

Audubon Everglades

EVERGLADE KITE

Monthly newsletter for our invaluable members.


NENE GOOSE
(*Branta sandvicensis*)

IN THIS ISSUE

- Bird of the month:
The Nene Goose
- Plant of the month:
Wild Coffee
- Scrub Jay update
- Program Feature: An
evening with Dr. Carl
Safina
- Upcoming Programs
- 2021-2022 Field Trips
& Christmas Bird
Count
- Join the Photography
Group!
- Volunteer
Opportunities

BIRD OF THE MONTH: NENE GOOSE (BRANTA SANDVICENSIS)

BY CLIVE & CELECIA PINNOCK

The Hawaiian Goose or Nene is the only goose endemic to the Hawaiian Archipelago. It is one of 30 Hawaiian bird species that are classified as endangered by both the State and Federal government. Because the Nene is the Hawaiian state bird, there is also greater significance in preserving the species as a symbol of native Hawaiian wildlife.

As with all geese, the sexes are almost identical (monomorphic), limiting gender identification to size difference (the male being slightly larger than the female). The Nene is a medium-sized goose with an overall length of about 25 inches. The bird has a black head, bill, tail feathers, legs, and webbed feet. The cheek patch and the neck are buff colored, and the neck is deeply furrowed. The body plumage is gray/brown in color, heavily barred above and lightly barred below. The birds also have a white rump patch.

Recently discovered fossil deposits strongly suggest that the ancient distribution of

Nene include Kauai, Molokai, Maui, and the Big Island. The current distribution of Nene on the Big Island occurs primarily on the slopes of Mauna Loa, Kilauea, and Hualalai. The reintroduced population on Maui is currently centered in the Haleakala Crater area. These upland habitats are frequently vegetated areas among the more recent lava flows, generally with no natural standing water. The Nene also inhabits pastures, other grasslands, wetlands, golf courses, montane scrubland, and parks. They graze and browse on the leaves, seeds, berries, and flowers of grasses, herbs, and shrubs. It is believed that most of their need for water is met by the berries they consume.

The breeding season of the Nene begins in October and ends in February, coinciding with the wet winter season in Hawaii, when most plant growth occurs. Adult pairs mate for life. After copulation, a bowl-shaped nest is made on the ground in a shallow scrape or depression and lined with a variety of available vegetation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

**OUR MISSION:**

EDUCATING AND INSPIRING PEOPLE TO
CONSERVE WILDLIFE, ESPECIALLY BIRDS,
AND THE ENVIRONMENT THAT
SUPPORTS THEM.

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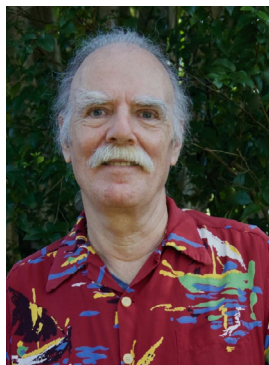
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NOTE FROM PRESIDENT



2021 has been an active and wonderful year for Audubon Everglades, despite slogging through another year of the Covid-19 pandemic. You've seen the growth in our program offerings through our monthly Kite newsletter, AE emails, and increased engagement in social media.

Highlights from 2021 show our commitment to our mission to inspire people to learn about the environment and the local habitats that support birds and other wildlife and to take action to conserve them.

Thanks to our member loyalty and the tireless work of our Membership Chair, Jeanette Mitchell, membership in Friends of AE has remained consistent, despite the effect the pandemic has had on our in-person events.

Our monthly programs have become so popular that we had to upgrade our Zoom account to accommodate more people. We now regularly exceed 100 participant screens. This is mostly due to the efforts of our Program Committee - Marianne Gabel, chair, and committee members Gail Tomei, Sabeena Beg, Mary Young, and me. Our final presentation for 2021 is December 7 with Dr. Carl Safina, celebrated author and host of the PBS series Saving the Ocean. Audubon Magazine listed Dr. Safina among its "100 Notable Conservationists of the 20th Century." His awards include the Lannan Literary Award, Orion Award, National Academies Communication Award, John Burroughs Medal, Pew and Guggenheim Fellowships, and a MacArthur "Genius Award." Surely, this will be an evening not to be missed.

