most other duck species. The precocial young leave the nest soon after hatching and can find their own food and feed themselves. They fledge about two months after hatching.

AUDUBON EVERGLADES UPDATE

First, our hope is that each of you and your families are healthy and safe. Like you, we feel isolated and miss our Audubon friends. With that in mind, the board and committee chairs had a zoom meeting May 14. We discussed how to proceed and decided that we would schedule field trips as we always have. Rick Schofield has already contacted his regular field trip leaders and they are in the planning stage. We will also schedule speakers who have the capability to present live programs or webcasts for each general membership meeting. We will not publish our two traditional brochures, but will instead monitor and update the Kite so that all changes to the schedule are reflected there.

Scott Zucker and Mary Young have been working diligently on conservation issues, and Vicki Rogerson is creating Plant for Bird programs for us.

We are touched by your commitment to AE! Doreen Le Page reported that a large percentage of you have renewed your membership. Your support inspires us to give you meaningful programming and encourages our efforts in education and conservation. We are interested in knowing how you want to proceed and are beginning to create a questionnaire so we can make plans that take your concerns into our planning process.

You are accustomed to seeing a write-up before the monthly General Meeting, but there is nothing usual about these times. Last Wednesday, June 2, we held our first Zoom general meeting. 56 households attended. Technically there were a few glitches, but our speaker, Dr. Laura Brandt, was fabulous. She is a Regional Scientist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Services, and she shared her knowledge about both alligators and crocodiles. We will have another Zoom webcast July 7. Originally the program was to be the AE Photo Showcase, but that will be difficult to do on a webcast, so we will have a substitute program. The July Kite will be ready in time to let you know all the details. Stay tuned!

Your AE board and committee chairs.

Green School Award

by Paton White

Our Audubon Chapter has a long history of supporting Pine Jog Environmental Center's Green School Program with both judges and funding awards. Our chapter has more judges than any other organization. We give the annual \$500 Habitat Improvement award. This year Mary Dunning, Vicki Rogerson, and Paton White reviewed the finalists and chose Lantana Elementary School. It was not an easy decision, because several of the schools presented inspiring stories. We chose Lantana Elementary because they have followed through with multiple projects over multiple years and, while they have attracted some outside money, they are a Title I school with little to no resources. Last year our chapter received a grant from FPL, and Lantana Elementary was a school that applied for and won a portion of the funds. The grant money was miniscule compared to what they are doing. Their focus is ongoing, and they have had both Vicki and Kat Rahla advise them. It is with particular pleasure that we were able to award a school whose faculty's "greening efforts" have expanded dramatically and whose funds are used so wisely in the enhancement of both the school grounds and the students' knowledge of the environment.

ROAMING THE REFUGE

How to Get Outdoors When You Can't Get Out

by Ron Seifer, Ph.D., Member, Friends of Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

Green spaces have long been identified as a source of help for what ails us – and, now, so are blue spaces (water, marine). The benefits to mind and body of getting out and connecting with nature are well known and have been researched by multidisciplinary scientists.

How does getting out work? The biophilia hypothesis ("biophilia" - from "bio," meaning "life," and "philia," meaning "friendly feeling towards," a term coined by Edward O. Wilson) expresses the idea that, as a consequence of evolution, man has an inborn, biologically-based tendency to connect with nature. The benefits to health and stress management of connection to nature have long been reported by Japanese forest medicine society researchers studying people visiting biodiverse forests in shrin-yoku or "forest bathing" programs. Other physical health studies have found benefits in simple exposure to natural settings, such as boosting immune and cardiovascular systems, lowering blood pressure, and improving energy. Psychological studies have also found improvement to stress reduction, mood, focus, and sleep. Beneficial results have been reported in simply walking or exercising while practicing mindfulness or meditation for a few hours each week in biodiverse forests, neighborhood parks, back yards, and even on green space sidewalks. A slow mindful walk is recommended, with the attention focused

on all the diverse sensory inputs of sight, sound, smell, feel, and movement of the experience. If one cannot leave their home, office or school to directly experience an outdoors natural setting, studies have reported that moderate benefits can be obtained by practicing mindful nature experiences indoors.

