



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

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Mottled Duck Family © Scott Zucker

Bird of the Month: Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*)

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

The Mottled Duck is one of four species of native waterfowl that breed regularly in Florida (others include both Whistling Ducks and the Wood Duck). It is uncommon to fairly common permanent resident in our state and is found in fresh and brackish water habitats, namely ponds, tidal/coastal marshes, flooded agricultural fields and pastures, and a variety of other wetlands.

The species plumage is mottled brown and tan except on its lightly-streaked head. Bill colors differ between male and female, with the male's being completely yellow, compared to the female's orange-yellow bill. Both sexes have a dark spot at the gape of their beaks (where the lower bill meets the face). Mottled Ducks differ in appearance from the similar-looking Black Ducks. The Mottled Ducks are paler in overall

appearance, and the female Black Duck's bill is dull green. Mottled Ducks are also sometimes confused with the female Mallard, but female Mallards have an orange bill marked with black, and the Mallard's speculum is bordered by white on both sides.

To add to the confusion, due to the release of numerous pet Mallards in Florida and elsewhere in the southeast, Mottled Ducks and Mallards are now freely interbreeding, producing hybrids. This dilution of the wild population of Mottled Ducks may eventually threaten the viability and survival of the species.

Unlike most waterfowl, Mottled Ducks are almost never seen in large flocks, generally traveling in pairs or small groups. They feed at the surface or just below, often tipping their tails skyward while extending

their necks and heads to reach vegetation below the surface. Courtship and pair-bonding generally begin in November. Breeding starts in January and extends through July.

The nest is placed in dense vegetation, usually within 600 feet of water. It is typically built on the ground, in a shallow depression with grasses, herbs, and feathers and down from the female's breast. Eight to twelve whitish to pale-olive eggs are laid and incubated solely by the female for 24 – 28 days. The young leave the nest shortly after hatching, with the female leading them to feeding sites. The young are able to feed themselves. They are capable of short flights at 50 days and sustained flights at 60 – 70 days.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

August 2020 - Doreen LePage

Advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion requires hard work and challenges all nonprofits. National Audubon and Audubon Florida are emphasizing diversity, and Audubon Everglades is joining that effort.

As Florida's population continues to diversify, so must the organizations dedicated to preserving the state's natural environment. For too long the environmental movement has been seen as a homogenous group of concerned and dedicated citizens – mostly white and mostly older. In order for our club's conservation and environmental education efforts to succeed, our membership and leadership must reflect the diversity of our community.

We welcome your ideas to help Audubon Everglades move forward in this direction. Sharing articles and information about problems faced by birders and nature lovers of color will help us learn how to share our concern for the environment more broadly and more effectively. In striving for diversity, we will be better stewards of our changing world.

We are initiating our monthly President's Corner again after its long absence from the Kite. I am honored to serve our club as president. COVID-19 has placed new demands upon all our lives. The board has been busy behind the scenes to develop a new direction for our club to safely navigate through our "new normal" lifestyles. As I write this column, Palm Beach County has extremely high COVID-19 case levels every day and I encourage everyone to wear face coverings and practice social distancing when out in public. We need our combined efforts to protect each other to get this virus under control.

Our SIP (shelter in place) orders kept people off the beaches. As a result, a remarkable thing happened on Deerfield Beach: approximately 50 Least Terns were attracted to the beach for their nesting site. But when the SIP restrictions were relaxed and people began returning to the beach a problem resulted. Under the leadership of Ann Wiley, 13 volunteer stewards guarded the Deerfield Beach Least Tern Colony from 7:00am till 8:30pm seven days a week

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Audubon Everglades Presents "A Virtual Turtle Walk" led by Hannah Campbell, Director of Education at Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center

AUG
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Tuesday, August 4 at 7PM
Zoom Hosted Presentation



Audubon Everglades monthly member lecture programs will continue in August with a "Virtual Turtle Walk" led by Hannah Campbell, Director of Education at the Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center. Join us via Zoom on Tuesday, August 4 at 7pm and learn about the connection between sea turtles, our health, and the health of our planet. In her presentation Hannah will discuss how we are all connected to the ocean, why it is critical to help protect it (for us and our future generations) and, together, we will watch one of the most ancient processes on the planet – a sea turtle's incredible journey from the ocean to the

beach to carefully construct and camouflage her nest under the cover of night.

