



# The Crane

Volume 55 Number 2 November December 2013

## November and December Field Trips

**Saturday, November 2, 8:00 a.m.**

**Hague Dairy:** Meet Rex Rowan at the Tag Agency on NW 34th Street near US-441 to caravan to one of the county's best spots for sparrows, blackbirds, and raptors. Diff: 1

**Saturday, November 9, 7:00 a.m.**

**Hamilton County Mines:** FULL DAY TRIP! Meet at the Tag Agency on NW 34th Street near US-441 and caravan to join trip leader Jerry Krummrich in White Springs. We'll explore a series of freshwater impoundments for ducks and other water birds, and look for sparrows in the fields and brushy margins. Diff: 2

**Sunday, November 10, 8:00**

**Cones Dike at Paynes Prairie:** Call Wild Birds Unlimited (352-381-1997) to reserve a spot on this space-limited hike to Cones Dike with field trip leader, Mike Manetz. Diff: 3

**Saturday, November 16, 6:00**

**Cedar Key:** Meet Rex Rowan in the Target parking lot and carpool to Cedar Key - a quintessential Florida birding destination where birders can often view shorebirds over one shoulder and songbirds over the other. Participants may want to stay in Cedar Key for lunch. Diff: 2

**Saturday, December 7, 8:00 a.m.**

**La Chua Trail:** Table your bias against sparrows and get a fresh start with Jonathan Mays at Paynes Prairie's La Chua Trail. Meet at the trailhead on Camp Ranch

Road. La Chua is one of the area's best spots for close study of a variety of sparrows and other brush-loving birds as well as wintering flycatchers, raptors, waterfowl, and Sandhill Cranes. Fee required at parking. Diff: 3

**Sunday, December 8, 6:00**

**Circle Bar B Ranch:** Meet Bob Carroll in the Target parking lot to car pool down to Circle Bar B Ranch in Polk County where we will meet our guide, Cole Fredricks. Located on the north shore of Lake Hancock, this birding hot spot supports a tremendous bird population including wading birds, waterfowl, raptors, warblers, sparrows, and others. The diverse habitat includes oak hammock, freshwater marsh, hardwood swamp, and lake shore. Diff: 3

**Sunday, December 15, SPECIAL EVENT**

**Gainesville Christmas Bird Count:** Contact John Hintermister (386-462-1109; [jhintermister@gmail.com](mailto:jhintermister@gmail.com)) to discuss details if you are interested in participating in this all-day event. Diff: 3

**Saturday, January 4, 8:00**

**La Chua Trail:** Meet Rex Rowan at the trailhead on Camp Ranch Road for a walk out La Chua Trail to the observation platform that overlooks Alachua Lake. If water conditions remain, expect to see waterfowl, wading birds, raptors, and perhaps even some unexpected rarities. Fee required at parking. Diff: 3

**Trip Difficulty 1:** Trip within easy access to the vehicle and/or level terrain one mile or less **2:** May involve uneven terrain one to two miles **3:** May involve elevation change, uneven terrain, and/or greater than two miles

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*The Alachua Audubon Society's mission is to foster appreciation and knowledge of birds and other native wildlife, to protect and restore wildlife populations and their habitats, and to promote sustainable use of natural resources.*

Content of **The Crane** is the sole responsibility of AAS and fulfills stated objectives and goals of AAS. Annual subscription to **The Crane** is included in AAS dues. Non-Audubon members may subscribe to **The Crane** for \$10 annually. All checks for subscriptions or changes of address should be mailed to Paul Moler, Membership Chairman: see back page for address. Submissions to **The Crane** are welcomed. **The Crane** is printed on recycled paper.

**Deadline for  
Jan.-Feb. Crane:  
Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**



Fall migration is, to a large degree, fairly predictable in its general outlines. Warblers, thrushes, grosbeaks, and tanagers come through more or less on schedule; but the little variations make it fascinating...it's the anomalies that get our attention. For example, most years during September one could bird the uplands at Bolen

Bluff and expect to see only a few Yellow Warblers. However, throughout September this year several parties reported 30 or more Yellow Warblers. Why so many this year? Then there were the Alder Flycatchers. Alders are still considered a rare migrant in the state; prior to last year none had ever been documented here in the fall. This fall we had at least six confirmed by call or song...three at La Chua Trail, at least one on Cone's Dike, and two at Levy Lake/Barr Hammock. Have we been somehow missing them all along, or is this part of a new migration pattern for the species?

