



The Crane

Volume 56 Number 2 November December 2014

November and December Field Trips

See Carpooling Information at the end of this article.

Saturday, November 1, 8:00 a.m.

Palm Point Addition: The City of Gainesville recently acquired over 100 acres of land and nearly a mile of shoreline along Newnans Lake. This new addition adds immensely to the protected area around one of Alachua County's best birding hotspots. City Naturalist Geoff Parks will guide us as we hike up to "Palm Point Hill" in search of birds and discuss opportunities for future nature-based recreation on this new property. Meet Geoff at Morningside Nature Center and carpool to the site. This is one of several Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP) field trips that AAS sponsors. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, November 2, 8:00 a.m.

Cones Dike at Paynes Prairie: Call Wild Birds Unlimited (352-381-1997) to reserve a spot on this space-limited hike along Camps Canal and 1.3-mile Cones Dike with field trip leader Howard Adams. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, November 8, 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. Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, November 16, 6:00 a.m.

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. Difficulty: 2.

Sunday, November 23, 6:00 a.m.

Circle Bar B Ranch: Meet Barbara Shea 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. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, November 29, 8:00 a.m.

Tuscawilla Prairie: Meet Rex Rowan at the Native American Heritage Preserve Parking Lot in Micanopy (from the flashing light at US 441 in Micanopy, go south one mile on 441 and turn right onto SE 165th Avenue, then go a third of a mile to the parking lot on the right). Tuscawilla is a 600-acre marsh owned by the Alachua Conservation Trust. If the water isn't too high, it's a good spot for raptors, waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, Marsh and Sedge Wrens, and a variety of sparrows. Wear boots or old shoes as the trails can be soggy. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, December 6, 8:00 a.m.

La Chua Trail: Meet trip leader Bob Carroll at the trailhead on Camp *Field Trips Continued on Page 9*

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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AAS Website	www.alachuaudubon.org	

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. 15th**



Fall migration this year was average in most respects, but the showing of warblers was truly outstanding. We held our annual Fall Migration Count September 20th and tallied 24 warbler species, including five Kentuckys, a Golden-winged, Cerulean, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Add a Canada Warbler found the same day by Jacqui

Sulek with the Alachua Audubon birding class and that's 25 species in one day! Normally we are lucky to see one Canada Warbler each fall, but Jacqui's was one of three reported this year, including one at Forest Park on the 18th seen by Geoff Parks, and a third at Palm Point September 24th by Adam Kent. Adam's bird contributed to a week-long warbler-fest at Palm Point that also included, among many others, a very cooperative Golden-winged Warbler and a rare-in-fall Cape May Warbler. Dozens of delighted birders visited "the Point" that week with some reporting as many as 17 warbler species in a single morning.

Cerulean Warblers turned out this fall in a big way. At least eight were noted between late August and late September at: Palm Point (John Hintermister), Bolen Bluff (Matt O'Sullivan), San Felasco Hammock (John Martin), La Chua trail (Jonathan Mays), the Gainesville yards of Adam and Gina Kent and the Ewing Family, Gainesville-Hawthorne trail (Andy Kratter) and the backyard of Becky Enneis in Alachua. Becky had an extraordinary turnout this fall at her backyard drip bath. Since September 1st to the time of this writing she tallied visits from 17 different warbler species.

But wait, there's more! Two Nashville Warblers were picked up September 28th by Adam Zions along Sparrow Alley off La Chua trail, and Ron Robinson reported a Wilson's Warbler October 7th in his yard south of Alachua. Capping that off, Ignacio Rodriguez spotted a Connecticut Warbler October 13th at Bolen Bluff. Connecticut Warblers are rare here in spring and even more so in fall.

For the third year in a row multiple Alder Flycatchers have chosen to spend some of their fall migration time with us, making Alachua County arguably the most reliable place in the state to encounter this otherwise-rare migrant. Alders were practically undocumented here in fall until September 2012 when two showed up along Cones Dike on the prairie basin. The following year at least one was found again in the exact same location along Cones Dike, as well as two individuals at Levy Lake and as many as three along Sparrow Alley near La Chua Trail. This year as many as four were located along Sparrow Alley, with probable individuals spotted again at Levy Lake and Cones Dike. It's possible Alders have been passing through here for years and have been overlooked, or silent birds have been simply passed off as "*Empidonax sp.*". It's also possible that (continued on Page 3)

**8th Annual Holiday Social
And Silent Auction
Friday, Dec. 5th; 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. 5th**

Alachua Audubon will hold a Silent Auction at the Holiday Social on December 5th 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 or Anne Casella at 352-256-5960; annecasella@gmail.com 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 and for supporting Alachua Audubon!



