

Audubon Everglades

EVERGLADE KITE



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BIRD OF THE MONTH

A SERIES THAT FOCUSES ON NORTH AMERICAN SPECIES REQUESTED BY OUR AUDUBON EVERGLADES MEMBERS.

[READ MORE](#)

PLANT OF THE MONTH

A SERIES THAT FOCUSES ON PLANTS AND THEIR BENEFITS TO NATURE AND WILDLIFE.

[READ MORE](#)

LATEST NEWS

READ UP ON THE LATEST AUDUBON EVERGLADES NEWS, EVENTS AND NOTICES.

[READ MORE](#)

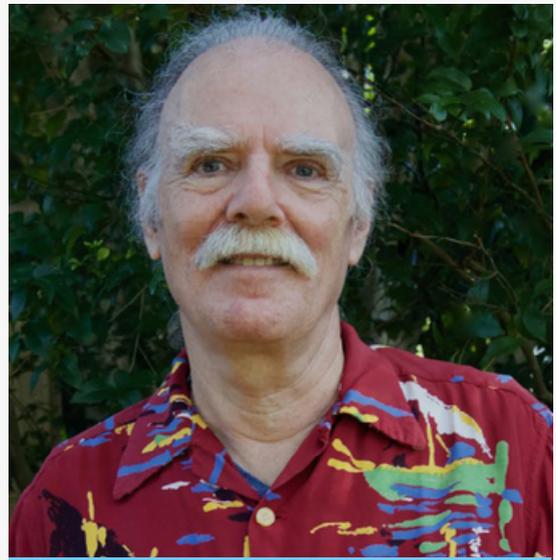
Featured Presenter

TYLER BECK: SNAIL KITE

TYLER BECK, SNAIL KITE COORDINATOR, FLORIDA WILDLIFE COMMISSION, PRESENTS ON THE STATUS OF SNAIL KITES.

CONTINUED TO P. 07





PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Greetings!

I hope that everyone is doing well and excited about seeing our spring avian visitors as they make their way north from Central and South American locales along the Atlantic Flyway. I especially hope that you have been looking up and been fortunate to see the elegant Swallow-tailed Kites, which returned in early March and have been circling our skies.

We have an exciting new field trip offering for the young and young at heart who accompany them.

On Sunday, April 3, from 10am to 12pm, Autumn Kioti, as Professor Screech, will host a "Family Friendly Adventure" through Peaceful Waters Sanctuary. Professor Screech will take participants on an entertaining and educational stroll, and binoculars will be available for all ages. Because space for this event is limited, be sure to REGISTER. [Read more](#)



Volunteer

GET OUTDOORS: HOW CONNECTING WITH NATURE CAN RECHARGE YOU

Become actively involved in Audubon Everglades 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, get in touch with us by contacting us at info@auduboneverglades.org



**AUDUBON
EVERGLADES**

BECOME A MEMBER
TODAY!



DONATE



AMAZON SMILE



PRESIDENT'S NOTE (CONT.)

by *Scott Zucker*

The Audubon Everglades Board met on February 24th. We discussed and approved our 2022-2023 budget, which can be viewed [here](#), and our [2022-2024 slate of Board officers](#), which will be presented to the Friends of Audubon Everglades for approval at our Annual General Membership Meeting on April 5, 2022.

New budget items to provide civics conservation training and to expand our outreach to youth, families, and the underserved community were approved. The Board also approved the renting of a larger storage unit, so we can have most of our Audubon Everglades property at one central location.

I would like to thank outgoing Board member Cathy Hanson for her invaluable service to Audubon Everglades during her six-year tenure as Recording Secretary. Cathy has another grandchild on the way and hopes to spend more time as a fulltime grandmother.

I hope that you continue to enjoy our monthly Zoom meetings and that yours was one of the record 185 screens that tuned in to attend the March 8 monthly meeting presentation by Clyde Butcher. It was an extraordinary evening and a privilege to host this iconic figure associated with landscape photography, especially the landscape of the Florida Everglades. Be sure to [register](#) for our April 5, 2022 Zoom meeting, when we will be hosting FWC Snail Kite Coordinator Tyler Beck, who will address "Snail Kite Conservation." Our AE Photography Group's April 18 presentation will be "Getting the Keeper" with professional photographer Don Hamilton. Here's where to [register](#). To get more involved in our photography group, please contact AEPG at aepgregister@auduboneverglades.org

In case you missed one of our AE Monthly Meetings or Photography Group programs or you wish to view them again, please visit our AE [YouTube channel](#).