Focused on-task overtime work, cramming for tests, or overusing electronic devices can be a mentally draining process leading to "directed attention fatigue." Taking a break with nature by going off-task, spending time watching birds, water or marine places, or tending to a potted native plant are activities found helpful for renewing focus and patience. Studies have even found that passive patients in a hospital room with a window with a green view have shorter postoperative stays and complications than those who have no view or an outside concrete wall view. Researchers suggest that indoors "nature connection breaks" be practiced a few minutes, a few times a day, such as simply looking at a natural object or picture and recalling all the mindful sensory input personally associated with it, while practicing breathing exercises and self-affirmations. Health practitioners, books, and online programs are available to help in combining such cognitive techniques with walk or exercise programs. For many, combining nature imagery with yoga, relaxation exercises, or other mental or physical fitness programs has also been reported

continued on page 4

Purple Martin Program 2020 Update

by Vicki Rogerson



Photo: Purple Martin parent © Shelly Rozenberg

The Audubon Everglades Purple Martin Program has been busy this year. We met with our new steward at Wakodahatchee Wetlands and did some housecleaning to help prepare for this year's Purple Martins. The houses at Peaceful Waters and Wellington Environmental Preserve (WEP) have been very active, and WEP is only on its second season. We can't thank Scott Fletcher and the Village of Wellington enough for all their hard work and support of Purple Martins. They have added an educational sign on Purple Martins at WEP that has been well received by the many visitors to the preserve. We have collaborated with Okeechellee Nature Center (ONC) to aid them in evaluating and relocating existing houses to ensure successful nesting in the 2021 season, and we are looking forward to the educational opportunities ONC will provide on Purple Martins. Emilie Travis has already created a Purple Martin video that you can check out on their Facebook page in the video section. We have seen our Eagle Scout project at Riverbend completed, and we met with new stewards. While we have seen birds in the area, none have yet taken up occupancy. We are excited to have the three Purple Martin Gourd Systems that were donated to Audubon Everglades by Jim Convery and Kathy Busick installed and occupied at two Fire Rescue Stations in Wellington. Lorraine Starr, the steward for both fire rescue locations is a retired PBC Fire Rescue Lieutenant. She has done an amazing job installing the gourd systems and taking care of these two locations. Audubon Everglades members, Alan and Cherie Summersgill, have put in a house at Epiphany Lutheran Church this year, and Alan is working on assembling a second one in time for the 2021 season. The house is right next to the church's preschool, and should provide quite a lot of excitement for the preschoolers when nesting begins.

Congratulations to Shelly Rozenberg, our Purple Martin Program co-chair. She has once again had her photos of Purple Martins printed in the Purple Martin Conservation Association's magazine, The Purple Martin Update. Shelly also shares her love and interest in Purple Martins by posting her photos on our many local Facebook pages, as well as on state and national Facebook pages, and she is an admin for the Purple Martin Society of Florida Facebook page.

A huge thank-you from Audubon Everglades and the Purple Martins to all of our location hosts, stewards, and Jim Convery and Kathy Busick! To paraphrase David Yarnold, You are what housing looks like to a Purple Martin!

If you are interested in starting your own backyard Purple Martin colony, or have questions about Purple Martins, please contact Vicki Rogerson or Shelly Rozenberg. It's never too early to get ready for the next season!

[Vicki Rogerson](#), 561-352-7835; [Shelly Rozenberg](#)



Photo: Purple Martin house © Shelly Rozenberg



Photo: Purple Martin nestlings © Shelly Rozenberg

Purple Martin House Public Locations:

All of the locations listed can be viewed by the public, but, as you know Wakodahatchee and Peaceful Waters are closed. If you do visit any of these locations, we appreciate your consideration of the 24/7 shifts at the fire houses and day to day coming and going at the other locations. It seems like they just got here, but Purple Martins are already fledging and by early July will be headed for South America.