Speakers Corner

November 10—Peru's Birding Rally Challenge; Adam Kent will describe this competitive birding event designed to raise awareness about Peru's diverse bird life. Adam participated in the southern Rally in 2013 and the northern Rally in 2014. Learn about some of the best places to bird in South America and see amazing photos of beautiful birds with names like Royal Sunangel and Marvelous Spatuletail. The social begins at 6:30 pm and the program at 7:00 pm at the Millhopper Library Meeting Room, 3145 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville.

Visit Alachua Audubon Society on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/alachuaaudubon> and click "like" and you will be kept up to date on field trips, events, and more!

Around The County (*continued from Page 2*)

some Alders have changed their migratory pattern and have found a new place to profitably spend part of their migration. Whatever the reason, they have added some extra spice to fall migration here, and we are glad to have them!

By the time you receive this issue of the Crane Newsletter fall migration will be over and it will be time to check the Hague Dairy for Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Bronzed Cowbirds. It will also be prime time for stray western Flycatchers like Vermillion and Ash-throated, and maybe a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. The party never ends!

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through October 14, 2014.

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Drawing by
Andre Frattino



Kids' Birding Event

In September, Alachua Audubon sponsored a Family Birding program at Powers Park. AAS volunteers Ted and Steve Goodman shared information on bird migration while Sharon Kuchinski talked about bird field guides. Seven children from four families enjoyed seeing birds and using binoculars and scopes. Scopes were set low so that children could use them. Everyone was excited to see two Bald Eagles soaring over Newnans Lake. Also seen were a Red-shouldered Hawk and several Turkey Vultures.

By Emily Schwartz

Birding in the Pacific Northwest

Our summer in Oregon was awesome; the cool weather andthe birds, of course! We traveled from the west coast of Oregon, through the Columbia River Valley to the eastern corner of Oregon. We saw a variety of birds, ranging from sparrows to ravens. On the coast, we also came across a Red Crossbill!

We kept a bird list and over the period of about two months we saw and identified 42 bird species. Wow! We think the most interesting birds were Hooded Merganser (they look cool) and Mountain Quail (very pretty). Last, but not least, we saw an American White Pelican; something we never expected to see in the Columbia River gorge.

By Arthur, Alex, and Andy Baker, age 12
(Photograph on Page 5)

Family Birding at Paynes Prairie

Join volunteers Neil and Joan MacLeod for family birding events on the first Saturday of each month, November through April. These field trips are sponsored by Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. Call 352-466-4100 for more information and register at www.prairiefriends.org. Families and kids are encouraged to participate. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday, November 1, 8:00 – 11:00 am Family Birding at Paynes Prairie

Introduction to Birding. Meet Neil and Joan MacLeod at the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park Visitor Center and learn birding basics as we walk the trail and look for birds.

Saturday, December 6, 9:00 – 11:00 am Family Birding at Paynes Prairie

Bird Habitat – Where and when to see Birds. Meet Neil and Joan MacLeod at the Lake Wauberg boat ramp at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park and look for birds on Lake Wauberg and along the lake trail.



Photograph of AAS volunteers Steve Goodman, Ted Goodman, and Sharon Kuchinski assisting families with bird identification at the Family Birding Program at Powers Park. Photograph taken by Emily Schwartz.

AAS Leads the Fight to "Keep the Barr Open"

Great progress has been made to educate and inform the County Commission on the needs and desires of our community to keep the Barr Hammock Trail open in its entirety. Thanks to all of you who responded to our call for action by contacting the commissioners through letters, emails, phone calls, and meetings. The commissioners ARE listening.

The County Commission meeting to discuss the fate of the Barr Hammock Trail was postponed again, this time to October 28th. We hope to pack the meeting room and show the commission how much community support there is to **Keep the Barr Open**. We will also be handing out the "Keep the Barr Open" stickers for all supporters to wear.



