



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

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Photo: (left) Phainopepla Female (right) Phainopepla Male © Elaine R. Wilson

Bird of the Month: Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*)

by Clive & Celecia Pinnoch

The 2021 Bird of the Month Series continues to focus on 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 PowerPoint presentation at each monthly meeting.

Phainopeplas inhabit the southwestern deserts of North America. Typically found in the Sonoran, Mohave, and Colorado Deserts of California, they are generally observed perched atop trees and shrubs, where they feed heavily on available fruits and insects. The male is silky black overall with a crest, red eyes, and a white wing patch that is conspicuous only in flight. The female and juvenile birds are “mouse- gray” in color and have crests. Wing patches are pale gray in both, but the juvenile has brownish eyes. Both sexes have relatively long tails.

Habitats frequented by these birds include, but are not limited to, desert washes with abundant mistletoe, orchards, chaparral, Joshua Tree woodlands, and oak and sycamore woodlands. Foothills and canyons are often used as well, but open desert and grasslands seem to be used to a lesser extent.

From fall through spring, the Phainopepla’s diet is comprised primarily of the berries of desert mistletoe, as well as elderberry, sumac, redberry, and juniper. As the breeding season progresses in the spring, the diet is supplemented with a variety of flying insects, caught in mid-flight (flycatcher style). In addition to “hawking” insects from the air, the birds consume leaf-dwelling beetles, bugs, and caterpillars. The additional protein from these insects contributes to egg production and hatchling development.

Territory establishment, nest site selection, and nest

building are all done by the male, which courts a perspective female to his territory with a variety of flight displays. As the receptive female gives in to the male’s advances, he sometimes feeds her (to help seal the deal). The nest is usually placed 4 – 12’ above ground in the fork of a branch or in the thicket of a mistletoe, making it difficult to locate.

The nest is a small shallow cup of twigs, leaves, weeds, and plant fibers bound together with spider webs and lined with animal hair or plant down. On average, 2-3 grayish colored eggs spotted with lavender and black are laid. The eggs are incubated by both parents for 14-16 days, with the male doing most of the incubation during daylight hours.

The young, quite helpless at hatching, have grayish-black skin sparsely covered with white down. They are fed by both parents, receiving mostly crushed insects at first;

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

September 2021

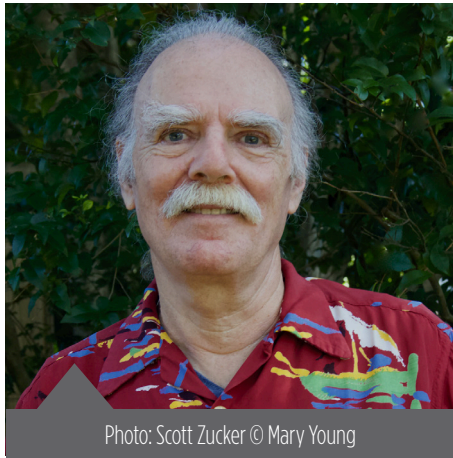


Photo: Scott Zucker © Mary Young

Greetings, everyone!

Early fall migrants have been returning, and birding has been especially active in Western Palm Beach County, with an American Golden-Plover and an Upland Sandpiper the highlights of recent August sightings.

Delta Variant of Covid Virus

The fourth wave of the Covid-related virus, which has been driven by the Delta variant, continues to severely impact Florida and Palm Beach County. And, as many of you probably know, a third vaccine or booster shot is currently available for immunocompromised individuals and will be made available to all fully vaccinated adults beginning the week of September 20. In the meantime, I encourage you to please continue to take the necessary precautions to stay safe.

Tuesday, September 7, 7 PM Zoom Monthly Meeting

We are excited to have the Busch Wildlife Sanctuary Executive Director Amy Kight as our feature presenter at this month's general meeting. Amy will speak about "Local Bird Rescue" and the essential role that Busch Wildlife plays in rescuing and rehabbing injured and sick birds before releasing them back into the wild.

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fruit is gradually added to the diet as the young grow. The young leave the nest 14-20 days after hatching, and only one brood is raised per nesting season.

The ground nest, typically selected by the female, is a shallow depression lined with grass, leaves, and twigs and placed beneath a shrub or in a clump of cactus or other protective vegetation. The ten to twelve or more eggs are dull white to pale buff in color and are heavily marked with brown. Two females may sometimes lay their eggs in the same nest. The eggs are incubated by

In case you missed it!