We had an excellent Fall Migration Count on September 21st. Seventy-one observers recorded 130 species, 24 of them warblers. If we had a "Count Week" as we do with the Christmas Count, we could have stretched that to 26 warbler species. Other goodies included Broad-winged Hawk, Black-billed Cuckoo, Alder and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Painted Bunting. Please see our website ([www.alachuaudubon.org](http://www.alachuaudubon.org)) for full list and totals.

Several local birders attempted to monitor pre-dawn flight calls in late September and early October. Most mornings between 6 and 7 am large numbers of thrushes, Bobolinks, and warblers could be heard passing overhead. The morning of Sept. 27 was particularly productive, with three different locations each reporting hundreds of thrushes. Interestingly, the woods can be pretty "thrushless" the morning after a heavy flight, but by early October we start seeing them "on the ground". San Felasco Hammock is usually the best place to see thrushes. Bob Carroll visited there Oct. 3 and found up to 7 Wood Thrushes; two days later Adam Kent had 10 Swainson's Thrushes. Rex Rowan, Matt Bruce, and I checked the following day and had multiples of all four expected thrush species.

We always hope for a cold front to provide a "grand finale" of migratory birds. We had no such weather event, but Ted and Steven Goodman still managed to find some late-fall goodies at Bolen Bluff Oct. 12, including two Bay-breasted and an amazing five Black-throated Green Warblers. The following day Bob Wallace had a couple of Philadelphia Vireos at his property near Alachua. Mid-October is also the time in fall when the largest number of Redstarts pass through our area, and several birders reported as many as twenty or more in a single outing. (continued on Page 3)

**8th Annual Holiday Social  
Friday, Dec. 6th; 6:30—9:00 pm  
Mill Pond Clubhouse  
240 NW 48th Blvd**

Celebrate conservation, birds, and the holidays with the Alachua Audubon Society! This festive event will include hors d'oeuvres, beverages, and a silent auction—one of our important annual fund raising events. This year our holiday party will be held at the Mill Pond Clubhouse.

Directions: From Newberry Road, turn south on NW 48th Blvd (across from GNV Health and Fitness Center). Drive south about 2 blocks. Look for tennis courts on the right. The Clubhouse is next to the tennis courts on the right. Look for our Alachua Audubon signs! We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming Holiday Social!

**Request for Silent Auction Items  
8th Annual Holiday Social  
Friday, Dec. 6th**

Alachua Audubon will hold a Silent Auction at the Holiday Social on December 6th and we are soliciting donations for the auction. If you own a business, provide a service, create cool art, or have items to donate for the silent auction, please contact Emily Schwartz at 352-372-0754; [emilysgfl@gmail.com](mailto:emilysgfl@gmail.com) or Helen Warren at [helenk-warren@cox.net](mailto:helenk-warren@cox.net); 352-214-7755. We would like to receive all of the silent auction items by December 1st so we have time to prepare bid sheets and other paperwork. Alachua Audubon is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, so your gift will be tax deductible. Thank you for your donation!

**Around The County** *(continued from Page 2.)*

There were early birds flashing signs of winter. The Goodmans checked the Hague Dairy Sept. 13 and found two Yellow-headed Blackbirds. The Ewing family followed up by finding a Bronzed Cowbird there the same day. Charlene Leonard noted the return of our Vermillion Flycatcher Oct. 5 at the end of La Chua Trail; Savannah, Song, and White-crowned Sparrows set early records for their return. Fall migration may be over, but there's no time to rest...see you out there! Thanks to those who shared their sightings through October 16, 2013.

**PLEASE DO THIS TODAY!**

Alachua Audubon Society members have been working very hard collecting voter signatures on the ballot initiative, ***“Water and Land Legacy Conservation Amendment”***. In fact, AAS is one of the leading petition gatherers statewide! Every single petition is much more than just a piece of paper. It's a message from a Florida voter who cares deeply about protecting what's best about living here, and who will take action to protect our natural treasures for future generations.

This is an important issue to have placed on the 2014 ballot and we need your help. Perhaps you have already signed this petition. If not, we ask you to go to the website, [floridawaterlandlegacy.org](http://floridawaterlandlegacy.org), download the petition, sign it, and mail it back to the Tallahassee address given on the form. It is urgent that you do this now! Thank you!

## Upcoming Youth Birding Activities

On Sunday, November 3rd, Alachua Audubon members will sponsor the Bird Camp in Micanopy at Tuscawilla Prairie Park. From 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. youth will learn about bird identification, listen to birds calls, and use binoculars and field guides.

