

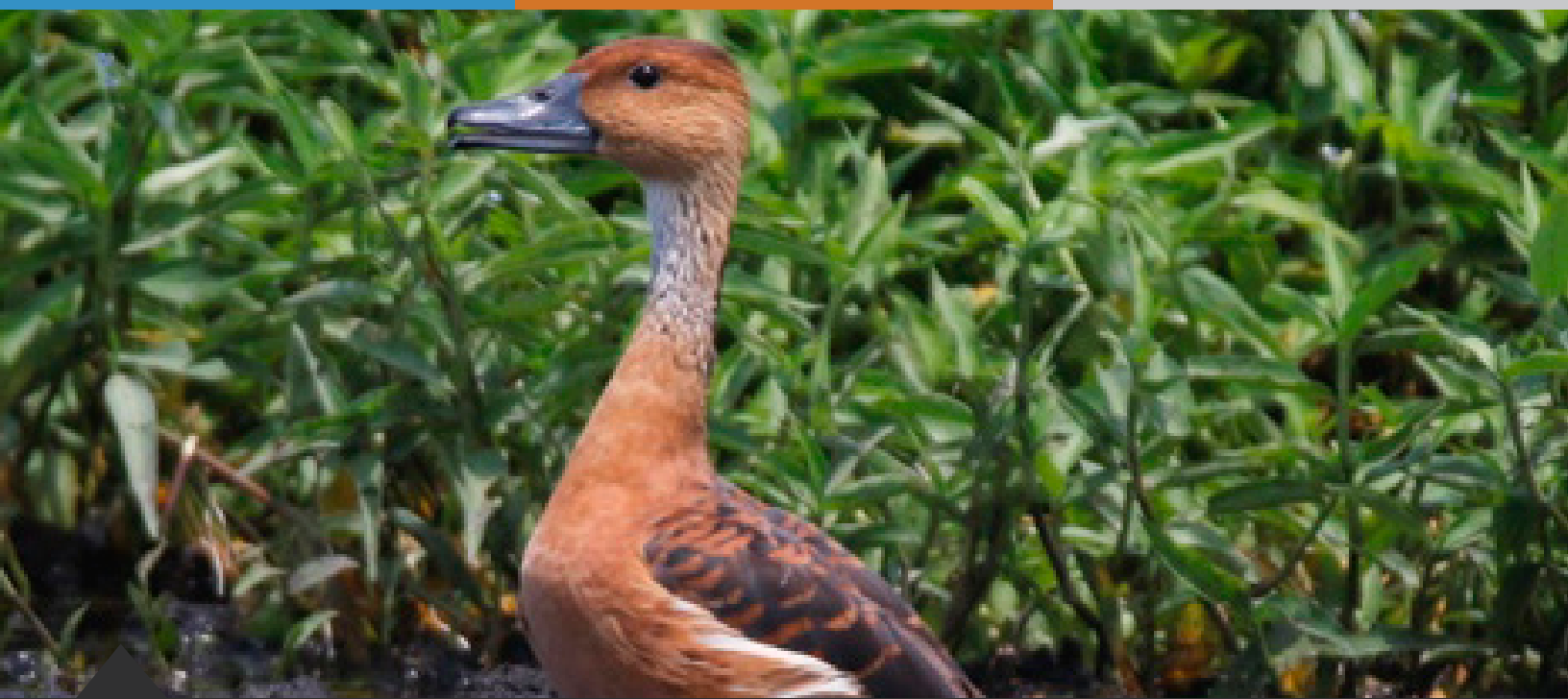


EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

VOL 61 | Issue 3 | November 2020



Left: Fulvous Whistling Duck © Dan Scolaro

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

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

Reprinted from the June 2020 Kite

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 November Speaker Program “eBird from a Volunteer Regional Reviewer’s Perspective”

with Dan O’Malley

NOV
11

Tuesday, November 11 at 7PM
Zoom Hosted Presentation



Photo: Dan O'Malley

Join us for our November Zoom-hosted program with Dan O’Malley, a volunteer regional reviewer for eBird, who will explain the eBird review process in detail and will inform listeners how they can best document their flagged sightings to expedite the review process.

eBird is a citizen science project coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology that maintains a global database of bird sightings. The volume of data generated by the veritable army of eBird contributors is incredibly powerful and has been used in numerous scientific publications and government agency reports. As with any dataset, accurate interpretation of data relies on quality control. For eBird, this quality control function is performed by volunteer regional reviewers who are responsible for setting filters that flag unusual sightings in their geographic area of expertise and for reviewing any reports submitted to eBird that are flagged by those filters.