If you were unable to view or missed our August Presentation about the film "Hidden Wild," [here is the link to view the film.](#)

Field trips

Audubon Everglades field trips are tentatively scheduled to start this October. Because of the recent advent of the fourth wave of the Covid pandemic and to ensure the safety of all participants, masks will be required until further notice and Covid vaccines are strongly encouraged. Our calendar of field trips will soon be available on the website, and we will inform you of changes or of any other temporary requirements put in place for attending field trips. If you are interested in leading a field trip for our 2021-22 season, please contact our Field Trip Scheduler, Paula Gatrell, at Paula@auduboneverglades.org.

Duda Farms

We had hoped to schedule a limited version of the popular Duda Farms field trip this August after the 2020 hiatus because of the pandemic, but we were unable to do so since Duda Farms currently has a "no visitor" policy in place because of the fourth wave of the pandemic.

Amazon Smile

We continue to receive many donations from Amazon, thanks to your use of their special Amazon Smile program when ordering. As of May 2021, the donations have totaled \$789.51, a great resource for us. To get started using Amazon Smile, simply go to "Smile. Amazon.com," sign in, indicate Audubon Everglades as your agency of choice, and bookmark the page. From then on, when you are ready to explore Amazon, click on your bookmarked "Smile" page, and you are ready to order. They will send us a percentage of your sales without you paying anything extra. We appreciate your donations when you use this site. Thank you!

the female for 21 to 24 days. The precocial down-covered young leave the nest within a day after hatching. The chicks are cared for by both parents; the adult birds lead the chicks to food sources (insects and other invertebrates), but the young feed themselves. The young can make short flights at 10 days but are not fully grown until later. One brood is raised per year on average.

Although considered socially monogamous, some females desert their mates and their brood to take a new mate and lay another clutch of eggs, leaving the original partner to raise the chicks on his own.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Salvia spp.

by Helen Laurence



Photo: Salvia coccinea © S. Laurence

All bird-welcoming gardens in South Florida must include some Salvia. The Audubon Native Plants Database considers Salvia, or "Blood Sage," an important bird resource: "Also known as Scarlet Sage, Tropical Sage, and Indian Fire, this annual plant grows to 4 feet tall and easily reseeds itself. It produces several whorls of showy, red flowers from an interrupted spike on a square stem from February through October.... [Blood Sage can grow in full sun to shade in dry to moist soils.](#)"

The Audubon database notes that this Salvia attracts Hummingbirds, in addition to Wood Warblers, Waxwings, Orioles, Sparrows, Mockingbirds & Thrashers, and Vireos. In our garden, Salvia blooms year-round, as long as we are diligent with our deadheading -- removing the old seed spikes. We have seen hummingbirds nectaring on our Salvia and assume the other birds on the Audubon list would be interested in both the seeds and the many insect pollinators that use the plant, although we have not observed this to be the case. White- and pink-flowered variants are common but according to Craig Huegel, these other colors are recessive and will not breed true over time if the [dominant red variety is nearby](#). Further, you might expect the white and pink

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“Local Bird and Wildlife Rescue”

**Presented by Amy Kight, Executive Director,
Busch Wildlife Sanctuary**

SEP
07

Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 7PM
Zoom-Hosted Presentation

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



Photo: Amy Kight with a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk

Join us as we welcome Amy Kight, the Executive Director of Busch Wildlife Sanctuary in Jupiter, Florida. Amy is planning to have several native species on hand for her presentation, while she shares their fascinating and often precarious stories of rescue and rehabilitation. She will discuss the importance and impact of our native species to the environment. Amy will also give us an in-depth look at the history, mission and future of Busch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Amy Kight

Amy has over 25 years' experience working with animals and wildlife – 17 of those with Busch Wildlife Sanctuary. She served as the Sanctuary's Education Director for five years before being promoted to Animal Care Director and then Executive Director in 2017. Prior to coming to the Sanctuary, Amy served as Palm Beach County's Wildlife Officer. She holds multiple certifications including Florida Animal Control Officer, Chemical Capture, and is an internationally certified Wildlife Rehabilitator. Amy

holds degrees in both Psychology and Veterinary Technology.