Hannah Campbell is an environmental education professional at the Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center (LMC), a sea turtle research, rehabilitation and conservation organization in Juno Beach, Florida, and she is the Southeast Regional Director (RD) for the Florida Marine Science Educators Association (FMSEA). Hannah is also a lead instructor for the University of Florida's/IFAS Florida Master Naturalist Program's Palm Beach County teaching team and has been an invited instructor for the Audubon Society of the Everglades' Conservation Stewardship course since 2016.

Hannah is a graduate of Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) Charles E Schmidt College of Science and a current candidate at the FAU Graduate College. Hannah is the 2017 Emerald Award honoree by the Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida and was named Outstanding Educator of the Year by the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society in 2020.

Please check your email for a link to join this exciting member presentation via Zoom.

Results of the online voting

by Rick Schofield

We had a total of 88 Audubon Everglades members vote for the 2020-2021 slate of officers and budget. Voting was open from July 3 through July 17 and is now closed.

The slate was approved by an 88-0 vote while the budget was approved by an 87-1 vote.

Thanks to those who took the time to vote.

(till 11:00pm on weekends). I am so pleased that seven of these volunteers were Audubon Everglades members: Chuck and Linda Hignite, Marcia Yeip, Chris Golia, Nancy Freeman, Marla Pankin and Marie Dugan. Many of these nests were successful and the birds have migrated back to South America and the Caribbean. Great job guys!

The club is extremely thankful to Rick Schofield for volunteering his IT talents to design and manage results of the COVID-19 Planning Survey. Our membership response was strong and your feedback will be utilized while planning our 2020 programs and field trips. Be assured that your safety and health will be our primary concern.

Rick stepped forward with his talents to address another important issue facing our club. The pandemic resulted in our cancelation of the Annual Meeting in April. The ballot was distributed to everyone in July allowing our members to vote on the nominated slate of officers and the annual budget was crafted by Rick. Being an all-volunteer managed and operated club, the strength of our organization is a direct result of our membership stepping forward when we need them.

Thank you to Paula Gatrell who has volunteered to pick up the club's mail at the post office. Many thanks to Paton White for handling that task for years.

I am pleased to announce that Clive Pinnock and Linda McCandless have been appointed to the board. Both Clive and Linda are familiar faces to the membership and bring many talents to our board. I thank both for their desire to serve the club.

Scott Zucker, our VP, has volunteered to take on the responsibility of leading the monthly Zoom virtual meetings for me, for which I am very thankful. The take-home message from our COVID-19 Planning Survey was clear. Until there is an effective and proven vaccine available, we will not be offering face-to-face meetings.

Until next month.....stay safe.

- Doreen

Shorebird Steward Team

by Marcia Yeip and Chris Golia



Photo: Least Terns © Marcia Yeip

South Florida is fortunate to have a Least Tern colony on Deerfield Beach this year. Deerfield Beach was closed for a few months, due to Covid-19, around the time the Least Terns were starting to nest. Rather than their usual spot somewhere on a flat-top roof, they saw the beach as a perfect nesting area. So, roughly by the end of April 2020, the colony began to set up housekeeping on the beautiful vacant beach.

Fish and Wildlife Commission quickly intervened, cordoning off the large area, about half the size of a football field. Located just south of the busy pier, the beach is normally visited by hundreds of people each day. FWC also placed signage and pallets in the area to offer the birds shelter and shade.

The Least Tern population declined by about 88% between 1966 and 2015, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. The North American Waterbird Conservation Plan estimates a continental population of 60,000 to 100,000 breeding birds and list it as a Species of High Concern. Part of the decline is due to the loss of nesting habitat.