We hope you will join us at our Annual Meeting on Tuesday April 5, and we look forward to seeing you at our social time before the start of all our meetings!



Audubon Everglades Board Members Natasha Warriach, Susan Kennedy and Mary Young begin to move AE property to new, larger storage unit. Susan (left) and Natasha (right) celebrate move.

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



AUDUBON EVERGLADES SLATE OF OFFICERS

by *Natasha Warraich*



The Nominating Committee proudly presents the Audubon Everglades Slate of Officers for 2022 – 2024

Treasurer: Louann Dillon (election 2022-24)
Recording Secretary: Theresa Beerman (election 2022-24)
Second Vice President: Natasha Warraich (election 2022-24)
Director: Susan Kennedy (election 2022-24)
Director: Michelle Bachoon (election 2022-24)
Director: Charlotte Nevill (election 2022-24)
Director: Autumn Kioti (election 2022-24)

Per the AE Bylaws, the four executive positions are staggered and alternate each year. Next year, the President and First Vice-President positions will be on the slate.

We are happy to introduce new additions to our Board of Directors:

Autumn Kioti is a certified Florida Naturalist, artist, and storyteller who currently leads nature journaling walks with AE and serves as a co-host for our monthly meetings. Autumn has collaborated with the NYC Audubon Society, the Santa Fe Art Institute, Art Monastery Italia, NOosphere Arts, Rohi's Readery, ecoAmerica, Resource Depot, Wild Bird Fund and more! They hope that their art helps bring viewers and participants closer to understanding that humans are part of nature and not separate from it.

Charlotte Nevill works at the South Florida Water Management District in the water quality group. In her spare time, she enjoys exploring and photographing the ecosystems of south Florida with her friends and family.

Theresa Beermann has been an Educator for 36 years and is currently teaching Language Arts at Dreyfoos School of the Arts High School. In addition to teaching, she has sponsored many clubs during her tenure at Dreyfoos, including National English Honor Society and the Asian Cultural Society, and she is the current girls' soccer coach.

The 2022-2024 slate of Board officers will be presented to the Friends of Audubon Everglades for approval virtually at our Annual General Membership Meeting on April 5, 2022.

Nominating Committee

Natasha Warraich
Paul Davis
Dr. Mark Cook

*Thank
you!*

We wish to thank
outgoing AE Board
member Cathy Hanson for
her outstanding six years
of service as Recording
Secretary.





Bird of the Month: Canvasback – (*Aythya valisineria*)

BY CLIVE AND CECELIA PINNOCK

The Canvasback, measuring 21 inches long, belongs to a group of waterfowl called diving ducks. The legs of these ducks are typically placed farther back towards their tail, giving them greater propulsion and maneuverability to locate food under water. Because of this anatomical feature, the ducks of this species have difficulty walking upright on land. The Canvasback has a noticeably sloped forehead that sets it apart in appearance from other waterfowl. The head and neck of the male is chestnut with vivid red eyes and a dark bill. The breast and under-tail coverts are black, and the upper and lower body, including the sides, is whitish. The female is pale brown overall with dark brown eyes and a pale eye-ring. She also has the characteristic sloping forehead and dark bill.