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 to reduce our newsletter costs. **Sign up today to receive the Crane electronically** by sending an email to AAS-thecrane@att.net. Put the word Newsletter in the subject line. And include your name and address. **Thank you!**

CBC Schedule

Sunday, Dec. 14— Gainesville; contact Andy Kratter (kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu; 352-226-2462) or Bob Carroll (gatorbob23@yahoo.com; 352-281-3616)

Tuesday, Dec. 16—Ichetucknee/Santa Fe/O'Leno; Contact Ginger Morgan at 386-208-4313 or ginger.morgan@dep.state.fl.us
Volunteers needed.

Thursday, Dec. 18—Melrose; Contact Joyce King (sjoyceking@comcast.net 352-475-1999) or Laura Berkelman (lberkelman@windstream.net, 352-475-2023)
Volunteers needed.

Tuesday, Dec. 30 —Lake City, Contact Valerie Thomas at 386-466-2193 or v.thomas57@gmail.com *Volunteers needed.*

Tuesday, Dec. 30—Cedar Key; Contact Ron Christen 850-567-0490 or Dale Henderson 352-543-5166.



Photograph of Andy, Alex, and Arthur Baker taken by Shirley Baker near Charleston, Oregon. The triplets wrote the article on Birding in the Pacific Northwest on Page 4.

Vote Yes on 1

Alachua Audubon, Audubon Florida, and hundreds of conservation groups throughout Florida support Amendment 1—the tool to protect conservation and environmentally-sensitive land. Please do your part and **Vote Yes on Amendment 1 on November 1st!**



And a special thank you to Emily Schwartz for helping to spread the word throughout Gainesville.



Vote Yes On 1

Photograph of the Fall Birding Class all signaling to **Vote Yes on 1**. Photograph taken by Jacqui Sulek.

AAS Objects to FWC's Claim that Large-Scale Plant Harvesting will Enhance Aquatic Habitat at Orange Lake

The Alachua Audubon Society expressed our concern to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) for a proposed 15-year permit to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) to mechanically remove aquatic vegetation for aquatic habitat enhancement, invasive plant management, and maintenance of navigable water at 11 lakes and water bodies in the north central region. In their permit application to the ACOE, the FWC claims that mechanically harvesting shrub, floating, and rooted herbaceous vegetation will result in habitat restoration. However, the purpose of mechanically harvesting the aquatic vegetation is for navigation and maintaining open water fisheries habitat. FWC's claim that mechanically harvesting aquatic vegetation for habitat enhancement is incorrect and misleading, and instead, will result in wide-spread destruction of aquatic habitat.

Results of the two studies funded by the St. Johns River Water Management District documented over 14,000 two-toed amphiuma, 11,000 dwarf sirens, and 8,000 greater sirens per hectare on the floating herbaceous habitats in Orange Lake. Bird density on these floating herbaceous islands was also quite high, with 152 birds per hectare using this habitat type. The high numbers of amphiumas, dwarf sirens, greater sirens, and other reptiles and amphibians that use these aquatic habitats are important prey items for the complex aquatic food web that occurs in Orange Lake. Further, many of the 89 bird species that were documented on the floating tussock-type vegetation that is proposed to be removed in Orange Lake are highly dependent on aquatic vegetative communities and have exhibited declining populations over the last several decades.

Avian species such as American Bittern, Purple Gallinule, and Wood Storks have demonstrated a population decline, and destruction of aquatic habitat is an important cause of the decline. Other species such as Least Bittern, King Rail, Sora, Northern Harrier, Marsh Wren, and Swamp Sparrow are highly dependent on heavily vegetated aquatic habitats. Mechanically harvesting these plant communities will result in large-scale destruction of the very habitats that so many aquatic-dependent species rely on.

Continued on Page 11

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Creating Water Features for Birds

The most surefire way to attract birds to your yard is by providing water. Food requirements and habitats may vary with the discriminating preferences of each species, but water is a universal draw. With water, just as in feeding habitats, each species has preferences regarding their water source. This is primarily due to the hazards presented to birds when they are wet--they gain temporary weight and lose optimum aerodynamics and camouflage.

