



# EVERGLADE KITE

## NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

VOL 61 | Issue 10 | June 2021



Photo: American Dipper © Wikipedia

## Bird of the Month: American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*)

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

*The 2021 Bird of the Month Series focuses on twelve North American species requested by our Audubon Everglades members. Each month, information on the featured species will cover its description, range, habitat, food, and reproduction. This information will also be covered in the Bird of the Month Power Point presentation at each monthly meeting.*

The American Dipper is North America's only truly aquatic songbird. This denizen of cold, rushing mountain streams of the Northwest is usually seen bobbing up and down on rocks amid fast flowing streams before plunging beneath the surface of the water in search of aquatic insects.

Adult Dippers are sooty-gray overall, with a dark bill and short wings and tail. Juvenile birds are paler, with mottled underparts and a pale bill. In the U.S. and Canada, the birds inhabit western mountains, where fast flowing streams provide an abundance of aquatic

adult and larval insects, and nesting ledges.

The birds feed by diving beneath the surface of the fast moving water, propelling themselves forward with the flapping or "flying" motion of their wings and by clinging to submerged rocks with their claws. As they do this, they snatch up exposed aquatic insect larvae or roll manageable rocks to find hidden ones. The dippers will also walk on rocks at the surface of the stream, with their heads submerged, gleaning insects just below the surface, or they will actively swim on the surface to catch floating insects.

Their insect diet usually consists of both adult and larval midges, dragonflies, caddisflies, mayflies, beetles, bugs, and mosquitoes. They also consume other invertebrates such as worms and snails and have also been known to eat fish eggs and very small fish (less than 3" long).

At the start of the nesting season, a male sings to

establish a territory and to attract a mate. With the arrival of an interested female, courtship ensues with much posturing, the birds strutting and singing in front of each other with drooped wings. Once the pair bond is established, both birds set about seeking a potential nest site, with the female taking the lead in locating the site and doing most of the nest building. The dome-shaped nest is usually placed 6 – 20 feet above water, under a ledge or in a crevice to protect the nest from predators and from flooding. The exterior of the nest is constructed of wet moss, twigs, rootlets, and grass, often dipped into water before being woven into the nest. The interior nest is lined with drier material.

Four to six white eggs are laid and incubated by the female for 13 to 17 days. Both parents attend to the nestlings, which are hatched helpless and with sparse down. The young leave the nest 18 – 25 days after hatching and are able to swim and dive almost immediately.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

June 2021

## Greetings, everyone!

We are on the cusp of summer, temperatures are rising, and the spring migrants, which may include some of you, are in their northern home. Hopefully, you have been able to get out more, meet with friends and family in safe environments, and see some birds now that the CDC has updated their guidelines for those who have been fully vaccinated.

## Tuesday, June 1 Zoom Monthly Meeting

This month's general meeting will feature longtime Audubon Everglades Volunteer Paul Davis, who is the retired Director for Coastal Restoration for PBC Environmental Resource Management (ERM) and the chair of the AE Sanctuary Committee and the AE Science Advisory Committee. He will be presenting "Our Plastic Problem." You can [register here](#).

## AE Photography Group

All Audubon Everglades Photography Group (AEPG) presentations and activities are now available as part

of your AE Friends membership. To receive information about programs and activities and to be able to submit photos for our critique sessions, please email [aepgregister@auduboneverglades.org](mailto:aepgregister@auduboneverglades.org) and provide your name, email address, and phone number. If you missed our most recent presentation by conservation photographer Dustin Angell, you might enjoy seeing Dustin at work in his YouTube video, "[Boots on the Ground](#)."

## AE Plants for Birds Demonstration Garden at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center (PJEEC)

The AE Plants for Birds Demonstration Garden at Pine Jog continues to move forward. With the help of Richard Moyroud of Mesozoic Landscapes, Jane Thompson of Indian Trails Native Nursery, and Susan Lerner, Director of Pan's Garden, and many volunteers, all working under the leadership of AE Board Member and PJEEC Education Coordinator Lauren Butcher, the garden has been evaluated, cleared of invasive plants, cleaned and pruned, and redesigned. Now planting has begun.

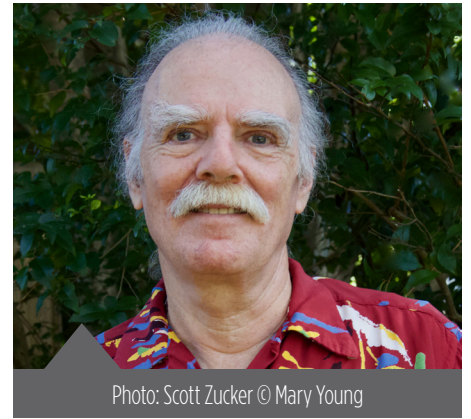


Photo: Scott Zucker © Mary Young

## Amazon Smile

One last thing - we have been receiving many donations from Amazon due to your use of their special Amazon Smile program when ordering. We appreciate it and hope you continue using this site. The donations do add up and are a great resource for us. To get started using Amazon Smile, simply go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://Smile.Amazon.com), sign in, and indicate Audubon Everglades as your agency of choice. They will send us a percentage of your sales without your paying anything more. Thank you!