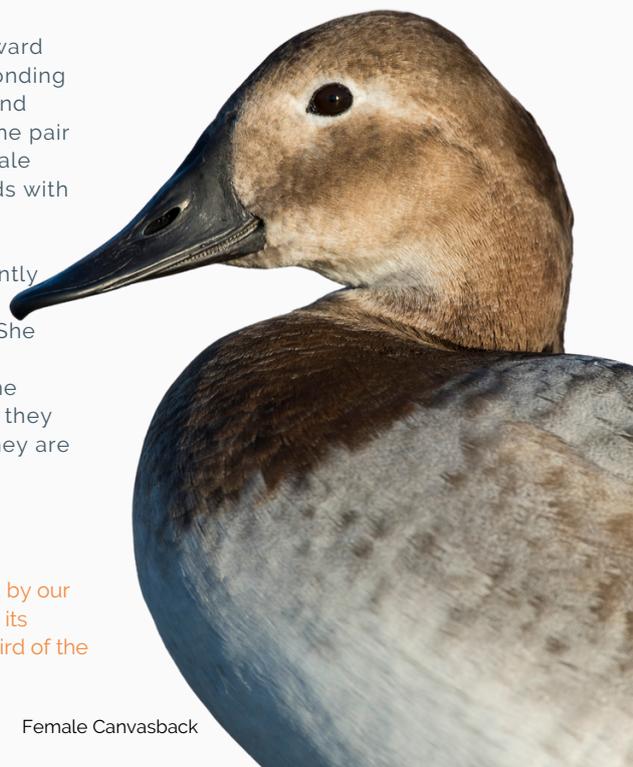
The placement of its feet means that, to fly, the Canvasback must run or skitter along the surface of the water until it builds enough air speed for flight. Once airborne, it is a strong and fast flyer, sometimes attaining speeds of 56 miles an hour.

Canvasbacks frequent marshes, lakes, and bays, where they can dive down to seven feet under water to forage on the leaves, roots, tubers, and seeds of aquatic plants. Its species name *valisineria* refers to the genus name of wild water celery, an aquatic plant that is among its favorite foods. The Canvasback's omnivorous diet includes mussels, snails, aquatic insects, and occasionally small fish. Outside the breeding season, Canvasbacks are gregarious and are generally found in large flocks, sometimes numbering in the thousands. Occasionally, the flocks are interspersed with Redheads and Scaup. Wintering habitats are typically estuaries, coastal bays and marshes, large lakes, lagoons, rivers, ponds, and flooded agricultural fields.

As the breeding season begins in the early spring, the birds begin migrating northward to their nesting grounds. It is during the spring migration that courtship and pair-bonding begin in earnest. Several males may sometimes court a single female, displaying and competing for her attention. She eventually selects a partner from the rivals, and the pair then focuses their attention on the business of reproduction. After mating, the female abandons the male and sets about locating a nest site (typically in shallow wetlands with cattail, sedges, and reeds), building a nest, and laying and incubating the eggs.

The bulky basket-like nest, built of dead vegetation and lined with down, is frequently built over water but sometimes on the edge of a wetland, hidden in the reeds. The female lays seven to twelve olive-gray eggs and incubates them for 23 – 28 days. She leads the down-covered young to the water several hours after they hatch. The ducklings are immediately able to feed themselves (mostly aquatic insects), and the female remains with them for several weeks. She then abandons the young before they fledge, leaving them to fend for themselves and to fly southward for the winter. They are capable of flight at 60 – 70 days after hatching.

The 2022 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.



Female Canvasback



Photo by Helen Laurence

Plant of the Month: Bird Pepper (*Capsicum annuum* var. *glabriusculum*)

BY HELEN LAURENCE

As the name suggests, bird pepper has an important place in a South Florida bird garden. Many sources indicate that the fruits are highly attractive to mockingbirds. In addition, Kushlan and Hines, in *Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens*, list cardinals, thrashers, catbirds, jays, grackles, blackbirds and parakeets. Many sources also note that, while the fruits are prized by birds, mammals avoid them with good reason. These peppers are hot! They can be used sparingly by human mammals in recipes that call for a hot pepper. Stacey Matrazzo of the Florida Wildflower Foundation states that, while the peppers typically measure between 50,000 and 100,000 units on the Scoville Scale, some have been documented at over 1,000,000 units -- hotter than a habanero! <https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-capsicum-annuum-var-glabriusculum/>

