



# EVERGLADE KITE

## NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

VOL 61 | Issue 1 | September 2020



Blue-winged Teal © Wikipedia

## Bird of the Month: Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*)

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

*The 2020 Bird of the Month series will continue to focus on species of waterfowl that permanently reside in or are seasonal visitors to our state. As in the past, basic information on highlighted species will be shared in each Newsletter.*

The Blue-winged Teal is one of the smallest members of the genus *Anas*, the dabbling ducks, which primarily inhabit shallow freshwater marshes and other wetlands (coastal and inland), where they forage for food at or below the surface of ponds, sloughs and flooded fields. They are one of the most numerous waterfowl in Florida and are a common to abundant migrant and winter resident throughout the state.

As long distance migrants, Blue-winged Teal are one of the earliest waterfowl to migrate south in early fall, leaving their summer breeding grounds in Canada and the United States well before other species. Some of these long distance flyers make it all the way to South America for the winter. Flocks of several hundreds or

thousands can be observed during migration and at favored wintering sites. Seasonal occurrence in Florida is mainly from September to March; however, a few breeding records during spring and summer have been documented.

Adult males have brown bodies with dark speckling on the breast, a slate-blue head with a white crescent behind the bill, and a small white patch in front of the black tail. Females and males in eclipse plumage are mottled brown overall with a blackish eye-line and white on the face, behind the bill. In flight, a blue forewing is noticeable in both sexes, but, in the male, the blue is bordered by white.

Their varied diet consists of aquatic insects such as midge larvae, crustaceans, clams, and snails, and aquatic vegetation which includes seeds, rice, millet, grasses, sedges, pond weed and water lilies. They seldom feed away from water, predominantly focusing on food that is available to them in the water.

Pair formation begins in early winter and continues during spring migration with new mates selected each nesting season. On the nesting grounds, the pair flies low over potential nesting terrain, with the female landing to search out a viable nesting site. The site is usually located in tall grasses and shrubs near a body of water. The male typically waits nearby while the female selects a nest site. The nest is a shallow depression made up of grass and weeds and lined with her breast feathers and down.

Six to thirteen dull white or olive-tinged eggs are laid and incubated solely by the female for 23 to 24 days. The downy young leave the nest within 24 hours after hatching, feeding themselves when the female leads them to the water's edge. She remains with the brood for the first few weeks but abandons them before they are capable of flying. The young are able to fly at 38 to 49 days after hatching.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

September 2020

Audubon Everglades is continuing in "Flock-down Mode" at least through the end of November, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With coronavirus cases increasing in Florida, it is not a good time to venture out for organized bird walks or field trips. This might make us unhappy birds, but it doesn't stop us from birding and being out in nature, a great comfort to us all. We can mask up and go out alone or with a few companions (socially distanced) and watch our feathered friends. Migration has begun, so, let's get out there safely and enjoy! Our monthly meetings have been conducted as virtual meetings using Zoom for the past three months. We are pleased with the participation; many folks who could not ordinarily attend the face-to-face meetings are viewing meetings from the comfort and safety of their homes. We all look forward to a time when we can safely flock together with our Audubon Everglades friends. Please be patient, knowing our caution is for your well-being.

Audubon Everglades celebrates our differences, much like we celebrate the wonderful and rich variety of birds, each with a unique shape, size, and color. We commit to fostering and building a chapter culture of welcome and inclusion, where all are bound together by a mutual love of birds, nature, and each other. Our Board, with Kristen Murtaugh's assistance, developed our chapter's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) position statement this past month.