Busch Wildlife Sanctuary

Busch Wildlife Sanctuary is a non-profit organization in Palm Beach County that rescues sick, injured, and orphaned native Florida wildlife. Over the years, they have rescued deer, foxes, screech owls, hawks, bald eagles, squirrels, birds, and many others. The Sanctuary relies on the public to bring injured wildlife to their wildlife hospital. When that isn't possible, their volunteer rescue team is sent out to rescue animals that the public can't, such as raccoons, great blue herons, bobcats, foxes, etc. Last year, Busch Wildlife Sanctuary had over 5,200 patients brought to their hospital for rehabilitation with the goal of releasing healthy animals back into the wild. Their Environmental Education Program, a curriculum-based program gives children and families the opportunity to learn about native plant and animal species and participate in conservation efforts to protect and preserve Florida's wildlife, natural resources, and endangered species.

Audubon Everglades and Busch Wildlife Sanctuary

Audubon Everglades and Busch Wildlife Sanctuary are partnering to create the “Native Neighbors Wild Bird Garden.” As mentioned in the July Kite, we have been awarded a grant by Palm Beach County to create a garden for the community and visitors of Busch Wildlife Sanctuary. The garden will provide the opportunity to experience and learn about native plants, birds, and pollinators and provide food sources and shelter for native birds and pollinators to thrive. It will show visitors how they can create a similar garden in their own yards to help wildlife, conserve water, and limit pesticide usage. Native birds and pollinators are in jeopardy due to habitat loss, climate change, and pesticides. We can make a difference and support recovery through collaborative efforts and conservation strategies like this that strengthen neighborhood engagement and improve the quality of life for community members and local wildlife.

[Register for the ZOOM meeting here!](#)

Remembering Cynthia Plockelman



Photo: Former AE Presidents Cynthia Plockelman (on left) and Paton White at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center © Scott Zucker

Cynthia Plockelman, past board member, vice-president (2006-2014) and president (2014-16) of Audubon Everglades, passed away August 9, 2021, after a valiant struggle with dementia. She was a native Palm Beach County resident. There was no place finer in her heart than Palm Beach County! She attended the local schools and graduated from Florida State University. Cynthia was employed for over forty years with the South Florida Water Management District as their librarian, managing their reference center and archive.

After her retirement from the District, Cynthia became a full-time grassroots environmental advocate. In 2014 she received the prestigious Everglades Coalition 2014 John Kabler Grassroots Activism Award. She was a tireless voice for Everglades restoration, wildlife conservation and protecting our water, attending numerous meetings at local, regional, and state levels, and speaking with decision makers.

In addition to being the president of Audubon Everglades, Cynthia was also a former Audubon Florida board member and was active with the Everglades Coalition, Friends of Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Florida Native Plant Society, and several other environmental organizations.

She loved all things native to Palm Beach County and Florida. She was an avid birder. She could identify many birds just by listening to them or seeing how they flew! She participated annually in the Christmas Bird Count and many other local bird counts. She went on several birding tours to Central America. She was also a founding member of the Palm Beach Chapter of the Native Plant Society. She is survived by her sister Margaret Richardson of Tennessee and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded by her beloved brother Ray, who was an avid birder and took great care of her during her illness, and by her elder sister Patricia Winters.

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flowers to be less attractive to hummingbirds than the red, and that has indeed been my experience.

The Florida Wildflower Foundation's brochure on *Attracting Birds with Florida's Native Wildflowers*, includes both [Salvia coccinea](#) and [Salvia lyrata](#).