Perhaps you have a child, grandchild, or neighborhood child you would like to bring to this event. Kindly register your child with Sharon Kuchinski at [sharonsmk@gmail.com](mailto:sharonsmk@gmail.com) for this fun afternoon together and an opportunity to begin to love the birds! Youth of all ages are invited.

## Family Birding at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park

Nov. 2nd—Introduction to Birding, Meet at the Visitor Center

Dec. 7th—Bird Habitats, Meet at Lake Wauberg parking area near the boat ramp

Join Neil and Joan McLeod for Family Birding fun from 9 am—11 am on the first Saturday of each month from November through April. Outings are free. Call the Visitor Center (352-466-4100) to register.

## Youth Birding at Powers Park

Alachua Audubon's Youth Program for the 2013/2014 season began September 30th at Powers Park. Participants included a combination of 14 elementary and middle school students and very enthusiastic parents. The emphasis of this outing was the fall migration.

After an introduction to bird migration, participants were quickly impressed with a back and front view of a Red-shouldered Hawk perched in a tall pine tree near the boat ramp. Along the canal birders compared a Little Blue Heron to a Tri-colored Heron. Other birds sighted were Red-winged Blackbirds, Boat-tailed Grackles, a Common Gallinule, Osprey, and an adult and immature Bald Eagle.

By the end of the morning young birders were able to identify Anhingas and recognize the difference between a Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture. For most it was their first experience viewing birds through a spotting scope.

Ted and Steve Goodman led the fieldtrip and provided guidance for bird identification and use of binoculars and spotting scope. Emily Schwartz and Helen Warren provided additional guidance on bird identification and let me tag along. This outing was a great start to Alachua Audubon's 2013/2014 youth birding program.

By Sharon Kuchinski

Photograph taken by Shichao Chen of Ted Goodman pointing out a bird to the kids during the Youth Birding Day at Powers Park.





## September 26: Sharon Kuchinski Day

AAS member Sharon Kuchinski, a second grade teacher at Expressions Learning Academy Charter School, has always been inspired by Operation Migration. This project raises Whooping Crane chicks in captivity and trains them to fly behind ultralight planes to migrate to Florida in order to establish a second migratory flock aside from the one that winters in Aransas NWR in Texas. Since its inception, Sharon and her students have monitored the migration of the cranes over the web from the time they leave Wisconsin until they arrive in Florida at Chassahowitzka NWR near Crystal River.

Sharon, or Ms. K as she is called by the students, uses Operation Migration across the curriculum, developing lessons in math, language arts, and dance based on the project. She also uses the Audubon Adventures class curriculum that our members have supported with donations, and her students participate in AAS Young Birders programs. Sharon requires that her students identify 30 birds by sight and sound in order to graduate to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. She is doing her part to foster a love of nature and birds in her students, building a conservation ethic in the next generation of leaders.

When a parent of one of Sharon's students suggested that she enter her class in the Environmental Protection Agency's Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder Contest, Sharon didn't hesitate. The contest was created to bring people of different age groups together to foster the EPA's mission to protect human life and the environment. Sharon, who has been dancing professionally since she was 15, choreographed a dance representing the behaviors of Whooping Cranes and taught it to her students. While she narrated by reading Eileen Spinelli's "Song for the Whooping Crane," her students danced to music. The dance and narration was videotaped and uploaded to the EPA website where it was then named among the national finalists. The winner will be determined by votes from the public. In recognition of Sharon's creativity, enthusiasm and commitment to her students, and for being ranked among the national finalists, Gainesville Mayor Ed Braddy declared September 26 to be Sharon Kuchinski and the Expressions Second Grade Class Day.



By Anne Casella

Drawing by Andre Frattino of Sharon and her class

## Speakers Corner

**November 20—Ecology and Conservation Status of the Threatened Southeastern American Kestrel;** Dr. Karl Miller will discuss the ecology, distribution, and population status of the Southeastern American Kestrel, sharing information obtained from nearly a decade of research and monitoring. The Southeastern American Kestrel is a non-migratory subspecies of falcon and one of Florida's most imperiled birds. Karl will share the latest updates on FWC's kestrel nest-box monitoring partnership and a statewide management plan for kestrels. Millhopper Library at 7:00 p.m.

## Community Calendar

November 7th—Sierra Club Meeting at 7:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville (4225 NW 34th St.). Dr. Bob Knight with the Florida Springs Institute will speak on "Spring Flow Declines and a North Florida Water Balance".