*The Board of Audubon Everglades agrees with the National Audubon Society's Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and has adopted for our local chapter the general goals and principles it sets out. Our conservation and environmental education efforts can be effective only to the extent that our chapter's membership, leadership, and outreach activity reflect the diversity of our community. In purposefully striving for equity, diversity, and inclusion, we will become better stewards of our changing world.*

The position statement is printed in its entirety in this newsletter and posted to our website. [As always, we welcome ideas, suggestions, comments, and input from our members.](#)

## Audubon Everglades September Program "Watershed Protection Plan and Everglades Restoration"

**Jennifer Reynolds, Director of Ecosystem Restoration and Capital Projects, South Florida Water Management District**

SEPT  
01

Tuesday, September 1 at 7PM  
Zoom Hosted Presentation



Jennifer Reynolds, Director of Ecosystem Restoration and Capital Projects for the South Florida Water Management District, will speak about projects and programs to improve water quality that flows south into Lake Okeechobee and the Florida Everglades at the Audubon Everglades hosted lecture program on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 7PM.

Reynolds retired from the U.S. Army in January 2020 and most recently served as the Deputy Commander for South Florida with the Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. During that time, she built a strong reputation of working collaboratively with the public and stakeholder groups.

In addition to her time working on Everglades restoration with the U.S. Army Corps, she brings experience managing emergency operations and supporting efforts in more than 90 countries worldwide. She has worked on unique international capital projects including the Mosul Dam, health

clinics, schools, and wastewater treatment plants in Iraq; Kajaki Dam and the national electricity system in Afghanistan; building maintenance facilities and road repair in Bosnia; base camp design and construction in Kosovo; and construction of training facilities in Germany.

Her undergraduate degree is in Natural Resource Management from Western Illinois University. She also holds graduate degrees from the Army's School of Advanced Military Studies in Strategic Planning and Webster University in Procurement and Acquisitions.

Reynolds was recognized as the 2018 Champion of the Everglades by Audubon Florida, and was honored with the Public Service Award during the 2019 Everglades Coalition Conference.

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

*continued on page 3*



You can help birds and the environment by sharing your time, talents, passion, and ideas. Volunteers are vital to our chapter and are needed for conservation, education, advocacy, EDI and other projects. Whatever your interest, there is a volunteer opportunity waiting for you! To volunteer, please contact us at [volunteer@AudubonEverglades.org](mailto:volunteer@AudubonEverglades.org).

Volunteers are the lifeline of our chapter and many work quietly behind the scenes. For example, Mary Dunning spearheads the Kite, managing the newsletter and coordinating all the writers. Kristen Murtaugh is our editor and magically turns our less than terrific writing skills into what you read in the Kite. Sheri DePuy is our amazing graphic designer and responsible for producing our high-quality newsletter. She hands off the draft issue to several individuals to proof, including Mary Dunning, authors of articles and several board members. Once the quality control step is completed, the PDF is emailed to Sean Borak or Rick Schofield to post to our club website. These two create a link to the PDF on the website, and I design the Constant Contact Kite mailing to be distributed to over 1700 readers. This super organized team performs these tasks every single month! I applaud everyone's contributions to making our monthly newsletter such a success. If anyone would like to contribute an article or has suggestions or comments on the Kite, please contact Mary Dunning at [publicity@auduboneverglades.org](mailto:publicity@auduboneverglades.org).

Lastly, maneuvering our club through the COVID-19 pandemic, where we have had to reinvent how to conduct our club business effectively without face-to-face meetings, has been a challenging learning experience. No local chapter's bylaws could have ever predicted the procedures that we now must include in our governing document. The board hired a licensed registered parliamentarian for guidance in handling the extensive list of items our chapter needed to update. This has resulted in a complete rewrite of our bylaws, which will serve our club for several years. Additionally, we are seeking legal advice on how best to present this document to the membership for review and approval (while still under the COVID pandemic and unable to have face-to-face meetings). We plan to distribute the revised bylaws to the membership for review and vote in the upcoming months. These are interesting times for sure!

Stay tuned and, more importantly, stay safe.

**Doreen LePage, President**

# Audubon Everglades Position Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion



**AUDUBON  
EVERGLADES**

The Board of Audubon Everglades agrees with the National Audubon Society's *Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* and has adopted for our local chapter the general goals and principles it sets out. Our conservation and environmental education efforts can be effective only to the extent that our chapter's membership, leadership, and outreach activity reflect the diversity of our community. In purposefully striving for equity, diversity, and inclusion, we will become better stewards of our changing world.