Hopefully, you've had a chance to join our Photography Group aepgregister@auduboneverglades.org. Under the leadership of Jay Richard and Alan Chin Lee, it has been offering a full slate of exciting and informative programs, workshops, and critiques for Friends of Audubon Everglades members. They hope to resume field trips this winter.

In addition to the Kite's new, more colorful format, a welcome addition to the Kite newsletter has been Helen Laurence's Plant of the Month Column, which expands our knowledge about which natives to plant in our yards. Starting this December, Shelly Rozenberg will contribute a monthly column about the birds that Audubon Everglades is helping to protect and monitor.

Palm Beach County Library's "Birding Backpacks" program, which Audubon Everglades partnered with and supported, has been a huge success and received the 2021 Library Innovation Award from the Florida Library Association.

Hopefully you've had an opportunity to join one of our stimulating new conservation-oriented book discussion groups led by Blue Kaufman.

To help us promote our Native Plants for Birds initiative, we applied for and received generous grants from FPL, which enabled us to install the "Plants for Birds Native Habitat Teaching Garden" at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center. Grants from FPL for the "Plants for Birds" program and the PBC Neighborhood Engagement and Transformation grant program will allow us to install a "Plants for Birds Demonstration Garden" at the new Busch Wildlife Sanctuary location set to open next year.

We resumed field trips in October under the scheduling leadership of Paula Gatrell and are once again offering many exciting opportunities for outings led by our knowledgeable Audubon Everglades volunteer field trip leaders.

We are excited by the continued growth and expansion of our community science and bird conservation programs, including the Christmas Bird Count led by Chuck Weber, the PBC Project Perch Burrowing Owl program led by Mary Young, the Purple Martin program led by Shelly Rozenberg, Eagle Watch led by Linda McCandless, and Shorebird Surveys led by Paul Davis. Volunteers have stepped up to support all these efforts, increasing their impact and success. If you would like to be part of one of these great programs, please contact us at info@auduboneverglades.org

Everglades Restoration is currently fully funded by both the state and federal governments with new projects coming online and others being completed. These efforts are beginning to make a noticeable difference in sending water south to protect Everglades and Florida Bay nesting and breeding areas. Mary Young and Susan Kennedy lead our conservation efforts and work closely with the Everglades Coalition.

We continue to be amazed and thrilled by the variety of birds we are finding in Palm Beach County. This year, birders saw rare songbirds in our area, such as the Tennessee, Canada, Nashville, Wilson's, Kentucky, Connecticut, and Blue-winged Warblers; Acadian, Least, Ash-throated, and Alder flycatchers; Hermit, Swainson's Gray-cheeked, and Veery Thrushes; Philadelphia, Bell's, and Thick-billed Vireos; Lark, Seaside, and Lincoln Sparrows; the Western Spindalis; rare plovers and sandpipers such as the Ruff, American Golden Plover, Upland Sandpiper, and Marbled Godwit; rare seabirds and gulls such as the Heermann's, Franklin's, and Bonaparte's Gulls, the White-winged, Black, and Surf Scoters, the Arctic and Sooty Terns, the Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, the Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes, the Brown Noddy, Cory's Shearwater, Leech's Storm-Petrel, Common Loon; and White-crowned Pigeon.

Audubon Everglades has many wonderful opportunities awaiting volunteers like you. Please share your ideas, time, and talents with us and become an integral part of the AE family. Help educate, conserve, and inspire! Happy Holidays! All of us at Audubon Everglades can't wait to share another awesome year with you.

Sincerely,

Scott Zucker
President

NENE GOOSE

(grasses, leaves) and down from breast feathers. The nest is usually hidden under shrubs. The female lays 2 – 5 eggs and incubates them by herself, while the male guards the nest. Incubation is about 30 days, and the goslings are able to leave the nest soon after hatching. Both parents care for the young, taking them to foraging locations, but the young feed themselves. Adults molt following the breeding season, remaining flightless for about 4 – 6 weeks and generally gaining flight feathers at the same time as the goslings.

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 is also included in the Bird of the Month Power Point presentation at each monthly meeting.



PROGRAMS



JOIN



SOCIAL MEDIA

AUDUBON EVERGLADES PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

BE PART OF AUDUBON EVERGLADES PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

While "Friends" membership now includes participation in Audubon Everglades Photography Group (AEPG), mailings will only include limited photography information.