## A Swallow-tailed Kite's 10,000 mile Journey: A Black and White Odyssey

### Now at the Florida Museum of Natural History - Free Admission

Through paint, photos and poetry, experience the beauty of Swallow-tailed Kites and the story of their annual 10,000-mile round-trip migration from Florida to South America. "A Black and White Odyssey" immerses visitors in the fascinating journey of these imperiled birds.

## Donations Requested for The Alachua Audubon Society

In September, you likely received a letter from AAS asking for donations that will allow us to continue our many bird-related conservation and youth programs. Thank you to those who generously donated! AAS will not have a Christmas tree fundraiser this year due to the increased costs of trees, large number of volunteers required, and hectic holiday schedules. Therefore, we are reaching out to our membership to solicit donations to help support our many important conservation-based programs.

Your donation will help fund our many youth-based birding and educational programs, support our many advocacy and conservation-based projects, and fund the purchase of bird seed for bird feeders at Haven Hospice. To donate, please send a check made payable to Alachua Audubon Society to:

Alachua Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 140464  
Gainesville, FL 32614-0464

All donations are tax deductible!

## CBC Schedule

Sunday, Dec. 15— Gainesville; contact John Hintermister ([352-316-2396](tel:352-316-2396); [jhintermister@gmail.com](mailto:jhintermister@gmail.com)) or Howard Adams ([352-665-3716](tel:352-665-3716); [HOWARDPPSP@aol.com](mailto:HOWARDPPSP@aol.com))

Tuesday, Dec. 17—Ichetucknee/Santa Fe/O'Leno; Contact Ginger Morgan at 386-208-4313 or [ginger.morgan@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:ginger.morgan@dep.state.fl.us)

Thursday, Dec. 19—Melrose; Contact Jim Swarr [352-475-1999](tel:352-475-1999)

Saturday, Dec. 28—Lake City, Contact Valerie Thomas at 386-466-2193 or [v.thomas@gmail.com](mailto:v.thomas@gmail.com)

Thursday, Jan. 2—Cedar Key; Contact Ron Christen [850-567-0490](tel:850-567-0490)



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**Third Alachua Audubon  
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Starting Jan. 1st, Tickets available \$10.00 ea. at  
**Wild Birds Unlimited,**  
4212 NW 16th Boulevard, next to The Flying Biscuit



## ***AAS Birding Field Trip to Powers Park and Palm Point***

Ever since I was a little kid I loved going out in the woods and exploring. Now that birding has become part of my life, the woods are just as enticing. They are different every day, every week, and every season. I rediscovered my own yard because of birding. So it was with pleasure that I was able to lead an Audubon field trip to Power's Park and Palm Point this fall.

Twenty-one people attended the AAS birding field trip to Powers Park and Palm Point on October 5th. Some new faces and some regulars; expert birders and beginning birders. Some folks were new to Gainesville and others just new to Alachua Audubon.

At Powers Park we were tripping over the "rare and secretive" Limpkin, sighting four. One stood on the railing and watched us watching him from about ten feet away. We had time enough to focus the scope for an eye to eye encounter. A Belted Kingfisher was fishing and calling loudly. A newly arrived Eastern Phoebe called from the treetop. Warblers seen here were: Yellow-throated, Prairie, Palm, Black and White and Common Yellowthroat.

At Palm Point we birded Lakeshore Drive first and then ventured into the park. A late Prothonotary Warbler was a highlight. Four Bald Eagles were a nice sight – two adults and two

maybe second or third year youngsters. There was a hard-to-see but eventually identified, Scarlet Tanager hiding behind a very cooperative Yellow Warbler. Everyone eventually saw the beautiful male Yellow as birders helped each other to locate him. Other not too confusing fall warblers were Northern Parula, Yellow-throated, Black and White, several American Redstarts, and at least one person saw a Worm-eating Warbler.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were ubiquitous this time of year but one of the best moments for me was confirming a newer birder's very own first ID of this pretty little bird.

We saw the usual waders and woodpeckers, vireos and lots of vultures. A swift-flying Accipiter got away unidentified through the trees, but a Peregrine Falcon, circling just over the treetops, made up for the missed accipiter. The Peregrine flew so quickly, and the tree cover allowed such little sky, that we saw pieces of him at a time. It was thrilling for me to see the uniform pattern on his underside and then seconds later see him in the distance, all dark with long pointed wings. His face pattern nailed the identification.