## **Audubon's Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

The birds Audubon pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. By honoring and celebrating the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Audubon

will bring new creativity, effectiveness and leadership to our work throughout the hemisphere.

In order to achieve these goals, Audubon has made equity, diversity, and inclusion a strategic imperative. Protecting and conserving nature and the environment transcends political, cultural, and social boundaries. Respect, inclusion, and opportunity for people of all backgrounds, lifestyles, and perspectives will attract the best ideas and harness the greatest passion to shape a healthier, more vibrant future for all of us who share our planet. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our staff, board, volunteers, members, and supporters, and fostering an inclusive network of Audubon Centers and Chapters in all communities, from rural to urban. We respect the individuality of each member of our community, and we are committed to a workplace free of any kind of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national or ethnic origin, politics, or veteran status.

# Be a Better Birder

## *Seven things every nature lover should know.*

by Kenn and Kimberly Kaufman, "Courtesy of Birds & Blooms, Copyright ©2020, reprinted with permission of Trusted Media Brands, Inc."

The best thing about birding is that it can mean different things for different people. Some like to enjoy birds in their own backyard or at a local park, while others travel the world in search of avian delights. Many enthusiasts leave their binoculars at home and primarily pursue birds with cameras instead.

No matter your approach, understanding birding etiquette and obeying the law are common threads that unite us in our hobby and experience. Here are seven of the most important things to remember to protect yourself and birds.

1. It may be exciting to watch birds in a new place, but it's never acceptable to trespass on someone's private property. Always err on the side of caution if you have any doubt at all, and when you contact a landowner or homeowner to ask permission to visit a closed area, do so with the utmost respect and consideration.
2. Birds have boundaries. It's tempting to approach birds closely for a better look, but always watch them for signs of stress. If a bird stops what it's doing to watch you, starts moving away or even flies away, then you're too close. Some experience will help you understand how different birds react. This is a good reason to invest in binoculars or a camera with a decent zoom lens: They make it possible to enjoy fliers from a respectful distance.
3. Wild birds are sensitive in every season, but they can be especially vulnerable while raising young. Keep a healthy distance away from nests and parents with small chicks. After all, if they don't succeed in raising more young, eventually we won't have any birds to watch.
4. Smartphone apps make it easy to play bird songs, and listening to them is a helpful way of checking the identity of an unfamiliar bird. But playing recordings too loudly can be a major disturbance for the birds, who may think an intruder has invaded their territory, or it could distract other birders.

5. As cameras become better and more compact, photography grows more popular. In most cases, using flash on wild birds is a bad idea. It's likely to startle them and possibly scare them away – and it's probably irritating to other birders in the area.
6. Most wildlife protection laws are just common sense, but some are less obvious. For example, it's not legal to keep feathers, eggs or old nests of most native birds, even after the birds are clearly finished with them. It's also illegal to keep most native birds as pets. Check with local wildlife officers if you have any questions.
7. Traffic laws apply to everyone, even in the birding season! In popular areas, occasionally a car will stop in the middle of a road while the excited occupants scan a nearby flock. This kind of thing is extremely dangerous, as well as illegal. No bird sighting is worth risking anyone's life. Even in the midst of a bird chase, obey speed limits and park only in safe, designated areas.

Remember, your behavior in the field sets the tone for others, and it has a big impact on how people see birders in general. Think of yourself as a birding ambassador, and always do your best to shine a positive light on this pastime we all love.

*Kenn and Kimberly Kaufman love to share the joy of birding with everyone they meet, but they want to make sure the increased attention is always good for the birds, too.*

# EAGLEWATCH VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSIONS ARE ANNOUNCED

by Linda McCandless

As we prepare for the new EagleWatch season, it's also time for new volunteer trainings! Due to COVID-19, all of the new volunteer trainings will be held online this fall. Shawnlei Breeding, the EagleWatch Program Manager, has set up the following weekend dates. The trainings will be held via Zoom and registration is required. If you have any questions, please send an email to [LindaM@AudubonEverglades.org](mailto:LindaM@AudubonEverglades.org).