1. Wakodahatchee Wetlands - 13270 Jog Rd., Delray Beach, FL 33484

- Features one 12-room house that has been consistently full of nesting martins
- Located on berm, viewable from boardwalk at SE corner looking into the property
- Manager/Steward: WPB Water Utilities Department

2. Peaceful Waters Sanctuary - 11676 Pierson Road, Wellington, FL 33414 (located within Wellington Village Park)

- Features four 12-room houses that have seen their occupancy level grow every year
- Located at entrance on north side, viewable from boardwalk and grass pathway
- Manager/Steward: Village of Wellington - Scott Fletcher

3. Wellington Environmental Preserve - 3491 Flying Cow Ranch Road, Wellington, FL 33414

- Features two 24-room houses with active nesting; recent count of approximately 50 martins
- Located directly west of the entrance; has informational sign and is viewable from pathways
- Manager/Steward: Village of Wellington - Scott Fletcher

continued on page 4

4. Daggerwing Nature Center - 11435 Park Access Rd, Boca Raton, FL 33498 (located within Burt Aaronson South County Regional Park)

- Features two 12- room houses with active nesting
- Houses are located west of parking lot and viewable from parking area
- Manager/Steward: Daggerwing Nature Center - Sean Mallee and Lila Varel
- Audubon Everglades Eagle Scout Project

5. Epiphany Lutheran Church -4460 Lyons Rd, Lake Worth, FL 33467

- Features one 12-room house
- House located on north side of property just west of the preschool fence line, viewable from access road
- Manager/Steward: Allan and Cherie Summersgill
- First year for house, new location with no previous houses

6. Riverbend Park -9060 W Indiantown Rd, Jupiter, FL 33478

- Features two 12-room houses
- Houses are located at the east end of the retention pond that borders the main parking lot (where offices and restrooms are), viewable from parking area
- Manager/Steward: Riverbend Park - Pat Ash, Dane, Stephanie
- Audubon Everglades Eagle Scout Project
- First year for houses, new location with no previous houses

7. PBC Fire Rescue Station 25 -1060 Wellington Trace, Wellington, FL 33414

- Features gourd style houses with 24 rooms/ cavities
- Manager/Steward: Lorraine Starr
- First year for houses, new location with no previous houses, already occupied with 10 eggs and 3 young reported
- Houses located on south side of fire station along canal, park in back parking lot to view
- Gourd system donated to Audubon Everglades by Jim Convery and Kathy Busick of Fort Myers, Florida

8. PBC Fire Rescue Station 27 -1060 Wellington Trace, Wellington, FL 33414

- Existing location for past 8 years with high occupancy, last season reported 28 breeding pairs and 52 young
- Features gourd style houses with 20 rooms/ cavities
- Houses located on south side of fire station, park at rear parking lot by ballfield
- Gourd system donated to Audubon Everglades by Jim Convery and Kathy Busick of Fort Myers, Florida

9. Okeehelée Nature Center -7715 Forest Hill Blvd., WPB, FL 33413

- Future site for 2021!
- Existing houses will be refurbished and moved to Audubon Everglades recommended location
- Viewable by the public from back side of the nature center
- Manager/Steward: Okeehelée Nature Center- Heather Moody, Emilie Travis, Skip and Ed
- Audubon Everglades collaboration

as beneficial. While Covid-19 imposes physical distancing, it is important to identify accessible outdoor green and blue spaces and to follow CDC and physician health guidelines. Locally, in Palm Beach County, the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, the northernmost part of the Florida Everglades, is open to visitors. Information on the status of the over fifty miles of walking, biking, water, and camera trails at the Refuge can be found at fws.gov/refuge/arm_loxahatchee/. Contact loxahatcheefriends.com to join, volunteer, or donate to the nonprofit Friends of Loxahatchee to help in support of the Refuge.

For all programs and procedures discussed, it is recommended the reader follow CDC guidelines and consult with their physician or counselor for the best physical or cognitive management program for their ability and situation. This article is intended for educational information purposes and is not intended as a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment of the reader's unique situation.

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.

Or, complete this form and mail your check to: Audubon Society of the Everglades, PO Box 16914, West Palm Beach, Florida 33416-6914 ([make checks payable to Audubon Society of the Everglades](#))

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 \$ _____

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

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 _____
