



The Crane

Volume 55 Number 5 May-June 2014

May Field Trips and Programs

These are the last Audubon-sponsored fieldtrips of the season.

Saturday, May 3, 6:30 a.m. Florida East Coast

Meet field trip leader, John Hintermister, at the Powers Park parking lot. We will explore St. Johns, Flagler, and maybe northern Volusia Counties. This is a good time for migrant songbirds and shorebirds and they will be in breeding plumage. This will be a full day field trip but you have the option to leave at anytime. Bring a lunch, water, sunscreen, and bug repellent.

Sunday, May 4, 8:00 a.m., La Chua Trail, Meet trip leaders Neil and Joan McLeod at the trailhead on Camp Ranch Road to search for Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, and other prairie-dwelling birds.

Saturday, May 10, Time TBA, Backwaters of Cedar Key.

Join AAS trip leader Scott Flamand and the Tidewater Tour crew on a canopied pontoon boat ride into some of the better known shorebird haunts of the Cedar Key area. Tidewater Tour owners offer a special Alachua Audubon price of \$25.00 per person for this trip. Call Wild Birds Unlimited [352-381-1997] to reserve a spot and for details, including time.

Saturday, May 17, 8:00 a.m. Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve (CLEP)

Meet trip leader Michael Drummond at the Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve. Birds we hope to see include

Bachman's Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Northern Bobwhite, Eastern Wood Pewee, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Red-headed Woodpecker, and others. Directions: east on Hawthorne Road to CR 325. Right (south) on CR 325 for roughly 2 miles. Preserve will be on right (west) side of CR 325. Bring bug spray, sunscreen, and water.

Sunday, May 18, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Woodpecker

Walk for Kids. Bring your kids, grandkids, or neighborhood kids on a gentle walk to look for woodpeckers at Northeast Park, 400 NE 16th Ave. This is a good activity for youth ages 6 to 18. We will have a short introductory lesson followed by a walk.. Park by the tennis courts and look for us near the first baseball field bleachers. You do not need to register for this activity but if you would like to borrow binoculars please send an email to emilysgfl@gmail.com.

Saturday, May 24, Butterfly Field Trip—Cancelled

**The Conservation Lands Educational Program (CLEP) is designed to bring attention to local land conservation efforts. These trips are conducted on properties purchased to protect natural resources and will be led by a representative who will discuss ecological features and history. CLEP trips will be educational experiences, so the emphasis will be on much more than birding.*

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 the editor and fulfills stated objectives and goals of Alachua Audubon Society. Annual subscription to *The Crane* is included in National Audubon dues. See back page for subscription information. Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed.

**Deadline for
July-Aug Crane:
June 15th**



Spring is here in all its glory, but first there are some winter birds to catch up with. On March 9th, Scott Flamand relocated the Pacific Loon that wintered on Lake Santa Fe. Hoping to follow up on that sighting, Adam Kent and Ryan Butryn set out in their kayaks March 20th, and although they missed the loon

they discovered something just as exciting...two Black Scoters! Extremely rare inland, this was only the second occurrence of Black Scoters in the county, the first being a small flock that turned up at Lake Wauberg on the 2011 Christmas Count.

It seemed as though Whooping Cranes might skip us entirely this winter until Andi Christman spotted one March 13th on Paynes Prairie Basin. Exactly one month later another (or the same) was spotted near the La Chua Trail platform by Sidney Wade and several other birders. Canvasbacks were nearly a no-show too, until Matt O'Sullivan noticed a pair March 14th from the La Chua platform; and we were missing Winter Wren until Jonathan Mays heard one calling February 16th along the Rail Trail near Prairie Creek. Another great late-winter bird was a Royal Tern spotted February 19th at Bivens Arm Lake by Dean and Samuel Ewing.