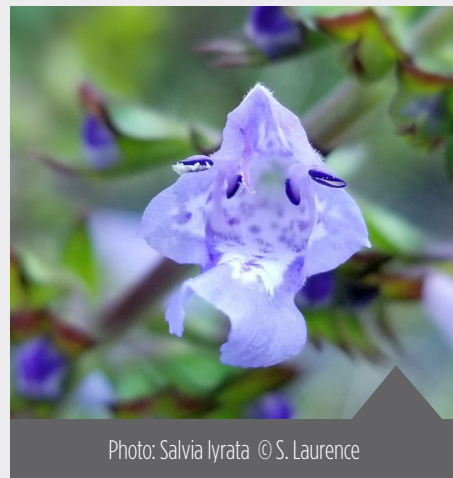


Photo: Salvia lyrata © S. Laurence

Known as Lyre Leaf Sage, *Salvia lyrata* features stunning lavender-blue flowers on a 2-3 foot stalk rising from a flat basal rosette with distinctive variegated leaves. The purplish-brown variegated pattern is most pronounced when the plant is grown in a shady location and seems to fade away in sunny locations. Or perhaps the variegation is recessive, since over successive generations, all of my self-seeded *S. lyrata* now have plain green leaves. In general, this is a shade-loving plant. It blooms in the spring, and if you trim the stalks after the seed-eaters have had their fill, those basal rosettes can make an attractive ground cover, especially in a shady spot where not much else will grow. Both Tropical Sage and Lyre Leaf Sage spread by self-sown seed and can become weedy in the garden. On the other hand, both of these *Salvias* will do just fine in flower pots on apartment balconies or suburban patios, and might help tide hungry migrators over until their next stop!

Other, less common species of *Salvia* native to South Florida are Southern River Sage AKA [Creeping Sage](#) ([Salvia misella](#)), [West Indian Sage](#) ([Salvia occidentalis](#)) and [Littlewoman](#) ([Salvia serotina](#)). I have never seen the two latter species, except in photographs. *Salvia lyrata* and *Salvia coccinea* are readily available at native plant nurseries. The *S. misella*, Southern River Sage may be more difficult to find; as always, native nurseries are your best bet! You can search for local growers in the Plant Real Florida database maintained by the [Florida Association of Native Nurseries \(FANN\)](#).

Profile: Paula Gatrell

by Kristen Murtaugh



Photo: Paula Gatrell standing in front of flooded agricultural field in Western Palm Beach County

Paula Gatrell has cheerfully taken on what has to be one of the most important and demanding volunteer functions for Audubon Everglades – the coordination of the field trips. I asked Paula recently how the building of this year’s schedule was going. Quite well! Paula has been reaching out to past partners for scheduling visits to sites, including the various STAs, and she has added interesting new trips to the calendar, such as one with Martin County Audubon to Jonathan Dickinson Park to see the Scrub Jays. She has also been assembling a small committee to help her with various tasks. At this point the schedule for October to December is well planned, and responses are coming in for January to June 2022. As always, the call is out for knowledgeable people interested in leading field trips to volunteer their time.

Paula grew up in rural North Carolina, in Lewisville, outside of Winston-Salem. She was the middle child of five and has two brothers and two sisters. The family lived on a small 15-acre farm, where they raised cows, goats, chickens, hogs, and quails and grew produce. The farm sustained the family’s food needs. Paula has always enjoyed being outdoors close to nature and loves hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting (she was quick to tell me that her

“shooting” is now with her camera). When she was 30 years old, she decided to move to West Palm Beach. She had a 45-year career as a nurse, 35 of those years as an emergency room nurse and eventually ER charge nurse. Her last job was Controlled Substance Coordinator at the VA Medical Center in West Palm Beach, a position in which she tracked and trended control substances throughout the hospital. Paula married Steve Gatrell on Christmas Eve in 1988. They have three “fur babies” (cats).

Upon her retirement in 2018, Paula became an active member of Audubon Everglades, attending meetings and going on field trips. Her experience in AE has moved Paula from backyard birder to avid eBirder. She was impressed by the knowledge of the group leaders and inspired to learn as much as she could about the birds in south Florida. She saw birds on field trips that she had never imagined were in her world. She uses guide books and has several different bird apps on her iPhone. She is ready to go after a rare sighting at a moment’s notice, if possible. She has been thrilled this summer to see the many unusual birds that have showed up in South Florida, such as the Brown Noddies and the American Golden-Plover. Paula’s favorite bird is the Roseate

Spoonbill. She finds watching its graceful movement awe-inspiring and a kind of “mental therapy.”

Paula gave herself a wonderful birthday present this year. She hired David Simpson to take her and Shawn Colter for a four-hour guided birding trip to the Glades, where she saw her first Orchard Oriole and Cave Swallow. Paula has had many wonderful mentors in her birding education, but the mentor she most appreciates is Vicki Rogerson. From what Paula told me, the two of them can bird for hours without losing their energy and enthusiasm. Paula had fun doing the June Challenge with Vicki this year.