Mammals may not eat the fruits, but I'm pretty sure deer will browse the leaves. My efforts to establish bird pepper in our garden have on several occasions been thwarted by what I assume are hungry deer, because the plants just vanished completely. Granted, they are relatively short-lived perennials or long-lived annuals in South Florida, but my plants never even had a chance to become established before they disappeared. Also, they are not easy to find locally. We purchased six nice, vigorous plants from a native plant nursery in Sarasota, gave three to friends, and planted the remaining three. The friends' plants survived; ours are gone. The good news is that our friend gave me seeds from one of the surviving peppers and I planted them, using the "ambient method" described in Rufino Osorio's chapter on Propagation in his essential *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants* (p. 31). This method involves planting the seeds in pots or flats outdoors, where they are exposed to natural variations in light, heat and moisture, in other words, ambient environmental conditions. Bird pepper re-seeds itself in nature, of course, most often after passing through the digestive tract of a bird. But in this case, the ambient method worked (see my photo on right)!

The beautiful, lush bird pepper pictured at the top of this article came from the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation, and it was offered in a recent plant swap organized by our local chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS). By the way, FNPS plant swaps (and monthly plant raffles held when in-person meetings resume) are an excellent way to acquire rare and unusual native plants.

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 Native Habitat Teaching Garden at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center.



Bird pepper seedlings. Photo by Helen Laurence



April Featured Speaker

TYLER BECK

April 5, 2022

REGISTER

MONTHLY PROGRAM

Snail Kite Conservation

Tyler Beck, Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

Snail Kites have had an uncertain and changing status over the last few decades due to issues impacting their South Florida habitats, including the rise of non-native flora and fauna. Lake Okeechobee has been important for the survival of Snail Kites in some years, critically important in others. Tyler will share the research that assists FWC in the management of Snail Kite habitat in Florida. You will learn about the birds' habits, the challenges they face, their latest breeding numbers and locations, how they are adapting to Florida's dynamic and shrinking wetlands and the shifting water levels on managed public lands, and what you can do to help their survival.

Tyler Beck grew up in Lake Placid, Florida, where his parents were educators. He received a bachelor's degree in Biology from Florida Gulf Coast University and completed an internship working with Florida Scrub Jays in the Avian Ecology lab at the Archbold Biological Station. He next worked at Florida Atlantic University, tracking Great Egret and White Ibis movements and habitat selection throughout the Everglades. He stayed on at FAU for his master's degree, focusing his thesis research on the characteristics of the unique avian communities of the Everglades Stormwater Treatment Areas. In 2011 he joined the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to work on wetland restoration and bird monitoring at Lake Okeechobee. For the past seven years, Tyler has been the Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, where his main responsibility is the management of Snail Kite habitat.

We offer a variety of informative and educational programs at our virtual monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. These Programs are free to our members and the public.

Upcoming Presentations



Previous Presentations



Audubon Everglades **PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP**

MEETS MONTHLY. Membership of Audubon Everglades is required to be part of AE Photography Group.

[JOIN NOW](#)



FEATURED PROGRAM

Getting the Keeper

Guest Photographer Don Hamilton
April 18th, 2022

[LEARN MORE](#)



Programs

Enjoy our monthly programs and events



Critique Sessions

Brush up on your skills with one of our Guest Expert Photographers.



Social Media

Join our discussion and post your photos



DID YOU MISS A PROGRAM?

[CLICK HERE](#)



Audubon Everglades **PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP**

It really is all about you. What constitutes a keeper? What gives you joy? There is not one answer. There is not one size that fits all, or many, or most when capturing a moment, a feeling, a sense of place, the great outdoors, the wild in wildlife, the beauty areate a dynamic learning environment, where both the beginner and the advanced photographer can learn. Capturing an image in the field is just the beginning. Don says, "One's photographic journey is about the process, the experience and the derived personal satisfaction."