Dan O’Malley was born in Rhode Island and was fascinated by the coastal environment and natural world at a young age. He was first introduced to ornithology while attending Tulane University in New Orleans and pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Although his master’s thesis at Nicholls State University focused on using oyster reefs for coastal erosion protection, he was also involved in ornithological research projects at the university and took advantage of the world-class birding opportunities offered by the nearby Louisiana coast. Dan was employed for three years by the Natural Heritage Program at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, where he developed and conducted research and monitoring projects on birds and other non-game wildlife species. During his time in Louisiana, he was mentored by several expert ornithologists associated with the renowned LSU Museum of Natural Sciences. Moving to Palm Beach County in 2016, Dan worked for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for three years, using his wide-ranging background to work on both marine habitat restoration projects and non-game species conservation projects, especially birds. Dan recently became licensed as a Registered Nurse and relocated to Gainesville, where he looks forward to exploring new birding territory.

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

THE IMPACT OF CAT PREDATION OF BIRDS

by Ann Wiley

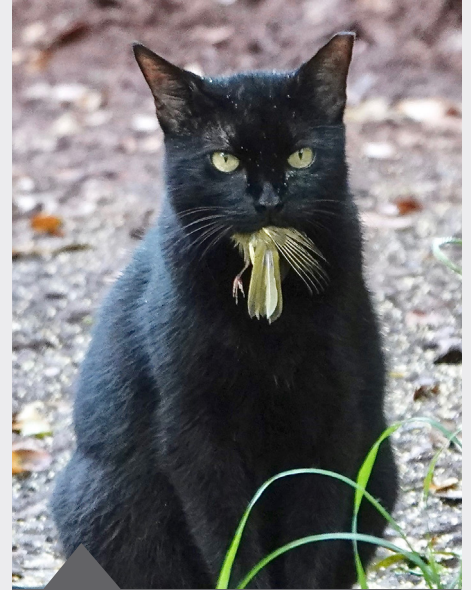


Photo: Ear-tipped feral cat preying on Black-throated Blue Warbler at Spanish River Park. © Chuck Hignite

We all are aware of the damage domestic cats (*Felis silvestris catus*) inflict on native wildlife, birds, ecosystems, and nature’s balance. But, when the ships first brought domestic cats to North America, this was neither understood nor considered. Cats were a crucial part of the cargo for one reason: they were stealthy, effective killers. Cats had proven invaluable in controlling rats drawn to the food stores. With time, cats spread across the continent, multiplying rapidly and into most ecosystems. There are now roughly 90 million owned cats and 80 million feral cats in the U.S. It’s estimated that there are more than 150,000 feral cats living in Miami Beach alone!

The Smithsonian, Audubon, the American Bird Conservancy, and others have calculated that feral and outside cats kill approximately 2.4 billion birds every year, making predation by domestic cats the number one direct, human-caused threat to birds in the United States and Canada.

In recent years, several countries have implemented practices to decrease or eliminate introduced predators such as rats and cats. In 2015 Australia began a program to eliminate 2 million feral cats by 2020, with most Aussies supporting it.

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Audubon Everglades Photography Club: November Meetings

by Charlene Raphael, Nancy Freeman and Scott Zucker



We hope that you enjoyed our Photography Club kickoff program in October on Gardening for Wildlife & Backyard Photography. Now that you've run out to your garden (or a nearby garden) and captured some great photos, how would you like some expert advice on making images that capture even better the beauty that you saw?

The Photo Club is offering our first Zoomed Critique Session on Monday, November 16 at 7pm with guest photographer Mike Cohen. To ensure that the constructive critique you receive is appropriate to your photography skill level, photos will be reviewed in two skill categories. Beginner/Intermediate and Advanced/Expert. In this first critique session, the two subject categories will be Open Nature (All nature photo images other than Botany) and Botany. For details, check out our [Critique Sessions](#) page in the [Photography Club](#) section on [Auduboneverglades.org](#).