To receive all photography events information, including the ability to submit your photographs to critique sessions and to post on our AEPG Facebook page, please send an email to: aepgregister@auduboneverglades.org and provide your name, email address and phone number.

Please note that unless you send an email to register for Audubon Everglades Photography Group to the above email address, you will only receive partial information about our photography activities.

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



PLEASE
CHECK THE
PHOTOGRAPHY
GROUP
WEBSITE
FOR
UPCOMING
PROGRAMS &
WORKSHOPS

VOLUNTEER



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 make 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 us at info@auduboneverglades.org.

CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPENINGS

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 Educational Environmental 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.

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 info@auduboneverglades.org for more information.





Shelly Rozenberg

HARVEST TIME FOR THE FLORIDA SCRUB-JAYS

APHELOCOMA COERULESCENS

Join us for
**Jonathan Dickinson State
Park Scrub Jay Walk**

Join Jim Howe, JD SP volunteer, for a walk through the imperiled Florida scrub habitat and learn about this unique ecosystem and the wildlife that depends on it to survive, particularly the Florida Scrub Jay.

December 15 @ 9:00 am – 11:00 am
For more information click [here](#)



Photo: Shelly Rozenberg

By Shelly Rozenberg

DID YOU KNOW that autumn is harvest season for the Florida Scrub-Jays and that a single Scrub-Jay may bury between 6,000 and 8,000 acorns? Although Florida Scrub-Jays have a varied diet that includes insects, lizards, small frogs and berries, acorns are an important part of their omnivorous diet. Acorns are eaten during the year and surplus acorns are buried throughout their territory for later use, especially in winter when animal food sources may be scarce. Each acorn is individually hammered just below the scrub habitat's sandy soil, a behavior called caching. Once the acorn is cached, the Scrub-Jay will often place a twig, leaf or pebble over the area, possibly to help them remember the location. Once in the ground, the acorns are protected from deterioration by their thick husks and a chemical called tannin. Studies conducted at Archbold Biological Station have found that Scrub-Jays are protective of this valuable resource and will often dig up acorns to check on their condition, sometimes moving them to higher, drier locations. Researchers also found that

young Scrub-Jays learn which cache sites are best and will improve their caching choices the following year.

The Florida Scrub-Jays have a symbiotic relationship with the oaks. Because Scrub-Jays only retrieve about 30% of their cached acorns, uneaten acorns may germinate making the Scrub-Jays agents for the dispersal of a variety of oaks.

Florida Scrub-Jays live exclusively in Florida and are reliant on the oak scrub habitat. Unfortunately, the Scrub-Jay's population has declined by 90% in the last century due to loss of habitat caused by urban development and climate changes. Regular prescribed burns that mimic lightning strikes during pre-settlement times are essential for maintaining a suitable habitat for their survival. Continued conservation efforts will determine the future of the magnificent Florida Scrub-Jays and other plants and animals dependent on the threatened Florida scrub habitat.



AUDUBON EVERGLADES FIELD TRIPS

Please join us on our December field trips. Most trips are led by volunteer Audubon Everglades leaders. Unless otherwise indicated, they are free and open to the public. When you arrive, we will have our usual sign-in sheet with some additional CDC practices we need to follow.

With safety in mind for all participants and trip leaders at AE sponsored and led field trips during the Covid-19 pandemic, Audubon Everglades recommends that face masks be worn and social distancing be practiced. Audubon Everglades also recommends that you stay home if you have a fever, cough,

shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, or new loss of taste or smell. Audubon Everglades Field trip leaders reserve the right to refuse those who exhibit these symptoms.

Please see our [Calendar](#) for more trip details and updates.

DECEMBER 2021

12/5 Riverbend Park

Field Guide: Ed Kaweck

12/5 Tall Cypress Natural Area

Field Guide: Bruce Pickholtz

12/6 Green Cay Wetlands

Field Guide: Valerie Brauer

12/11 Wellington Environmental Preserve

Field Guide: Clive Pinnock

12/12 Wakodahatchee Wetlands

Field Guide: Chris Golia

12/15 Jonathan Dickinson State Park Scrub Jay Walk

Field Guide: Jim Howe

12/17 Green Cay Wetlands

Field Guide: Valerie Brauer

12/18 STA 5/6 Hendry-Glades

Field Guide: Bob Hartmann

JANUARY 2022

1/2 Christmas Bird Count

Field Guide : Chuck Weber

1/8 Pine Glades Natural Area

Field Guide: Dr. Mark Cook

1/8 A1 FEB

Field Guide: Bob Hartman

1/9 Indian Trails Improvement Area

Field Guide: Ranger Booth

1/13/2022 - 1/17/2022 Everglades Birding Festival

Key Note Speaker: Richard Crossley/Field Guide: Paddy Cunningham, David Simpson, Jeff Kietzmann.