Don Hamilton Jr. is an award winning, internationally recognized photographer. He is a native Floridian living in Boca Raton and a passionate wildlife and nature photographer. He is a frequent contributor to the Clewiston News and the South Florida Water Management District's publications. A passion to share the many delights of nature and to promote conservation is the force that propels him to pursue excellence in photography. Don's fascination with wildlife and nature photography began at an early age while living in Venezuela for 10 years of his childhood. He specializes in leading custom workshops/tours to Costa Rica, Ecuador, Canada, Africa, and within the United States. With a preference for smaller groups and one-on-one teaching, Don can maximize the participants' learning experience and focus on their personal goals.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/don.hamilton.984>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/donhamiltonjr/>

FEATURED PROGRAM

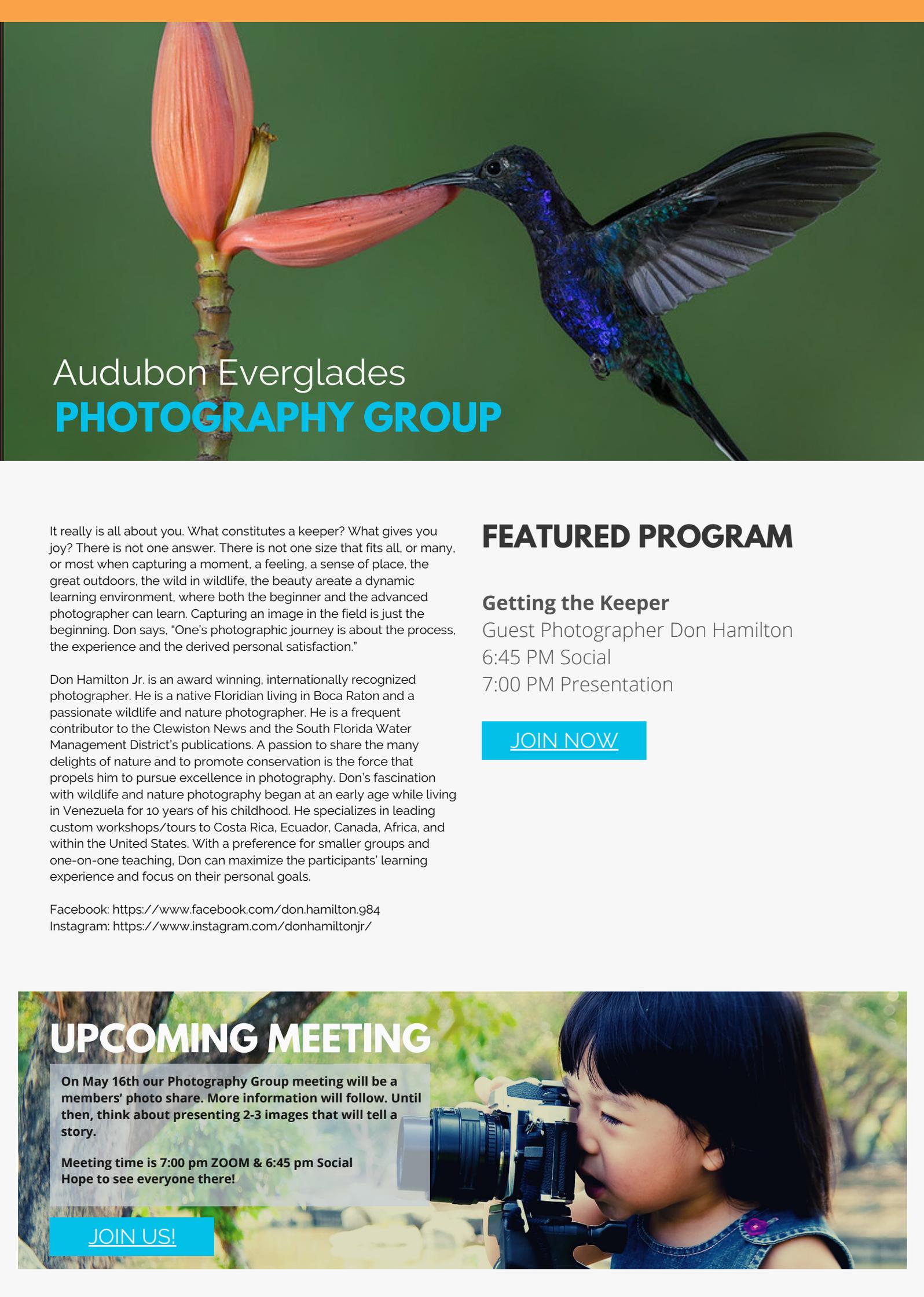
Getting the Keeper

Guest Photographer Don Hamilton

6:45 PM Social

7:00 PM Presentation

[JOIN NOW](#)



UPCOMING MEETING

On May 16th our Photography Group meeting will be a members' photo share. More information will follow. Until then, think about presenting 2-3 images that will tell a story.