According to Fish and Wildlife Commission, this is the only time Least Terns have nested on Deerfield Beach. FWC says, too, that this is the only ground-nesting Least Tern colony from Brevard County all the way down the Eastern Seaboard, including the Florida Keys. There have been at least 140 adults and 40 nests spotted in the Deerfield Beach colony.

A volunteer group of 16 individuals, Seabird Stewards, are monitoring and protecting the nest colony. Stewards are present seven days a week from 7:30 a.m. until 8:30 pm. The group is composed of people living nearby and members of Broward Audubon and Audubon Everglades. Seven of the 16 volunteers are

from Audubon Everglades. The Stewards interact with the public and try to educate them about what is going on with the birds at the beach. Beachgoers are usually very excited to learn about the life of Least Terns and see how amazing they are.

As of July 7, there were 60 flight-capable chicks still at the site, along with 20 active nests. Chicks are hatching every day, and it is a joy to watch them grow. More than 70 flight-capable chicks and their parents have already left to head south. We expect the remaining birds to gradually leave for their home in South America, probably by the end of July or early August.

The success of this colony has been due to a joint effort among FWC, the City of Deerfield Beach, and volunteers dedicated to the project. The project leader, Ann Wiley from Broward Audubon, organized and trained the stewards. Ann's passion, motivation, and countless hours spent at the site contributed significantly to the success of the colony.

Score one for Mother Nature!!

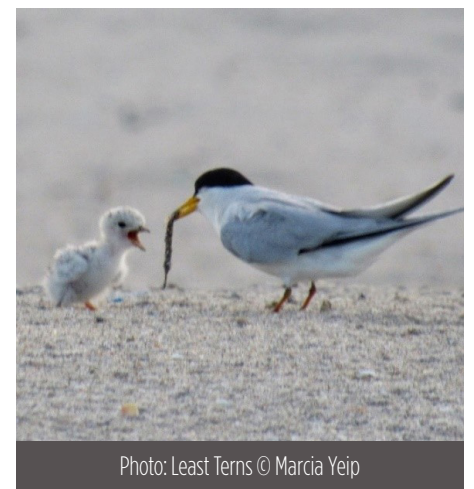


Photo: Least Terns © Marcia Yeip

PROFILE: CATHY HANSON

by Kristen Murtaugh



Photo: Cathy Hanson

Last month a masked profile; this month a profile via Zoom. Much easier to understand what the other person is saying (!) and just as much fun. Cathy Hanson has been a member of Audubon Everglades for 10 years and a Board member for 6 years, 4 of those as Secretary. I enjoyed learning how her interest in birding has developed and become an integral part of her life.

Cathy was born in Columbus and spent the first part of her life in Ohio. She attended Ohio State University, where she met her husband Tom. They lived in North Carolina while he was in law school, and then in Cleveland until thirty years ago, when they moved to Florida. Tom's Cleveland law firm merged with a firm in Miami and wanted someone from the home office to relocate to Florida. Since Cathy and Tom loved the ocean and the sun, the decision to move was easy. Their two daughters were born in Ohio but grew up in Florida. Cathy had an early career as the first female bond underwriter in Cleveland. Not being bilingual, she could not practice her profession in Miami, so she devoted herself to volunteer work related to their daughters' interests. She was a leader of two Girl Scout troops, often the "room mother" and often a field trip chaperone, and she accompanied them to tennis and synchronized swimming practices and competitions. She was one of the founders of the Friends of the Arts at St. Andrew's School. One daughter is now a singer/songwriter living in Los Angeles. The other is an art historian on a post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard University's Busch-Reisinger Museum. Clearly Cathy

passed on her interest in the arts to her daughters. Tom and she have a four-year old granddaughter in LA.

Cathy's interest in birding evolved from her interest in photography. When she signed up for a class, her family told her that they did not want to be her subjects, so Cathy started taking walks at Wakodahatchee and Loxahatchee and taking pictures of birds. During the class critiques, her fellow students would ask, "what's this bird?" She got herself a field guide, joined Audubon walks, and learned about birds. Cathy and Tom travel extensively, and birding added a new element to their trips. Now they look for National Wildlife Refuges and local bird club walks in the areas they visit. They have been to 48 states in the U.S. The last two, Vermont and Arkansas, won't be off their list for long; they already know what birds they want to see there.