1/14 Wakodahatchee Wetlands

Field Guide: Valerie Brauer

1/15 Wellington Environmental Preserve

Field Guide: Mary Dunning

1/16 Lake Okeechobee: Herbert Hoover Dike and EAA tour

Field Guide: Dr. Paul Grey

1/19 Jonathan Dickinson State Park Scrub Jay Walk

Field Guide: Jim Howe

1/22 STA 5/6 Hendry-Glades

Field Guide: TBD

1/23 STA 1 E

Field Guide: Brian Garrett

1/23 Green Cay Wetlands

Field Guide: Valerie Brauer

1/29 Grassy Waters Preserves: Behind the scenes

Field Guide: Scott Zucker & Cindy Bush

FEBRUARY 2022

2/5 Wakodahatchee Wetlands

Field Guide: Valerie Brauer

2/12 Wellington Environmental Nature Preserve

Field Guide: Scott Zucker

2/13 Indian Trails Improvement Area

Field Guide: Ranger Booth

2/13 Green Cay Wetlands

Field Guide: Valerie Brauer

2/20 STA 5/6 Hendry-Glades

Field Guide: Bob Hartmann

MARCH 2022

3/4 Green Cay Wetlands

Field Guide: Valerie Brauer

3/5 STA 5/6 Hendry-Glades

Field Guide: TBD

3/6 Birding Class: Ascend to Be a Better Birder*Field Guide: Paddy Cunningham***3/13 Indian Trails Improvement Area***Field Guide: Ranger Booth***3/16 Jonathan Dickinson State Park Scrub Jay Walk***Field Guide: Jim Howe***3/18 Wakodahatchee Wetlands***Field Guide: Valerie Brauer***3/19 STA 1 West Expansion***Field Guide: Brian Garrett***3/26 Peaceful Waters Sanctuary***Field Guide: Scott Zucker***APRIL 2022****4/3 Wakodahatchee Wetlands***Field Guide: Valerie Brauer***4/16 STA 5/6 Hendry-Glades***Field Guide: Hendry-Glades Staff***4/20 Jonathan Dickinson State Park Scrub Jay Walk***Field Guide: Jim Howe***4/23 - 4/24 Ft. DeSoto Overnight***Field Guide: Paddy Cunningham***4/23 Wakodahatchee Wetlands***Field Guide: Valerie Brauer***MAY 2022****5/9 Pelagic Tour***Field Guide: Dr. Mark Cook***5/14 Green Cay Wetlands***Field Guide: Valerie Brauer***5/18 Jonathan Dickinson State Park Scrub Jay Walk***Field Guide: Jim Howe***5/22 Wakodahatchee Wetlands***Field Guide: Valerie Brauer***JUNE 2022****6/1 - 6/30 June Challenge***Organizer: Vicki Rogerson/Paula Gatrell*

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



- By Chuck Weber

After a year hiatus, the West Palm Beach Christmas Bird Count resumes Sunday, January 2. The CBC, since its beginning in 1900, has become a holiday season tradition. National Audubon calls it "the nation's longest running community science bird project." Conducting the West Palm count since 1956, we are able to see long-term trends in our local bird species, both positive and negative.

Each count takes place in an established 15-mile diameter circle, divided up into territories and assigned to count teams. Our West Palm circle stretches from West Palm Beach to Delray Beach, and includes a portion of the coastline, as well as a small part of Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. The counters are seasoned, skilled birders, as well as those with less experience, who usually help by keeping the lists.