Much to the relief of those looking ahead to the June Challenge, some difficult-to-find breeding birds were discovered in late winter. Sidney Wade alerted us to a pair of probably-nesting Yellow-crowned Night-Herons she located March 15th along Camp Canal. Hairy Woodpeckers are always a challenge to find, but Frank and Irina Goodwin photographed and recorded one at Longleaf Flatwoods that has since been reliably seen. One breeding bird we won't have to worry about finding on the June Challenge is Limpkin. They have greatly benefited from the explosion of exotic *Pomacea* apple snails at Newnans Lake. Rex Rowan and John Hintermister conducted a survey around Newnans March 20th and were astonished to find a record-setting 39 Limpkins! Not too many years ago even the most active birders considered themselves lucky to see just one.

Our neo-tropical breeders returned more or less on schedule. The weekend of March 20-21 saw our first influx of Prothonotary and Hooded Warblers, Red-eyed Vireos, and Summer Tanagers. Matt O'Sullivan found an extremely early Worm-eating Warbler February 27th, making us wonder if it hadn't wintered over. Other returnees that flirted with early records included an Orchard Oriole that showed up in Tom Hector's yard, a Chuck-wills-widow reported by Tina Greenberg, and a Chimney Swift spotted by Jonathan Mays.

Andy Kratter has been studying and monitoring the spring flight of Common Loons. Loons on the (Continued on Page 8)

Annual Pot Luck Dinner Celebration and Election of Officers and BOD

Please join us on Wednesday, May 14th at 6:00 pm for our annual pot luck dinner party and election of officers and board of directors. Our dinner party will be held at Bubba and Ingrid Scales' house at 3002 SW 1st Way, Gainesville, located in the Colclough Hills neighborhood between south Main Street and Williston Road. (Look for the Audubon signs!) Bring some food to share for the pot luck, a drink of choice, and enjoy visiting with our Alachua Audubon Board Members. This will be a fun gathering and provides time to share our more recent spring migration observations!

The Alachua Audubon Society is a volunteer-based organization. We have four officers and 17 members on the Board of Directors. The officers of Alachua Audubon are:

(New) President—Anne Casella
Vice President—Scott Flamand
(New) Secretary—Felicia Lee
Treasurer—Dotty Robbins

The returning board members are Bob Carroll, Joni Ellis, Barbara Fennelly, John Hintermister, Mike Manetz, Jonathan Mays, Geoff Parks, Rex Rowan, Emily Schwartz, Debbie Segal, Barbara Shea, and Bob Simons. Our newest board member is Sharon Kuchinski. ***Please join us for this annual pot luck dinner party as we celebrate Alachua Audubon, welcome our new board member, and congratulate our new slate of officers.***

Alachua Audubon extends our sincere gratitude and appreciation to two AAS Board Members—Helen Warren and Ron Robinson. Helen served as President of AAS for the past four years, and will now turn the reins of presidency over to Anne Casella. And after four years, Ron Robinson is stepping down from the Board of Directors. Ron was responsible for the herculean effort of spearheading and executing three county-wide Backyard Birding Tours. ***Many thanks to Helen and Ron for your contributions to AAS!***

Speakers' Corner

Mark your calendar now!

Wednesday, May 21, Social at 6:30 p.m. and program at 7 p.m. Millhopper Library at 3145 NW 43rd St. Tracking Manatees in Florida: From Individuals to Populations. Presented by Dr. Chip Deutsch. The Florida manatee is one of the best-studied marine mammals in the world, and yet many mysteries remain. Chip Deutsch has studied the manatee for 20 years and will discuss their unique biology and conservation issues. Special focus will be on what we've learned about their movements and behavior through tracking via satellite.

Wednesday, June 18, 2014 – Millhopper Library Social at 6:30 p.m. and program at 7 p.m. Tracking Birds: The Latest Technology and the Amazing Things We Can Learn. Presented by Gina Kent of Avian Research and Conservation Institute. Learn about different ways to track wild birds from color bands to VHF and satellite telemetry. Gina will share her experience from her work with many different avian species found in the southeastern U.S. and how telemetry data has answered many questions on the life history of these birds.