Cathy has always been on the lookout for birding opportunities. She accompanied Tom on his conference trips, and, while he was in his meetings, she took the rental car and joined local Audubon chapter walks, knowing that local birders know where to find an area's special species. Once, on her way to pick up her daughter in North Carolina, she stopped overnight in South Carolina and the next day joined an early morning bird walk. After the walk, the group planned to take a canoe trip. They had an extra space and invited Cathy to join them. She called her daughter with the changed ETA and went on the canoe trip with her new birder friends. Since Tom's retirement they have had several trips to wonderful places, including Croatia, the Canadian Rockies. Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. When they went to Africa, they engaged safari guides to help them find and identify birds. The guides were excited because most of their clients were not that interested in birds. They saw 100 different species on the safari, had a lot of fun, and their interest and enthusiasm added to their guides' positive experience. Last year Cathy and Tom went to North Dakota and hired a guide for two days. He was a local state college professor and a talented birder, who took them into state-owned properties they could not have accessed themselves.

Cathy became a member of Audubon Everglades after going on field trips and attending monthly meetings.

She's met a lot of fun people through Audubon and enjoys being a board member and the secretary. Cathy continues to photograph birds, and she still uses her photos as a tool to identify unusual species. Once she was in Howard Park in Tampa and photographed a gull she could not identify. She found the rare gull – a Black-headed Gull – in a guidebook and was happy to have her identification confirmed in a later e-Bird report of its presence in that location. Cathy finds the rare bird notices on eBird a great resource, especially when travelling. She gets notifications of unusual sightings in all her favorite places, including where her daughters are. Cathy does not list on eBird, but she keeps lists of the species she's seen in Africa, Australia, and Florida.

Cathy and Tom are gradually turning their garden into a native garden as they replace planting areas. She was inspired a few years ago when she attended the annual Native Garden Tour organized by Audubon Everglades and the Palm Beach County Native Plant Society. Northern Mockingbirds and Mourning Doves have raised families in her yard. She has a resident Brown Thrasher. In season, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds nectar at the native plants, and as many as fourteen Painted Buntings visit her feeders.

For the past 10 years Cathy has been busy in the community as chairman of her Junior League book group as well as captain of her Palm Beach County tennis league team. One of her special interests is the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. She was in the Chicago area for the Ohio State-Northwestern football game some years ago and visited Oak Park. She visited Wright's home and workshop there and took a walking tour of the houses he designed in the town. Cathy was smitten. She bought the guide to Wright buildings by state and has travelled to see them around the country. She told me that one of the largest collections is in Lakeland, Florida, on the Florida Southern College campus. I always think of questions I should have asked the people I interview, afterwards, while I'm writing up the profile. The question that comes to my mind for Cathy is: which Frank Lloyd Wright location would yield the most bird species? Fallingwater in Pennsylvania? The setting seems promising!

EagleWatch in Florida and Palm Beach County

by Linda McCandless



Photo: Adult Bald Eagle delivering soft material to line a Palm Beach County nest © Doreen LePage

The Florida Audubon EagleWatch Program started in 1992 in Central Florida and has since expanded statewide, including into Palm Beach County in 2015. Through this program, volunteers monitor Bald Eagle nests and report their findings to an on-line database. Shawnlei Breeding, the Audubon EagleWatch Program Manager, recently held an End-of-Season Celebration via Zoom to provide highlights of Florida's 2019-2020 Bald Eagle nesting season. She reported that 480 volunteers monitored 840 nests this season. Ninety percent of the nestlings fledged, for a total of 800 new Bald Eagle juveniles in the state!