I began creating water features for birds in 1978. Over the years I have tried new methods and techniques that encourage an increasing variety of birds. The following factors are very important when creating and maintaining a popular water feature for birds:

1. Consistency and quality of the water supply: always full, clean, and in the same spot.
2. Proximity to cover: wet birds emerging from a bath are vulnerable to predation. There needs to be convenient "hidden perches" close to the water source that allow birds to feel safe and stay out of the vision of predators.
3. Gradient of the water container: sloping beach-like sides for a gradual approach, without algae encrusted "slippery" approaches. Birds typically do not dive into the deep end of the pool; they prefer to walk slowly into the water to the depth of their choosing. The sides of most concrete birdbaths available commercially today are too steep on the sides. Good baths can be hard to find. However, they are worth the search when you do find one.
4. Maximum depth: less than 2.5 inches.
5. Moving water: dripping or slowly flowing replicates natural water sources. Adding a source of dripping or moving water will greatly increase the avian activity at your water feature. Use a re-circulating pump or water hose; recirculation wastes very little precious water.
6. Perches: an overhead perch will allow birds to assess the safety of any potential bathing site. Even regular visitors to your bath will want to recheck the area for hazards before
7. Bath elevation: a ground-level water feature will greatly enhance your bird activity since practically all natural water sources occur at ground level. Be sure to apply all the aspects listed above, but if cats are ever present add a semicircular "cat barrier" made of "dog" or "turkey" wire, set back at least three feet, to preclude cats from hiding or sneaking up and attacking a bird as it bathes.
8. Place your water feature in a location where you can easily observe it. For example place it outside your favorite window. Keep a bird book nearby to help identify the *visitors* that you have never seen before. It will happen!



If you apply these techniques the birds will reward you with their presence. Be patient, allow time for the birds to locate your water feature, check it out, and time for others to see the pioneers take advantage of your offering, gain confidence in its safety and then take the plunge themselves.

By Ron Robinson
Drawing by Elaine Robinson

Orange Creek Basin Stakeholder Meeting

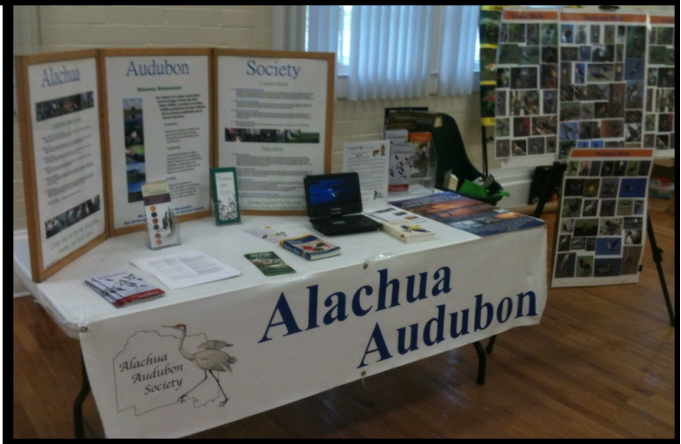
On September 25th, the Orange Creek Basin Interagency Working Group held a public meeting at the Grand Lake RV and Golf Resort in Citra in order to provide a forum for concerned stakeholders in the Orange Creek Basin. The public was invited to voice their concerns for the water bodies in the basin, which includes Orange Lake, Newnans Lake, Lochloosa Lake, and Paynes Prairie. Both the Alachua Audubon Society and Audubon Florida are recognized stakeholders and were invited to attend. Fay Baird represented AAS and Stephanie Nagid represented AF at the meeting.

The meeting began as an open house, followed by a presentation on the roles played by various local and regional agencies involved in water quality and natural resource management in the Orange Creek Basin. Following the presentation, attendees were invited to visit information stations on various topics and water bodies that had been set up around the meeting room, and write down or discuss issues of concern to agency staff. The meeting concluded with an opportunity for the public to voice questions and concerns to the Interagency Working Group. The vast majority of commentary and discussion focused on vegetation management at Orange Lake.