By Barbara Shea

Photograph of birding group at Palm Point taken by Bob DeHoff



## Look for the New “Save Our Springs” Billboards

Twelve “Save Our Springs” billboards have recently been installed along I-75, I-10, and the Florida Turnpike. The purpose of the billboards is to raise awareness for the need to protect Florida springs. The billboards direct people to the [SpringsForever.org](http://SpringsForever.org) website where one can learn more about the problems inflicting springs and some solutions for restoring the springs. The billboards were designed by Rick Kilby and Bob Knight. Photograph taken by John Moran.



### Receive the Crane Electronically

**Help!** Alachua Audubon is spending over \$500 every time the newsletter is printed and mailed. That is over \$3,000 each year. We need your help so we can reduce our newsletter costs. **Sign up today to receive the Crane electronically.** You will receive only one email per newsletter that will contain a link to the Alachua Audubon Website. Your electronic newsletter will not only save AAS money, you will see the photos in color and you can easily forward the newsletter to others. To start receiving the Crane electronically, send an email to [AAS-thecrane@att.net](mailto:AAS-thecrane@att.net). In the subject line put the word Newsletter. And include your name and address. **Thank you!**

### TEACHERS SAY THANK YOU,!

Alachua County teachers are so grateful to the following Audubon members who have donated funds to supply their classrooms with Audubon Adventures, an environmental education program produced by National Audubon. Many thanks to these donors: Carol R. Alderson, Mary Louise Brey, Jane Brockmann, Karen Brown, Carol Cobb, S.P. and K. M Eoff, Scott and Kirsten Flamand, Chandler and Kathy Jones, Martha E. King, Mary Landsman, Barbra C. Larson, Catherine Lee, Kim Marie Lepore, Paul and Deanne Moler, Barbara S. Mollison, Ann Fearney Paul, Debra Segal, John Sharp, Deborah Spiceland, and John Winn.



## AAS Opposes FWC's Plan to Herbicide at Orange Lake

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) plans to herbicide approximately 1,500 acres (over two square miles) of native wetland vegetation in Orange Lake in order to improve lake access and boating safety. Alachua Audubon and Audubon Florida are objecting to FWC's proposed herbicide application plan due to its wide-spread destruction of wildlife habitat, its apparent disregard for known wading bird rookery islands, its potential for creating an "oxygen demand" that could kill invertebrates and fish, lack of a monitoring plan, and likely only temporary benefits for the intended users.

A large diversity of avian species are dependent on the emergent wetland habitats at Orange Lake, and depending on the season, include Sandhill Crane, Purple Gallinule, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Green Heron, Sora, Virginia Rail, King Rail, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, and Swamp Sparrow. Additionally, aquatic salamanders, frogs, turtles, aquatic snakes, forage and game fish, and small alligators all utilize this emergent wetland habitat for

protective nursery areas. Furthermore, pickerelweed, the dominant plant species growing on the tussocks, is an important pollinator plant for myriad species of butterflies, moths, and bees, and numerous invertebrates colonize the roots, stems, and leaves of the wetland plants. These emergent wetland plants are also the "kidneys" of the ecosystem and contribute to water quality purification in the lake. Thus, elimination of an extensive area of native wetland habitat will be detrimental to organisms at all levels of the complex aquatic food web.

Furthermore, Florida Audubon owns Bird Island in Orange Lake. This island and Redbird Island supported significant and diverse wading bird rookeries for over a century; however, aerial application of herbicides in Orange Lake is thought to have destroyed these long-established wading bird rookeries. Audubon Florida is prohibiting FWC from spraying herbicides in or near the Audubon-owned parcels. Due in part to Alachua Audubon and Audubon Florida's objections, FWC has reissued a request for comments from stakeholders. Thanks to all who submitted comments to the FWC regarding their ill-conceived plan. Alachua Audubon's letter of objection to FWC's proposed herbicide plan at Orange Lake

can be reviewed at [Alachuaaudubon.org](http://Alachuaaudubon.org).

By Debbie Segal

Photo of Orange Lake taken by Bob Knight



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P. O. Box 140464  
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*The Crane*  
Nov.—Dec. 2013

We hope to see you at the Alachua Audubon Holiday Social on December 6th! New location this year at Mill Pond Clubhouse. See page 3 for more details.

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## Join Audubon!

To join Audubon on 3 levels (National, Florida, and Alachua), fill in application and mail to:  
Paul Moler 7818 Highway 346 Archer, Florida 32618  
Questions? Contact Paul 352-495-9419 or [paulmoler@bellsouth.net](mailto:paulmoler@bellsouth.net)

### Chapter E-18 New Membership Application **Not for renewals!**

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