Sadly, though, the mortality rate for Eagles during their first year of life is greater than 50%. Some of the hurdles encountered by Florida's Bald Eagles just this past nesting season included:

- Fire
- An alligator attack on an adult Bald Eagle which was trying to snag a fish in a pond for its eaglet
- Storms
- Drones
- Rodenticide, a poison used to kill rodents
- Pox, a viral bird skin disease which causes lesions

- A fish hook in the beak of a young eaglet
- Two eaglets accidentally impaled themselves on a cell tower lightening rod and perished

There aren't as many nests in Palm Beach County as there are in the mid-section of the state; however, 16 volunteers monitored 18 Bald Eagle nests in the county. Twelve of those nests produced a total of 16 fledglings. Three nests suffered storm damage, so failed to produce eaglets. We suspect one nest failed due to human activity. In two nests the eggs failed to hatch for unknown reasons.

Thank you, volunteers! There is no EagleWatch program without you.

If you would be interested in becoming an EagleWatch volunteer, please send an email to LindaM@AudubonEverglades.org. Bald Eagle nesting season runs from October through May. All new volunteers are required to go through training. You'll be asked to visit your assigned nest every two weeks for at least 20 minutes per visit and submit observations to the EagleWatch database.

RESULTS OF THE COVID-19 SURVEY

by Rick Schofield

Thanks to all who participated in the COVID-19 Survey. We had 112 responses from Friends and 37 responses from National Audubon members who live nearby. Your responses are particularly useful for planning our upcoming season of meetings, events, and field trips. Please refer to the included pie charts for supporting documentation.

As for meeting at the South County Civic Center, it was split pretty evenly between Yes, No, and Maybe (30%, 28%, 26%) with somewhat fewer saying that they don't normally attend the monthly meetings (17%).

But the clear majority preferred to meet virtually via Zoom rather than in person (59% vs. 23%, with 18% no preference).

Following are survey participant comments:

- *Until vaccine becomes available we will avoid crowds, especially indoor venues*
- *I think it would be optimal to have monthly meetings held online for now until we see a decline in cases (because of being relatively close to people indoors for long periods of time)*
- *I am continuing to monitor the number of covid cases which will determine when and if I am comfortable for live meetings and outdoor events*
- *Delray is too far for us to travel at night and we do not want to end up in the middle of any protest marches*
- *Attending in person to anything depends on cover-19 progression-regression and strict adherence to mask wearing and distancing or complete compliance to protect human health; happy to do all we can to support EA and attending everything by zoom, in person staying healthy and alive is the highest priority*
- *Thanks. I don't like to drive far at night, so won't be able to attend meetings in Boca. Would consider field trips in the Lake Worth area. Appreciate your efforts*

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Survey continued from page 5

- *Because I live in west central Palm Beach, the South County Civic Center is a long 40 minute drive. It is unlikely I would attend the monthly meetings there*
- *I don't usually attend the monthly meetings because of poor night vision. I really enjoyed being able to watch the last meeting [on Zoom]*
- *Wearing face masks and distancing are critical issues for me. Virtual meetings work for me*
- *Delray Beach is a little bit far for me to travel on weeknights*
- *I will not be attending any meeting / event nor will I interact with any individuals unless I personally know them to be infection free and practicing all risk adverse protocols*
- *Personally on Zoom I think shorter meetings make sense with both gatherings and screen sharing taking place*
- *The South County Civic Center is a 45 minute drive one way for us. We would only attend in person for very special programs*
- *Any in person meetings or field trips would have to be very carefully organized and implemented for me to consider attending*
- *Zoom sessions of meetings is probably the only way I will attend AE meetings (at least until a proven vaccine is released)*
- *Reluctant to attend anything in person until a vaccine is available.*
- *I would not like to participate in any of the in-person events if masks are not worn, and if social distancing is not maintained*
- *Delray Beach is a further drive and honestly, I most likely will not attend due to the longer distance/night driving. I prefer in person meetings rather than Zoom meetings*
- *I would like the zoom mtgs to continue, however, the last one I was in was just the speaker..., and there was nothing else. I would prefer if it could be a regular mtg. including announcements, news, bird of the month, etc. like it always has been. Thank you*
- *Since I live in Boca, I Was thrilled when you started to have meetings in Delray Beach. I would continue to go to meetings in Delray Beach but not travel to the other meetings*