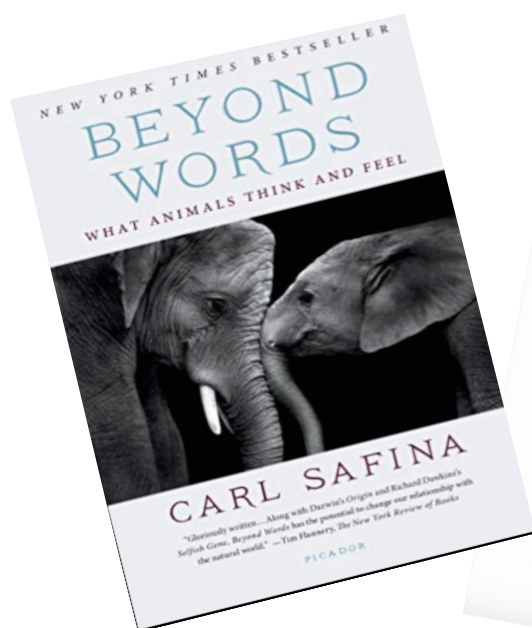
2019 saw the second highest number of participants in the history of our local count -- 120. Our counters logged a very respectable 149 species. We also made important inroads gaining access to more gated communities within our circle with good bird habitat.

Following the January 2 count, we'll conduct our compilation via Zoom the same evening at 7:30. If you feel you can help the effort, counting or accessing your community, contact compiler Chuck Weber at cweber4aves@comcast.net.

Here are National Audubon's COVID protocols: <https://www.audubon.org/news/christmas-bird-count-compiler-announcements>

Here's a map of all count circles -- you can zoom in to find and explore our circle: <https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4>

DECEMBER FEATURED SPEAKER

AN EVENING WITH AUTHOR CARL SAFINA:
THE MINDS AND CULTURE OF ANIMALS

NAMED A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR BY
THE NEW YORK TIMES, KIRKUS REVIEWS,
AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

WINNER OF A 2021 NAUTILUS BOOK
AWARD GOLD AWARD IN THE CATEGORY
OF ANIMALS AND NATURE



BEYOND WORDS & BECOMING WILD

- By Marianne Gabel

Humans think, experience emotions, and develop cultures. Turns out, so do many other species. Drawing on his two most recent books, "[Becoming Wild](#)" and "[Beyond Words](#)," Carl Safina will discuss cognition, emotion, and culture in non-human beings. He will show and talk about, what makes us human and what makes many other species who they are. He will also talk about what is at stake in this living world, for us and for all our co-voyaging species.

About Carl Safina

Carl Safina's lyrical non-fiction writing explores how humans are changing the living world, and what the changes mean for non-human beings and for us all. His work fuses scientific understanding, emotional connection, and a moral call to action. His writing

has won a MacArthur "genius" prize; Pew, Guggenheim, and National Science Foundation Fellowships; book awards from Lannan, Orion, and the National Academies; and the John Burroughs, James Beard, and George Rabb medals.

He grew up raising pigeons, training hawks and owls, and spending as many days and nights in the woods and on the water as he could. Safina is now the first Endowed Professor for Nature and Humanity at Stony Brook University and is founding president of the not-for-profit [Safina Center](#). He hosted the PBS series [Saving the Ocean](#), which can be viewed free at [PBS.org](#).

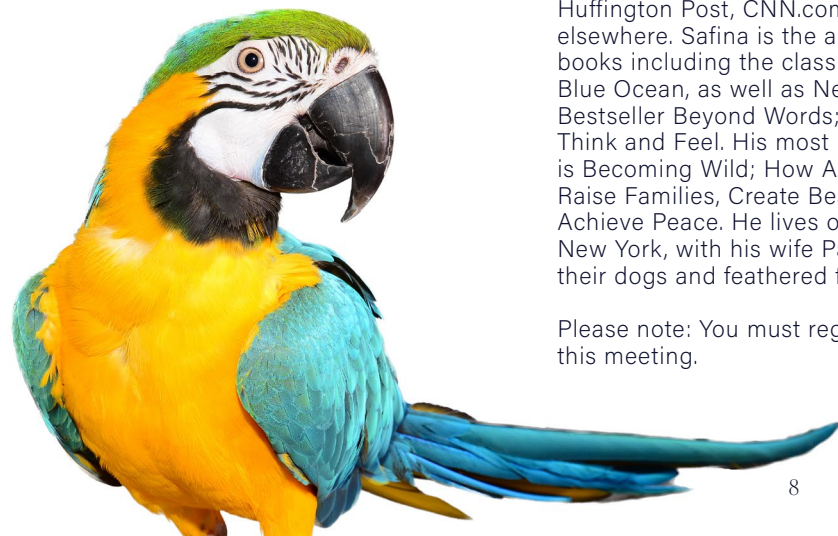
His writing appears in The New York Times, TIME, The Guardian, Audubon, Yale e360, and National Geographic, and on the Web at Huffington Post, CNN.com, Medium, and elsewhere. Safina is the author of ten books including the classic [Song for the Blue Ocean](#), as well as New York Times Bestseller [Beyond Words](#); [What Animals Think and Feel](#). His most recent book is [Becoming Wild](#); [How Animal Cultures Raise Families, Create Beauty, and Achieve Peace](#). He lives on Long Island, New York, with his wife Patricia and their dogs and feathered friends.