Kids' Corner

Sunday, May, 18, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Woodpecker Walk for Kids. Bring your kids, grandkids, or neighborhood kids on a gentle walk to look for woodpeckers at Northeast Park, 400 NE 16th Ave. This is a good activity for youth ages 6 to 18. We will have a short introductory lesson followed by a walk. Park by the tennis courts and look for us near the first baseball field bleachers. You do not need to register for this activity but if you would like to borrow binoculars please send an email to emilysgfl@gmail.com.

Summer Classic – The June Challenge!

The Eleventh Annual June Challenge will run from June 1st through June 30th. The Challenge is a friendly competition originated by Alachua Audubon's Becky Enneis in 2004 in order to get us outside where we belong. That's the actual point of it – to get us outside, looking at nature – but the rationale of the Challenge is for you to see as many species of birds in Alachua County as you can during the month of June. It's a competition because the desire to win, or at least beat your last year's total, will motivate you to go birding, but we don't take that aspect too seriously.

June is a month that most birders spend indoors, and consequently it's largely terra incognita as far as bird movements are concerned. In 2004, the first year we did it, we were amazed to find several locally-rare tern species on Newnans Lake, and in 2006 we found a Snail Kite on Paynes Prairie; obviously we wouldn't have known about any of those birds if we'd stayed indoors. Who knows what might be out there this year? If you're interested in joining us, here are the rules:

1. Only birds seen in Alachua County during the month of June may be counted. (Those of you living in other counties are encouraged to do June Challenges there, too, and to report the results to me at the email address below when it's over. You folks in Gilchrist, Marion, and Columbia may find yourselves discovering new birding spots.)

2. Heard birds do not count; you've got to see those Chuck-will's-widows and Eastern Screech-Owls.

3. You are free to put Muscovy Ducks, retention-pond Mallards, and Whooping Cranes on your list.

That's simple, isn't it? Now here are a few tips:

Do as much birding as possible during the first few days of the month. You're more likely to see lingering spring migrants that way. Purple

Martins, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and Orchard Orioles may complete their nesting and leave before the month's end, so get them early too. But don't neglect the last few days of the month either, because they've produced early fall-migrant Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, and Lesser Yellowlegs.

Make several visits to Newnans Lake and other large bodies of water to scan for gulls, terns, and pelicans, which may come and go on a daily basis. Go to Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve for Bachman's Sparrows and San Felasco Hammock for Hooded Warblers. There are over 100 species possible here in June. The first and last few hours of daylight are best. Birds tend to sing early in the morning.

Good luck to all of you who decide to join us! In the spirit of good sportsmanship, let me know (rexrowan@gmail.com) when you see an unexpected bird so I can pass the word. Don't keep it a secret - as I say, it's a *friendly* competition, based on our shared enthusiasm for birding rather than a desire to come in first.

And of course follow the progress of the Challenge at <http://www.alachuaudubon.org/>

Rex Rowan



**Vote Yes on Amendment 1:
Water and Land Conservation
Tuesday, November 4, 2014**

Pd. pol. adv. paid for and sponsored by Florida's Water and Land Legacy, Inc., 1700 N. Monroe St., Ste. 11-286, Tallahassee, FL 32303



Alachua Audubon proudly supports the Water and Land Conservation Amendment.



Saturday, May 10, 2014
4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Prairie Creek Lodge
(7204 SE County Rd. 234)

Join us for a celebration to honor the Swallow-tailed Kite and raise funds for ARCI's (Avian Research and Conservation Institute's) Swallow-tailed Kite satellite tracking project.

The free event will be a combination of science, art, and entertainment with the focal point being a silent art auction of the paintings, sketches, and photographs of this spectacular raptor from a collaborative exhibit currently at the Florida Museum of Natural History. There will also be presentations on ARCI's other projects, live birds, tree climbing and field trapping demonstrations, live music, drinks, and light food.