There were three questions regarding attending field trips: walking trips (e.g., Loxahatchee NWR, Hungryland Slough, Riverbend); boardwalk trips (e.g., Wakodahatchee, Green Cay, Peaceful Waters); and caravanning trips (e.g., STA-IE, West County / Belle Glade, DuPuis). In all three cases, the majority felt comfortable attending (44%-50%), maybe (25%-33%), and not comfortable (11%-24%). The question was predicated on attendees adhering to the then-current CDC recommendations on mask wearing and social distancing.

Following are survey participant comments:

- *I would be most comfortable if everyone attending wears a mask, I would not be comfortable in a carpool at this time*
- *Caravanning field trips sound better except for getting out of the cars to see the species is still a part of it isn't it? And speaking while wearing a mask is hard to hear without shouting to a group gathered farther away from the leader*
- *i miss our guided field trips and would attend wearing mask*
- *Until there is a vaccine for COVID and most of our area has received it, I think that in person meetings and field trips such as to Green Cay where it's impossible to socially distance are not good ideas. We need to be patient and stay safe*
- *Would support field trips, but would limit carpool to immediate family due to one member being immuno-compromised*
- *I'm not comfortable at this point to be in an enclosed space of a car for a caravan trip. My hesitation with the boardwalk is the ability to social distance and still hear the guide*
- *While car field trips sound safer, I have concerns over bathroom availability and cleanliness and lack of handwashing facilities*
- *As long as there is space to distance ourselves, we wouldn't mind going on field trips. Thank you to all for keeping Audubon going thru these unsettling times*
- *Field trips should have masks mandatory. Assume all CDC guidelines are met*
- *with safety guidelines (masks and distancing) i would feel comfortable doing walks on trails and boardwalks*
- *My interest is the trips. I love them and hope they will continue this coming fall. Of course, safely*
- *The use of face mask and social distancing is critically important for the club to utilize until a vaccine is available. Thanks for inviting me to voice my opinion*
- *We would love to do field trips. We have been spending most of our time outdoors already because we feel it's the safest place to be and we need nature for our wellbeing*
- *Any trips should allow for social distancing and require masks, if that was the case, I would be comfortable attending*
- *In the car caravan people could sign up with their own 3 or 4 people in their car. I don't think I would be comfortable joining another car unless I know the people very well and what they are doing during the covid-19 time*
- *I believe the only viable birding events are STA like field trips with the exception that everyone drives and remain in their own vehicle*

- *as a single member i prefer only myself in my car during a caravan due to corona-virus issues*
- *We would not feel comfortable attending boardwalk field trips in the locations mentioned because they can get crowded and this makes it difficult to maintain an appropriate distance*
- *Participation in field trips contingent upon low risk status of the disease at that time*
- *Field trip locations that just have boardwalks are not safe for these trips since you can't keep at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and the other people on the trip*
- *Field trips would be great*
- *car trips only if no strangers in cars, like in Lakeside STA*
- *In reference to car trips. I would attend if there is no carpooling*
- *As for caravanning, I would not want to ride in someone else's car, nor would I want others to ride with me. Me, alone in my car, fine! I think social distancing could be maintained when people get out of their cars to look at birds, but there may need to be limits on the numbers of people who could attend. Places like STA-I might still be a problem because the only "bathroom" is a porta-potty. It's hard to wipe down a porta-potty with disinfecting wipes*
- *filed [sic] trips on occasion if participants wear masks and stay 6-10 feet apart; maybe on caravans depending on destinations*
- *I believe everyone needs to wear masks, keep social distancing and be in group less than 10*

Finally, the best means of communicating updates to our schedule was clearly email via Constant Contact (93%). The web site came in next (40%), followed by Facebook (23%), and lastly by the Yahoo Group (6%).

[Click here to view the full survey results on the Audubon Everglades website.](#)

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 _____

[Enjoy this short video from the 2019 Audubon Convention "Audubon for Everyone"](#)