# PLANT OF THE MONTH

## Rattlesnake Master *Eryngium yuccifolium*

by Helen Laurence

About 10 years ago, I picked up a wonderful brochure on "Florida Wildflowers & Butterflies" produced by the Florida Museum of Natural History. [Now it's available online](#). It lists 48 Florida native plants used by butterflies, but not all of them are suitable for South Florida gardens. I decided to acquire and plant as many of them as I could find locally. One in particular caught my eye: Rattlesnake Master. Do other gardeners have an emotional attraction to certain plants and not others? Who knows why? "The heart wants what it wants," as Emily Dickinson wrote, "or else it does not care."

I planted Rattlesnake Master and watched in delight as it developed. It is a member of the carrot family, but as its specific epithet "yuccifolium" suggests, its leaves resemble yucca leaves, complete with soft prickly spines. Unexpectedly for a plant that resembles a desert species, it prefers moist conditions, although it does want full sun for most

of the day. Its flowers emerge from the base on tall, sturdy stalks in late spring. The individual flowers are inconspicuous but together they form the characteristic round spiky flower head. These flowers are attractive to many species of native bees and wasps, and as such may invite insect-eating birds; once the flower heads go to seed, they may attract the seed-eating birds as well. Since it is in the carrot family, you might expect it to be used by the Eastern black swallowtail as larval food, but Craig Huegel says it is useful only as a [nectar source for a variety of pollinators](#).

According to the Florida Wildflower Foundation, [it's also attractive to bats](#).

Apparently, the common name refers to the use of the root as a traditional snakebite remedy, but there is no evidence that this treatment is effective. However, there is evidence of another ethnobotanical

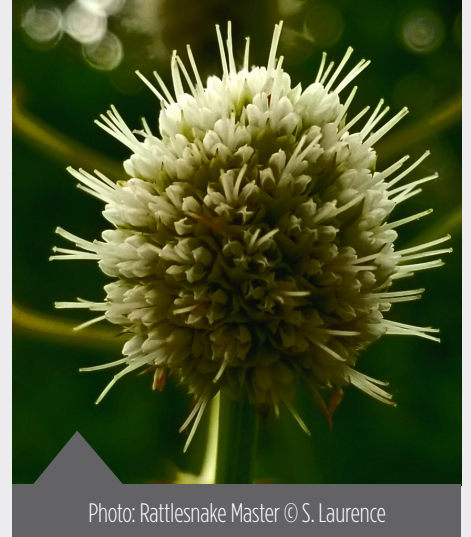


Photo: Rattlesnake Master © S. Laurence

use of *Eryngium yuccifolium*; we were pleasantly surprised a couple of years ago to encounter Rattlesnake Master in a native plant garden at Toltec Mounds Archaeological State Park in Scott, Arkansas. The garden was designed to demonstrate the plants used for food and fiber by the Woodland Era people who lived in the Ozark region over 1000 years ago. According to the archaeological evidence, they used Rattlesnake Master as fiber, [for weaving bags and shoes and the like](#).



# “OUR PLASTIC PROBLEM”

**Presented by Paul Davis, Conservation Biologist and Shoreline Restoration expert  
Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute (CMAEI)**

**JUN  
01**

**Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 7PM  
Zoom-Hosted Presentation**

6:45-7PM Social time with fellow members and presenters



Photo: Paul Davis © Susan Davis

Audubon Everglades invites its members to spend an evening with speaker Paul Davis. Paul's program will describe the problem posed by Plastic debris, how CMARI became involved, and the ways that we can all contribute to solving the problem. Join us as Paul takes us on a journey of discovery into the nature of this growing problem and how we can be part of the solution.

Over 300 million tons of plastic are produced annually for use in a wide variety of applications. At least 8 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year, and make up 80% of all marine debris from

surface waters to deep-sea sediments. In the next decade, scientists estimate that the plastic waste “that slides into waterways, and ultimately oceans, will reach 22 million tons and possibly as much as 58 million tons a year.” Plastic has been detected on shorelines of all the continents and, despite the efforts of numerous volunteer groups to clean up our coastline, can be found on our local beaches. Marine species, including sea birds, ingest or are entangled by plastic debris, which causes severe injuries and deaths. Plastic pollution also threatens food safety and quality, human health, coastal tourism, and contributes to climate change.

#### **About Paul Davis**

Paul has spent over 40 years managing our local coastal ecosystems and species including 25 years at the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM). During that time, he has conducted sea turtle monitoring and research and was responsible for the local Manatee Protection Plan. He's been involved in ecosystem and protected species initiatives and the management of reef, beach, dune, mangrove, seagrass and estuarine communities.

Paul has also been a long time Audubon Everglades Volunteer and has assisted the chapter in innumerable ways in his longtime position as our Sanctuary Chair and in his new position as the chair of our new Science Advisory Committee.