Approximately 200 people attended the meeting. The presentation and compiled public comments resulting from the meeting and from emails are available on the Orange Creek Basin Interagency Working Group website: <http://orangecreekbasin.wordpress.com/>. The comments will be used "to create focused working groups that can then begin to work on some of the issues discussed". Interested AAS members are encouraged to visit the website to stay updated on the progress of this Interagency Working Group.

By Fay Baird

Also see a related article on Aquatic Vegetation Management in Orange Lake on Page 7.



The Alachua Audubon Society sends a warm thank you to Barbara Shea for organizing and Ria Leonard for "manning" the AAS booth at the recent Master Gardeners Florida Friendly Garden Tour.

Field Trips (Cont. from Page 1)

Ranch Road. La Chua is the 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. Entrance fee \$2.00. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, December 14, SPECIAL EVENT Gainesville Christmas Bird Count

Contact Andy Kratter (kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu; 352-226-2462) or Bob Carroll (gatorbob23@yahoo.com; 352-281-3616) if you are interested in participating in this all-day event. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday and Sunday, January 10-11, 8 a.m. St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Meet John Hintermister at the St. Marks visitor center on Saturday at 8 a.m. for a trip to one of Florida's premier winter birding spots. Expect a large number and wide variety of birds. Overnight option. Sunday's meeting time and location will be decided on Sat. Call Wild Birds Unlimited (352-381-1997) to register. Limit 20 people. Difficulty: 3.

Carpooling: If you need a ride or are willing to provide a ride, check our web site under Activities > Field Trips > Field Trip Schedule. Click on specific field trip, then "Read more." Then "Leave a Reply" and note whether you will drive or need a ride. Then "Post Comment." Hopefully, folks will respond to the comments. Be sure to check the comments a day or two before the field trip.

Proposed Pipeline Poses Many Problems

Last October the Florida Public Service Committee (FPSC) approved construction of a new 465-mile, 36-inch pipeline to be built from Alabama to south Florida. Construction will be directed by Florida Power and Light and built by Sabal Trail, whose parent company is Spectra Energy. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will submit a detailed study recommending approval or rejection of the pipeline project. FERC will accept and consider public comments.

Much controversy surrounds this project, beginning with the revelation that Governor Scott, who appoints the FPSC, has personal investments in the power companies and thus stands to benefit from its construction.

The original proposed route was slated to cross the Ichetucknee River, but due to public opposition, the pipeline route has been moved west and will cross the Santa Fe River. If this company truly understood what karstic terrain means, they would not consider constructing a pipeline in the sinkhole-prone landscape of north Florida, nor would they consider crossing the Santa Fe or Ichetucknee Rivers. A real danger exists to the springs and spring-fed rivers if an explosion, such as already happened in various locales, took place.

There are strong indications that the line is not needed to supply power to Florida, which leads to the suspicion that the plan is to sell the gas to a company for export. Florida Power & Light just recently estimated that in ten years the demand for power will increase approximately 13%, but the new pipeline would increase the delivery capability of 33%. So if Sabal Trail's own parent company, Spectra, has projected that ten years from now the proposed pipe would have the capability to carry 20% more gas than is required in Florida, then the suspicion is to export it. Sabal Trail is not seeking approval to export gas right now, but they can legally sell the gas after storage in Florida, and the buyer can export it. The permits are written, the ocean is there, the ships are built, the scene is set.

Another possibility is that over time liquid natural gas (LNG) may not be transmitted in this proposed pipe. Other liquids, such as water, could feasibly be moved through this infrastructure. The corridor, the pipe, and the permits would be in place. Is this pipeline the infrastructure needed to eventually pipe water from north Florida to thirsty south Florida, further depleting

Hummingbird Update

Most of our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are gone now but don't take down your hummingbird feeder yet. It is time to start watching for the first of the western hummingbirds like Rufous, Black-chinned, or Calliope. Please let Fred Bassett (FHound@aol.com) know if you have already identified a western hummer at your feeder, or if you see any species of hummers in your yard after November 1st. Several Rufous Hummingbirds have already shown up.

the aquifer and springs?

More controversy exists since the pipe will carry LNG, touted as the cleanest fossil fuel, but is acquired by fracking and LNG is rapidly losing its desirability as a clean fuel. Spectra has one of the worst safety records of all gas companies. In 1989, Spectra was fined \$15 million by the EPA for violations, the largest federal fine ever for an environmental violation. Cleanup was expected to run over \$400 million.