Paula has been photographing for 20 years and has enjoyed being a member of AE’s Photography Club. The meetings and outings have helped her build her shooting and photo-editing skills. She especially enjoys making videos of birds and described how much fun she recently had videoing the spinning of a Wilson’s Phalarope. This summer she bought a more advanced Nikon camera, the mirrorless Z-50, and is enjoying learning its controls.

Paula is enthusiastic about what she considers her biggest accomplishment for Audubon Everglades. In 2020 she electronically scanned all the club records from 1955-2018. There are many interesting documents in the records, including a letter from Marjorie Stoneman Douglas in reference to conservation and a telegram from the chapter to President Dwight Eisenhower, urging him not to name a certain person Secretary of the Interior. Paula was active in the Least Tern Stewardship project. She enjoyed educating out-of-town beach goers about the birds and seeing how the residents near the beach had developed feelings for the terns. She also volunteers for Florida Audubon EagleWatch. The nest she watches at a south county school with Linda McCandles successfully fledged two eaglets this spring. Paula said the interest of the school principal and children is heartwarming.

I enjoyed doing the interview for this Kite Profile with Paula. I had seen her at AE zoom general meetings and photography club meetings during the pandemic and seen her photographs on the AE Photography Club Facebook page, so it was fun to get to know her. She told me she has a strong work ethic, and I see that ethic in the commitment she has made to helping the Audubon Everglades chapter remain strong and relevant in this challenging time. Her belief in the importance of contributing her time in appreciation for all she has learned is inspiring.



Make a Difference in Our Community: Volunteer with Audubon Everglades

by Scott Zucker

Become actively involved in AE and support our mission to inspire and educate others to conserve wildlife and the environment. Help ensure that future generations can enjoy all the wonders that nature has to offer! **We have plenty of volunteer opportunities and are sure to have a place where you can enjoy making a difference.**

If you have a special interest or talent or simply want to give to the community as an Audubon Everglades volunteer, please check this list of volunteer opportunities. If your interest area is not listed but you would like to volunteer, get in touch with us by contacting our Volunteer Coordinator Chris Golia at chris@auduboneverglades.org.

Here are some of our current volunteer opportunities:

Plants for Birds Garden Stewards

Volunteer gardeners or plant lovers are needed to help once a week or so for a few hours in the Audubon Everglades Plants for Birds Teaching Garden at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center in West Palm Beach. Tasks may involve weeding, pruning, plant identification, watering, transplanting, and mulching to help the garden thrive. Training will be provided. If you are interested, please contact Lauren Butcher at lauren@auduboneverglades.org.

Purple Martin Stewards

Volunteers are needed to support our ten Palm Beach County Purple Martin partner locations by assisting with public outreach, education, housing, etc. No previous knowledge of Purple Martins is required. All that is required is a desire to learn and a passion to make a positive change for Purple Martin conservation. Shelly Rozenberg, our Purple Martin Project Coordinator, guarantees that volunteers will fall in love with these unique and social birds! Please contact Shelly at shellyrozenberg@bellsouth.net.

Everglades Kite Publication Assistant

A volunteer is needed to lay out the monthly version of the Audubon Everglades Kite for publication on the Website. Proficiency with layout software required. We will provide the necessary software as needed. Experience with publications is helpful. Please contact Sabeena Beg at sabeena@auduboneverglades.org.

Workshop Coordinator

We are looking for a volunteer to develop educational programs, working with our AE team and members and other community resources. Workshop design should ideally be instructive and experiential, related to birds and/or the environment, and relevant to the AE mission. You will work with our Education Chair and the public and coordinate with our Communication Director to publicize the workshops.

Please contact our Educational Coordinator Lauren Butcher at lauren@auduboneverglades.org.

Library Liaison

Coordinate with the Palm Beach County Library (main branch) to collaborate, augment, and promote the ongoing Audubon Collection of books on ornithology, a project Audubon Everglades helped establish in 1979, which has become one of the most informative and complete collections of bird books found in Florida. Please contact our President Scott Zucker at Scott@auduboneverglades.org for more information.

Community Outreach

Assist with other volunteers in staffing the Audubon Everglades Display booth at local events and festivals. Have fun interacting with the public while providing valuable education about birds and the environment. Experience or prior training is not necessary, and all materials/information are provided. Please contact our volunteer coordinator Chris Golia at chris@auduboneverglades.org for more information.

Join Friends of Audubon Everglades