Anyone who has a current [Friends of Audubon Everglades membership](#) and has paid the nominal [Photography Club dues](#) can submit photos for critique during the Zoom meeting. Other participants will not know who submitted the photos. If you're not sure that you want to submit your photos yet or even that

you wish to join the club, but want to know more about what's going on and how the process works, then come to the first Critique Session as an observer. Simply notify [membership](#) that you wish to be a guest. You're still guaranteed to come away with a different perspective from hearing the critiques of others' photos. That's part of the fun – we all learn from the critique of every photo, regardless of the skill level of the photographer or the equipment used. You'll soon discover, if you didn't already know, that the eye behind the camera, the point of view, and the lighting are what make the image special. By applying this knowledge, you'll be able to edit your photographs in the field even before you take them.

We are fortunate to have as our guest, Mike Cohen, an extraordinary wildlife photographer, who will guide us on how to improve our photography through his insightful critiques of our work. For years he has devoted himself full time to producing gorgeous wildlife photographs from around the world. If you are looking for inspiration, many of his images are available to view on [Mike's webpage](#) where he hopes "to encourage discussion and advice about photographic sites, techniques, equipment and, most important, art and composition."

On Monday, November 2 at 7 PM, we will be offering a special Zoom Roundtable on "How to submit an Image for Critique," where members of the AEPC Committee

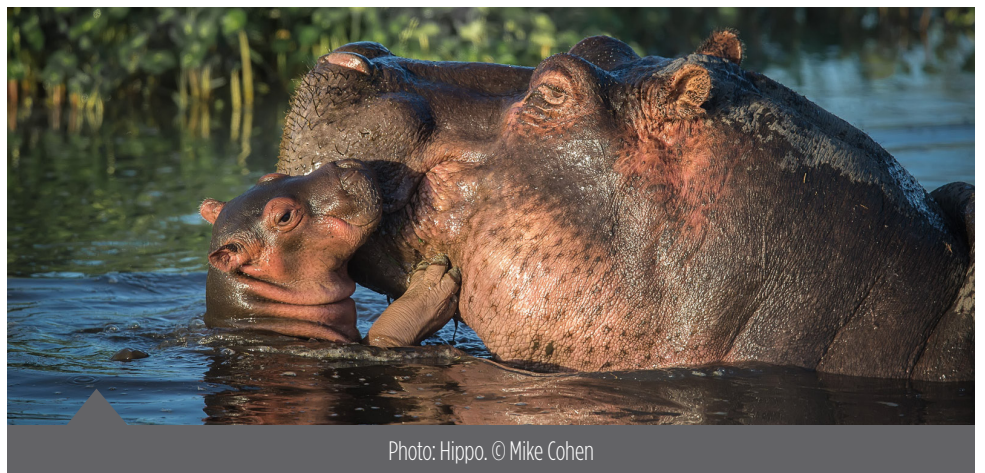
Cats continued from page 2

The popular practice called TNVR (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate -Return) has been found ineffective for feral cats because it is their feeding habits, not their breeding habits, that endanger birds and wildlife. In 2015 the Palm Beach County Commission adopted new ordinances regarding feral cats. Now the cats are trapped, sterilized, vaccinated for rabies, their left ears are clipped for identification, and they are "returned to field." Due to this practice thousands of feral cats that were once trapped are back on the street. The accompanying photographs are recent images of several of these "tipped-ear" cats. This summer, neutered feral cats invaded the only beach-nesting Least Tern colony along Florida's SE coast and killed over thirty tiny chicks in less than two weeks, despite all efforts to stop them. Least Terns, a state-listed threatened species, have decreased by 88% over the past 40 years, while feral cat numbers have skyrocketed. This past week a tipped-ear cat was photographed at Spanish River Park with a female Black-throated Blue, a migrating species, clenched in its mouth.

We need to decide if policies and practices that directly result in the killing of native species and migratory birds are acceptable or if we should rethink and change them.

will walk you through the process of the Critique session, show you how to participate, and offer some guidance on basic photo-editing software that comes free to Mac and PC computers. Notify [membership](#) if you wish to be participate.

The AEPC is a dues-supported club open to current [Friends of Audubon Everglades](#) (local chapter members). Participation in future programs of the [AEPC](#) will require an annual dues payment of \$10.00 for individuals, \$15.00 for households, and \$1.00 for students.



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 _____