Please note: You must register to attend this meeting.

DR. CARL
SAFINA

- Zoom Hosted Presentation
- Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 7PM
- 6:45-7:00 PM Social time with fellow members

[CLICK
HERE TO
REGISTER](#)



JANUARY FEATURED SPEAKER

Audubon Everglades Presents:

Dr. Mark Cook -
"When Flows Returned to
the River of Grass"

2020-21 Wading Birds Nesting
Season in the
Everglades

January 4 @ 7pm
[Click Here to Register](#)



Dr. Mark Cook's presentation will discuss some of the incredible ecological responses that occurred in 2021 as a result of the flows that returned to the southern Everglades and Florida Bay. He will first discuss the exceptional wading bird nesting year across the Everglades, why it happened, and the relevance of these responses to wading bird conservation and restoration. He will then take you on a visual journey with a selection of photos/videos taken during his scientific aerial surveys: the return of massive flocks of foraging water birds, huge nesting colonies of storks and ibises, and an abundance of healthy predators set within expansive watery landscapes.



UPCOMING PRESENTORS 2022

**Birds of the Ice Age**

Sara Ayers Rigsby, Director, Southeast & Southwest Regions, Florida Atlantic University Public Archeology Network presents on ancient species.

Tuesday February 1, 2022
 7pm - 9pm

[Register here!](#)

**Everglades Photography - Clyde Butcher**

An Evening with Acclaimed Photographer Clyde Butcher.

Tuesday March 8, 2022
 7pm - 9pm

[Register here!](#)

**Snail Kite Conservation**

Tyler Beck, Snail Kite Coordinator, Florida Wildlife Commission presents on the status of Snail Kites.

Tuesday April 5, 2022
 7pm - 9pm

[Register here!](#)

My most frequently consulted online resources on Native Plants:

- **Atlas of Florida Plants from the USF Institute for Systematic Botany:** <https://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/>

- **Audubon Native Plants Database:** <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants/search?>

- **Florida Native Plant Society**
<https://www.fnps.org/plant/callicarpa-americana>

- **Florida Wildflower Foundation:**
<https://flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-callicarpa-americana/>

- **Hawthorn Hill Wildflowers blog:** <http://hawthornhillwildflowers.blogspot.com/>

- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center:** https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=caam2

- **Natives for Your Neighborhood from the Institute for Regional Conservation:**
<https://www.regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/default.asp>

- **Native Plant Finder from the National Wildlife Federation:** <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>

- **Treasure Coast Natives blog by George Rogers:**
<https://treasurecoastnatives.wordpress.com/2012/02/04/dont-let-your-beauty-droop/>

- **USDA Factsheet:** https://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_caam2.pdf

- **University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Services Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS)**



PLANT OF THE MONTH: Wild Coffee - By Helen Laurence

Wild coffee is an attractive hammock understory plant, occurring naturally throughout peninsular Florida and into the Keys. Three species of wild coffee are native to Florida:

Shiny-leaved wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*), AKA Seminole Balsamo

Bahama wild coffee (*Psychotria ligustrifolia*)

Shortleaf wild coffee (*Psychotria tenuifolia* was *P. sulzneri*), AKA velvetleaf wild coffee

All three species produce fruits that attract birds as well as flowers that attract insects, providing food for insect-eating birds. The most common of the three species is the Shiny-leaf wild coffee, *Psychotria nervosa*, so that's the one we'll focus on. According to the Audubon Native Plant Database, *Psychotria nervosa* attracts nuthatches, mockingbirds and thrashers, orioles, waxwings, crows and jays, thrushes and woodpeckers. At the Audubon project website, "Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink," a zip code search identifies the birds most vulnerable to habitat loss due to climate change in Palm Beach County. Among them are wild coffee lovers such as orioles, crows, woodpeckers, and thrashers, making it even more important to plant species like wild coffee to restore and maintain native habitat. <https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees/county?zipCode=33449>