Since retiring 6 years ago as ERM Director of Coastal Restoration, Paul has been working with Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute (CMARI) as a conservation biologist and manages their Healthy Habitats and Ocean (H2O) marine debris environmental education program in Southeast Florida. The program focuses on marine debris issues and uses a mobile classroom to bring the message to schools and community events. He also coordinates monthly beach cleanups at Boynton Inlet to raise awareness.

Whenever possible Paul spends time in and on the water surfing, paddle boarding and kayaking. Audubon Everglades is also pleased to announce that our popular series “Bird of the Month” with Clive and CiCi Pinnock will feature a new surprise bird picked by our members.

**Please click the link below  
to register for the meeting.**

[Register now.](#)

1. Click [Register now](#) and you will receive a confirmation notice from Zoom with the link to join the event. You will receive a reminder notice with the meeting information from Zoom prior to the meeting.

2. The meeting will start at 7PM. We invite you to sign on at 6:45 for “social time,” when you can see and chat with club members and meet our presenters. If you join earlier, you will be placed into a waiting room.

Note: If you register and find that you cannot attend, please cancel your registration. We hope to have a recording of the meeting posted to our website soon after the meeting.

# Would You Like to Be Part of Our AE Photography Group?

by Mary Young

Your AE “Friends” membership now includes participation in Audubon Everglades Photography Group presentations, workshops, and field trips as well as the ability to submit images to the critique sessions and to post on our AEPG Facebook page.

If you are a “Friends” member and would like to register to receive photography information and be able to submit your photographs to critique sessions and to post on our AEPG Facebook page, please email: [aepgregister@auduboneverglades.org](mailto:aepgregister@auduboneverglades.org) and provide your name, phone number and email address.

Please note that you will not continue receiving photography information unless you register for Audubon Everglades Photography Group by sending an email to the address above.

To visit our Photography page, [click here](#).

To visit our AEPG Facebook page, [click here](#).

Membership in “Friends” of Audubon Everglades is required to be part of AE Photography Group. To join “Friends” of Audubon Everglades, [please click here](#).



Photo: © Scott Zucker

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## 12th PALM BEACH COUNTY JUNE CHALLENGE

by Vicki Rogerson

### Challenge yourself this June to see more birds! The fun all starts on June 1.

The June Challenge is a friendly competition designed to keep us birding through the summer heat while non-birders retreat indoors and miss all the fun. The aim of the competition is for each individual contestant to see as many species as possible within the boundaries of their county between June 1 and June 30. Counties all over Florida participate. Bird alone or with others. It's a great reason to get out and see more birds. You never know what surprises might be waiting for you out there.



Photo: Migrating Arctic Tern photographed at Boynton Inlet Park May 26, 2021. © Mary Dunning

*continued on page 5*



*Challenge continued from page 4*

The June Challenge begins on Tuesday, June 1. Alachua County's Becky Ennis originated the Challenge in 2004, and she also established the rules. Marie Zeglen is the compiler.

**More about the June Challenge**

Rules for the Challenge:

1. Count birds found within a single county, ideally the one you live in. Explore your home turf and find some new birding spots. (Doing more than one county is permissible, but each must be reported separately.)
2. Each bird on your list must be seen, not just heard.
3. Share your unusual bird sightings with others. It is, after all, a friendly competition.
4. Any free-flying bird is countable for the purposes of the Challenge, but keep track of how many ABA-countable (view or download) and non-countable species are on your list. (Click here to view or download the Audubon Everglades Palm Beach County Checklist of Birds.)
5. Send your list to Marie Zeglen for the final compilation by midnight on Thursday, July 1st. Report them in this format: "Total number of species seen (number that are ABA countable / number that are not)," e.g., 115 (112 / 3). If your local population of an exotic species is recognized as established by the ABA, then any member of that population is an ABA-countable bird. Otherwise put it on your non-countable list. Marie does not need your species list, just the total count in the proper format. Marie's contact info: [Kayaker3955@gmail.com](mailto:Kayaker3955@gmail.com)
6. Optional, but it would be fun to know what species were seen by everyone. Send your June eBird list of species seen, and ABA list (countable/number that are not countable) to Vicki Rogerson by midnight on Thursday, July 1st. She will post a county species list on the Audubon Everglades Community Facebook page, along with the county winners, and Marie's final compilation. You can also request the results be sent to you by email.

Hints for new Challengers: Bird as much as you can during the first and last weeks of the month to get late spring and early fall migrants.

The more you bird, the more you see! Happy birding!

For questions, contact Vicki Rogerson:  
[VLRogerson@gmail.com](mailto:VLRogerson@gmail.com), 561-352-7835 or

Paula Gattrell: [paulagattrell@hotmail.com](mailto:paulagattrell@hotmail.com),  
561-248-9089.



Photo: Red-Headed Woodpecker in Palm Beach County. © Kenny Miller



Photo: Spot-breasted Oriole in Palm Beach County. © Gael Silverblatt

**Join Friends of Audubon Everglades**