Sabal Trail has stated that it does not and will not use eminent domain authority as a negotiation tool with landowners to obtain an easement for the pipeline. However, Sabal Trail has exercised that right as a means of last resort. Eminent domain may not be exercised to obtain land used for a product destined for export. Although export of natural gas is not proposed, we have no assurances that it will remain this way. Once the pipe is built and the gas begins to move overseas, the landowners cannot be given their land back.

At the seven public meetings held by Spectra Energy, the vast majority of the attendees who spoke were opposed to the pipeline. Opposition to the pipeline is because of the potential devastating impacts to the springs, rivers, and aquifer; lack of an established need for the LNG; the real danger associated with explosive gases; and because this company has shown itself to be irresponsible in the past and has an abominable safety record. Let us hope FERC has the intelligence, honesty and fortitude to deny the permit.

Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson is president of *Our Santa Fe River, Inc.*, and Jim Tatum is a volunteer member.

WHY MIGRATORY CARIBBEAN BIRDS MATTER

Fall is coming to the Caribbean and it is arriving with flapping wings, not icy winds. The fall migration of birds marks the changing of the season in a land that often seems to be blessed with an endless summer, where beach days can be enjoyed any time of year. The arrival of these feathered migrants also signals the beginning of the festivities that celebrate them. Throughout October, festivities marking International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) will celebrate these birds and their amazing journeys.

IMBD events, which take place in countries from Canada to South America, are organized by BirdsCaribbean. BirdsCaribbean, the largest organization devoted to wildlife conservation in the Caribbean, will coordinate month-long, region-wide activities centered on Saturday October 11th. 2014 marks the seventh year that the BirdsCaribbean has organized IMBD events throughout the region.

The theme of IMBD this year is **Why Birds Matter**. While most people enjoy seeing birds, it is easy to overlook the important roles they play in Caribbean ecosystems, and the ways in which they benefit humans.

Roughly 350 species of birds migrate to the Caribbean. They are incredibly diverse and include songbirds, raptors, egrets, and ducks, among other well-known groups. This great diversity means that migratory birds are an integral part of every type of habitat in the region. In the course of their intercontinental travels, it is likely that migratory birds helped create Caribbean ecosystems by transporting and dispersing seeds.

The relationship between migratory birds and humans is often beneficial. Birds inspire, making incredible journeys of thousands of miles, often returning each year to the same location. They connect, transcending the boundaries of countries to link the hemisphere. The effort to protect these birds and their habitats has led to some of our most important

international conservation partnerships.

Public activities to mark IMBD will include a diverse array of events such as bird-watching excursions, lectures, seminars, school-based art competitions, church services, and media campaigns all in recognition of the region's still unappreciated role in one of the world's most important animal migrations.

To view reports and photos of IMBD in the Caribbean and North America, for downloadable IMBD resources, and for updates on ongoing and planned activities, kindly visit the website of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds at:

www.birdscaribbean.org, and Environment for the Americas: www.birdday.org.

By Leo Douglas

AAS Objects to FWC's Claim (Continued from Page 6)

The Alachua Audubon Society understands that some plant removal activities are needed to maintain navigation for boaters and anglers. However, we object to the claim that large-scale mechanical harvesting of aquatic vegetation will promote aquatic habitat restoration. Quite the opposite, it will result in large-scale destruction of aquatic habitat. For that reason, we request that the ACOE place strict limits on the acreage of aquatic vegetation that can be mechanically harvested, and prohibit large-scale aquatic vegetation removal. Further, we request that the ACOE not issue a 15-year permit, but rather reduce the duration of the permit to five years. And lastly, we request that the ACOE require comprehensive baseline and post-harvesting environmental monitoring of the FWC's plant management activities in order to document the true environmental effects that are occurring.

By Debbie Segal

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Permit No. 18



The Crane
Nov.—Dec. 2014



We hope to see you at the Alachua Audubon Holiday Social on December 5th at the Mill Pond Clubhouse. See Page 3 for more details.

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Questions? Contact Paul 352-495-9419 or
paulmoler@bellsouth.net