The genus name, *Psychotria*, comes from the Greek word *psyché*, which means "life" or "soul," possibly referring to the medicinal properties of some plants within the genus (<https://flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-psychotria-nervosa/>). The species name or specific epithet, *nervosa*, does not mean that ingesting any part of the plant makes you nervous or jittery,

as from too much caffeine. Despite

the common name, wild coffee is only distantly related to *Coffea arabica*, and contains no caffeine. *Nervosa* is from the Latin word *nervosus*, meaning "sinewy," and refers to the pronounced veins of the leaves, which give them a distinctive quilted appearance.



As befits an understory hammock plant, wild coffee does best in shady locations; the dark green leaves may turn chlorotic (yellowed) in full sun. Otherwise, wild coffee is highly adaptable and forgiving. It may attain a height of ten feet but responds well to pruning, so it can be trimmed and maintained as a hedge which may offer good nesting opportunities for birds. So these are the "pros:" Feeds and shelters the birds, has beautiful leaves and berries, good in shady spots, easy to grow.

Now for the "cons."

Too much of a good thing?

Wild coffee requires a lot of maintenance to keep it under control in the home landscape. Unless you have space in your garden for a spreading thicket, you will need to prune and trim on a regular basis and pull up the many unwanted sprouts (or pot them up and give them to other native plant gardeners). We know an avid birder and gardener who, despite its significant ecosystem services, will not

PLANT OF THE MONTH (CON'T).

have wild coffee in the yard because it is spread so readily by the birds and other wildlife that eat the fruits and disperse the seeds, producing too many volunteers that take over and crowd out other native plants, in the process perhaps reducing biodiversity and balance in the landscape.

Laurie Albrecht, UF/IFAS/Palm Beach County, Environmental Horticulture Extension Agent with the Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Office, included wild coffee in her recent presentation to the Florida Native Plant Society, listing native plants that make good hedges as well as provide food for birds. But there's a caveat.

Wild coffee is one among several woody native plants that are susceptible to Lobate Lac Scale, "an invasive insect native to India and Sri Lanka that was first found in Broward County in 1999. Evidence of the lac scale includes a dark, sooty mold covering leaves and high numbers of minute, bark-like bumps or scales on twigs" <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/AG241>. The scale

infestation is particularly destructive to another important native plant for birds, Wax Myrtle (see Kite article, July 2021), such that Albrecht no longer recommends it for use in the home garden. There is no effective treatment for lobate lac scale, although thorough and frequent application of a horticultural oil may help.

According to a publication of the Entomology and Nematology Department, UF/IFAS Extension, other native plants that appear to be highly susceptible to lobate lac scale include cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*), buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*), strangler-fig (*Ficus aurea*), myrsine (*Myrsine guianensis*), and red bay (*Persea borbonia*). Non-native popular ornamentals like black-olive (*Bucida buceras*), Indian laurel (*Ficus microcarpa*), Benjamin fig (*F. benjamina*) and fruit trees, e.g., lychee (*Litchi chinensis*), mango (*Mangifera indica*), and star-fruit (*Averrhoa carambola*) are susceptible as well <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN471>, Original publication date November 2002. Revised June 2021).

Until an effective treatment is found, the best we can do as home gardeners is to adhere to the good general practice of "Right Plant, Right Place." This means understanding the environmental conditions a specific plant needs to thrive and choosing a planting site with appropriate soil quality, water, light, air circulation and temperature. This will minimize plant stress and support the plant's natural ability to resist disease.

In the meantime, we still have abundant wild coffee in our yard, so far healthy and vigorous and providing a bounty for birds and other wildlife.

Helen Laurence is a regular contributor to Audubon Everglades. A Master Gardener who loves plants, birds, and butterflies, Helen has a lavish native plant garden on her five acre property bustling with birds and butterflies. Helen also volunteers at our recently established Educational Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Pine Jog Educational Environmental Center.



We left this area open for you! Do you have something you love and want to share with the Audubon Everglades community? Look no further! Audubon Everglades newsletter team would love to hear from you! All ages are welcome.

Contact Scott@auduboneverglades.org for more information and how to join our team.

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