**Saturday, September 5, 10AM-12PM**

[Please register here.](#)

**Sunday, September 13, 2-4PM**

[Please register here.](#)

**Saturday, September 19, 10AM-12PM**

[Please register here.](#)

**Saturday, September 26, 10AM-12PM**

[Please register here.](#)

**Sunday, October 4, 2-4PM**

[Please register here.](#)



Photo: Palm Beach County Bald Eagle Family  
© Doreen LePage

# Become A Mentor



## Audubon | FLORIDA Conservation Leadership Initiative

A year-long co-mentoring program  
to connect with the next generation  
of Audubon leaders



Photo: Luke Franke

- **Provide guidance for a Florida college student pursuing a career in conservation**
- **Learn how your Chapter can better engage with a younger audience**
- **Create a better relationship with your local students and colleges**
- **Share best practices with other Chapter leaders across Florida**

## Ready to Join?

**Click HERE** to fill out an interest form

*Due by Sept. 18th*



## Have more questions about becoming a mentor?

Join us for a virtual Info Session on Thursday, 8/20 at 5pm



# Revealing the Past to Create the Future

*As Audubon deepens its commitment to antiracism, we owe members and others a full accounting and reckoning with John James Audubon himself.*

by David Yarnold, President and CEO, National Audubon Society



Over the last few months, we've committed to making Audubon an antiracist institution – a commitment built on years of learning and action. Audubon's presence in hundreds of communities across America gives us a responsibility to help correct centuries of racial injustice by changing our internal and external practices. And that includes a reassessment of our own history.

We're not alone among conservation organizations in taking these steps. A Washington Post article last week detailed the Sierra Club's extraordinarily candid reckoning with the racist legacy of the iconic John Muir and other founders. That same piece details the equity and justice efforts of several well-known environmental non-profits—as well as the experiences of some staff of color in a largely white, male-dominated field.

Audubon's founding stories center on the groups of women who came together to end the slaughter of birds for their feathers (mostly for fancy hats), but we have glossed over the actions of the American icon whose name we bear, as well as the racist aspects of our organization's history.

It's fair to describe John James Audubon as a genius, a

pioneer, a fabulist, and a man whose actions reflected a dominant white view of the pursuit of scientific knowledge. His contributions to ornithology, art, and culture are enormous, but he was a complex and troubling character who did despicable things during his life. And, he's a person that some researchers have argued was part Black himself, which would mean that the most famous American bird artist was a man of color. Black contemporary artist Kerry James Marshall reflected on that possibility in The New York Times this week.

Audubon did not found the National Audubon Society or any of the other organizations that bear his name; they were named after him posthumously beginning in the 1880s and 1890s because of his deep association with North American birds.

While most have come to know the National Audubon Society for its conservation and policy leadership, its science and its community-based education efforts, we owe our members and others a full accounting and reckoning with John James Audubon himself. As you'll see in a piece we're publishing today by John James Audubon historian Dr. Gregory Nobles, there is a lot of John James Audubon's personal history that must be laid bare. In the strongest possible terms, we condemn

the role John James Audubon played in enslaving Black people and perpetuating white supremacist culture. We're partnering with leading historians and journalists to grapple with John James Audubon's legacy on Audubon.org, in Audubon magazine, and in the physical places we steward. We've taken down the biography of John James Audubon that has existed on this site for many years because it largely ignored the challenging parts of his identity and actions. We'll be replacing that content altogether soon.

This is a time when Audubon magazine's journalistic integrity, which allows us to examine our field and ourselves, will help air out our closets and illuminate the future. We're committed to working with partners and our network through this process, and we'll have more to say soon.