Activities:

- ◆ Silent art auction of 14 original pieces, 4 canvas remarques and 20 canvas prints;
- ◆ Presentation of ARCI's Swallow-tailed Kite research by Dr. Ken Meyer;
- ◆ "Bringing Kites to Canvas," a presentation by Margo McKnight, artist;
- ◆ "Through the Lens of a Wildlife Photographer," a presentation by Jim Gray, wildlife photographer;
- ◆ Readings of original poetry by Chris Cock, poet;
- ◆ Entertainment by Plum Creek, a bluegrass band;
- ◆ Entertainment by The Clique, a barbershop quartet;
- ◆ Live bird exhibit including Swallow-tailed Kite, Great Horned Owl, and an American Kestrel;
- ◆ Tree climbing demonstration; and
- ◆ Field trapping demonstration

A Birds-Eye View of NW 8th Avenue

There has been a lot of controversy about the recent narrowing of NW 8th Avenue, just east of NW 34th Street, where it passes through Loblolly Woods. Alachua Audubon seldom focuses on transportation issues. However, the narrowing of 8th Avenue may be more connected to Alachua Audubon's mission than many people realize.

In its new two-lane configuration, 8th Avenue contains a bike lane for the first time, and bicycle use of this section of the road has already grown substantially. Providing bike lanes encourages more people to choose a means of transport that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts. What does this have to do with wildlife? The National Audubon Society calls climate change "the largest threat to birds and other wildlife in human history."

Furthermore, a major focus of Alachua Audubon has been to encourage children and families to spend more time outdoors in nature. 8th Avenue bisects one of Gainesville's most popular nature parks. The road's presence has always made it difficult to cross between the southern half of Loblolly Woods and nearby schools and parks. Since the road's reduction to two lanes, it has become noticeably easier to cross. Making this road easier to cross for pedestrians and cyclists coming from Littlewood, Westwood, and Westside Park makes this beloved nature park more inviting for families and children.

And finally, a narrower road with a lower speed limit has direct benefits for wildlife. Over the years, the four-lane, high speed road through Loblolly Woods has led to the documented deaths of many wildlife species, including bobcat, gray fox, and Barred Owl. Certainly a two-lane road with a lower speed limit will be easier for our furred and feathered residents to negotiate than four lanes of high-speed traffic.

It seems likely that the Gainesville City Commission will consider this issue again soon. Hopefully when they do, they'll consider wildlife as well. If you support the lane reduction of 8th Avenue, email your city commissioners at CityComm@cityofgainesville.org.

The Flicker Mystery

The Northern Flicker seems to be rare in summer in Alachua County. But does that signify a decline? Has it ever been common? We can't say, because we have no historical data against which to measure current observations. Almost all our knowledge of their historical abundance is based on winter surveys (Frank Chapman in 1886-87, John Dennis from 1949-51, Christmas Bird Count from 1957 to the present), and in winter the Florida population swells with wintering northern birds, so those surveys didn't tell us anything about the size of the locally-resident population.

During the months of June, July, and August I'm asking Gainesville-area observers to take note of any flickers they see, and to contact me by email at rexrowan@gmail.com or to leave a message on my phone at (352) 371-9296 with the location (as exact as possible), the date, and number of birds seen. If you find a nest that would be particularly valuable.

By Rex Rowan

Congratulations Helen Warren, Past President of Alachua Audubon, for a successful campaign and for becoming Gainesville's new City Commissioner.

Family Birding on Paynes Prairie

Alachua Audubon recognizes Neil and Joan MacLeod for the family birding programs that they designed and implemented in order to introduce families to the fascinating hobby of bird watching. As volunteers for Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, they led a monthly bird watching walk from November 2013 through April 2014 for park visitors, campers, and area residents who wanted to learn about bird behavior and identification. Alachua Audubon partnered with the MacLeods by providing volunteers and providing binoculars. Thank you Neil and Joan MacLeod for your dedication and enthusiasm and for sharing your appreciation of birds with so many people.

Birds, Buds, and Helping Hands: Alachua Audubon at the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival

Spring in Gainesville means the annual Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival, a celebration of everything that grows or flies in our area. It's a great place for nature lovers and gardeners to see and be seen, so every year, Alachua Audubon has an official presence at the festival. This year, Barbara Shea took the reins of AAS's efforts there, with me as her loyal wingman (is "wingwoman" even a possible term?)