Meeting time is 7:00 pm ZOOM & 6:45 pm Social
Hope to see everyone there!

[JOIN US!](#)

Audubon Everglades **FIELD TRIPS**

We offer a variety of exciting field trips throughout the county and Florida. Check our Calendar for new additions each month.

[CALENDAR](#)



Observe, Conserve, & Inspire

Check our Calendar for upcoming events and programs.

[CALENDAR](#)



Events & Workshops

Are you a bird brain? We certainly hope so! Join special Audubon Everglades guide, Professor Screech, for a family friendly field trip adventure at Peaceful Waters, a Wellington gem. What makes a bird a bird? Test your bird-braininess as the foremost expert in expertology leads both young and young at heart on an exciting boardwalk scavenger hunt to spark the curiosity and wonder of all budding bird watchers.

All ages and abilities welcome. The boardwalk is accessible to those with wheelchairs and assistive walking devices. Kiddo-sized binoculars will be available.

Spaces are limited, [register here!](#)

PROGRAMS



Plants for Birds



Education



Outreach





[CLICK HERE TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP.](#)

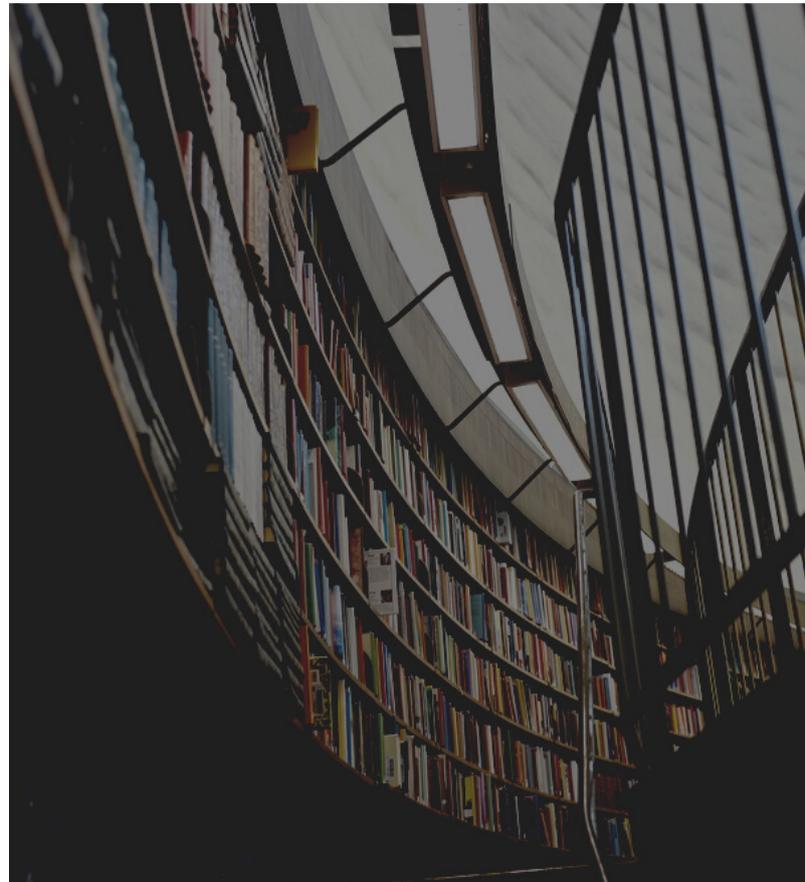
YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED: HB741 THREATENS ROOFTOP SOLAR

HB 741 threatens rooftop solar growth in Florida and is headed to the desk of Governor DeSantis. We need your voice to tell the Governor to veto this bill.

Climate change poses an existential threat to two-thirds of North American bird species—but there's still time to protect them. Building momentum in our transition to renewable energy can reduce the impacts of climate change while creating a more resilient future for both birds and people.

- Audubon Florida

Sign [Here](#)



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AMAZON SMILE