We've received overwhelming support for our antiracist commitments from Audubon members, staff, and volunteer leaders. They understand that questions of birds and conservation and questions of racial equity are not separate, though they've been treated that way for far too long. The artificial division between those concerns came crashing down when birder and New York City Audubon board member Christian Cooper was threatened in a racist incident in Central Park this spring, and when Black birders, scientists, and outdoor enthusiasts came together to share their stories during #BlackBirdersWeek shortly afterward.

It's clear to us that the work Audubon does in the world—from our environmental advocacy in Washington, D.C., and state capitals, to on-the-ground conservation, to community engagement from coast to coast—must actively advance racial equity. A lift-all-boats approach is not enough and in fact often deepens existing inequities.

From incorporating inclusion and equity in our staff's goals to the creation of an equity task force within our very supportive board, our commitment runs deep. But words are only that if actions don't follow. We expect to be held accountable.

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I should pause here to say that we're recruiting now for several vital programmatic and management roles, including Chief Conservation Officer; VP/Climate; VP/Equity, Diversity, Inclusion; VP/Mississippi Flyway; and executive directors for field offices in the South and the Mid-Atlantic. We need leaders in all those roles who have strong foundations in and expansive visions for conservation and equity, and we recognize the importance of bringing in more senior leaders of color to Audubon. If you're looking to make an impact at the executive or board level, please be in touch.

There's an important conversation happening in America right now about monuments, names, and outdoor spaces. Audubon submitted a letter of support last week for three bills in Congress (H.R. 970, H.R. 4135, and H.R. 7550) that would result in the removal of two statues of Confederate officers on National Park Service lands and initiate an inventory of other such monuments across federal lands. There's no justification for these monuments in places that belong to every American.

And it's not just an issue of physical monuments: Many birds are named for human beings (mostly white men), some of whom did terrible things during their lives. There's an important debate underway about whether to change the name of birds like McCown's Longspur, which is named for a Confederate general. A wide range of voices including scientists and birders – many young and of color – are petitioning for change. The American Ornithological Society's North American Classification Committee, which is the group of scientists that maintains the official list of North American bird names, is set to announce changes to its naming policies in August. We're eager to see what they announce and will have more to say after that.

Amid a horrific pandemic and the worst economy we've seen since the Great Depression, the velocity of social change has accelerated, demanding a great reckoning. We won't fix 400 years of oppression overnight, but we can do far more as organizations and as individuals than we thought possible even six months ago. In order to do that, we have to own up to our pasts even while we chart a new future. We welcome your advice and your partnership. [Here's how to reach me.](#)

## YARD READY FOR FALL MIGRATION?



Photo: Painted Bunting © Mary Dunning

Many of us are eagerly awaiting the return of the birds. All summer we've spent a lot of time in our homes (clearly an understatement) longing for a glimpse of our favorite visitors and anticipating a reunion in the fall. I personally can't wait to have a little Painted Bunting with my coffee in the morning, see if the birds like the plants I've added, or find out if that new feeder really does keep the squirrels out.

What are you doing to get ready? Is there a secret to your success? Share with us at [publicity@auduboneverglades.org](mailto:publicity@auduboneverglades.org) and include 1 photo if you like. Responses received by September 15 will be included in the October issue of the Kite.

## A Presentation by Doug Tallamy Webinar

SEPT

22

Tuesday,  
September 22  
6-7 PM ET

Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home* and *Nature's Best Hope*, will present a special talk about birds and native plants. The title of his presentation is "A Guide to Restore the Little Things that Run the World." [Register here.](#)

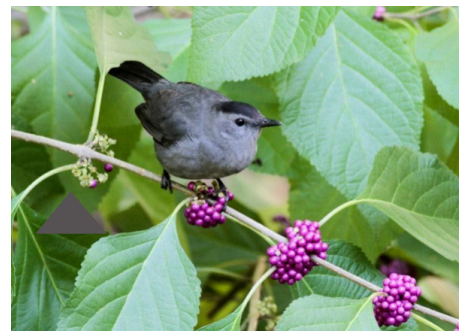


Photo: Gray Catbird on American Beautyberry  
© Will Stuart

# 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](https://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 \_\_\_\_\_