Our most crucial task was recruiting extra hands to help us run the AAS booth over the course of the two-day festival, and fortunately, we had plenty of friendly volunteers eager to help by handing out flyers, answering questions for passersbys, and sharing their knowledge and love of birds. Our presence and positive impact at the festival would not have been possible without the spirited help of Sidney Wade, Elizabeth Martin, Will Sexton, Emily Schwartz, Maralee Joos, Glenn Price, and Ria Leonard. Thanks to all for an amazing job! Even cooler, some of the volunteers are fairly new to birding or to AAS themselves, yet are already enthusiastically sharing their new knowledge.

Glenn and I took the final shift at the AAS booth on Sunday afternoon, and discovered with delight that we had scored a prime location right next to the Sweet Dreams ice cream truck. As always, the main attraction in our booth was our giant poster of common Alachua County birds – all conveniently numbered, but left unlabeled. Curious visitors had no choice but to approach us with questions: A lot of really great conversations started with "what's Number 43? I see that in my yard all the time!"

When the festival wound down and it was time to pack up for another year, we were surprised and pleased to get extra help. AAS member Barbara Fennelly, officially at the festival as a representative of the Gainesville Orchid Society, came by with a couple of her pals to help us break down our tent – as did some friendly folks from

the neighboring Alachua Conservation Trust booth. It was a terrific reminder that when nature-minded people work together, great things can happen.

By Felicia Lee



Photograph of AAS Member Barbara Shea, at Alachua Audubon's table at the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival. Barbara is standing in front of the popular bird quiz that draws so many people to Audubon's booth. Photograph taken by Emily Schwartz.



Photograph of AAS Volunteer Will Sexton, at Alachua Audubon's table at the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival. Photograph taken by Emily Schwartz.

Up From the Egg: The Confessions of a Nuthatch Avider

Bird watchers top my honors list,
I aimed to be one, but I missed.
Since I'm both myopic and astigmatic,
My aim turned out to be erratic.
And I, bespectacled and binocular,
Exposed myself to comment jocular.
We don't need too much bird lore, do we,
To tell a flamingo from a towhee;
Yet I cannot, and never will,
Unless the silly birds stand still.
And there's no enlightenment so obscure
As ornithological literature.
Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,
Or a migrant *alouette* from Picardy?
You rush to consult your Nature guide
And inspect the gallery inside,
But a bird in the open never looks
Like its picture in the birdie books –
Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage,
And plunges you back into ignorant gloomage.
That is why I sit here growing old by inches,
Watching the clock instead of finches,
But I sometimes visualize in my gin
The Audubon that I audubin.

By Ogden Nash, 1957

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Check out the fieldtrip with Tidewater Tours in
Cedar Key on May 18th. See Page 1 of this
Newsletter.

Around the County (continued from page 2)

gulf typically migrate across the state to the Atlantic side before heading north, with many passing directly over Gainesville. Andy and other "loon-spotters" were having a slow time of it this spring until the mornings of April 7th and 9th when Andy recorded 133 and 146, respectively.

By the time this issue of the Crane reaches your inbox or mailbox, spring migration will be at its peak. If you are working on a county list make sure you get out and see Blackpoll and Cape May Warblers, as they rarely appear here in fall. Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes will be passing through. Early to mid-May will be your only chance for Connecticut Warbler...I'm still waiting for mine!

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through April 10, 2014.



Illustration of
Downy Wood-
pecker and Hairy
Woodpecker on a
Tree by Steven
D'Amato

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The Crane
May-June 2014

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To start receiving The Crane electronically, simply send an email to AASthecrane@att.net Please include your name and address.

Check Out Our Website

Visit us at alachuaaudubon.org and peruse the wealth of information posted there, such as up-to-date local birding reports, a schedule of field trips, programs, and classes, a list of Alachua County's best birding sites, a history of birding in Alachua County, info on caring for injured birds, lists of other wildlife that occur in Alachua County, a page of links to other birding and conservation websites, and much more.

Join Audubon!

To join Audubon on 3 levels (National, Florida, and Alachua), fill in application and mail to:

Paul Moler 7818 SW Co Rd 346 Archer, Florida 32618

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

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