



The Crane

Volume 60 Number 5 May – June 2019

May and June Field Trips

The Annual Schedule of 2018/2019 Alachua Audubon Field Trips is on the AAS website under Activities where you may download and print a copy. Printed copies may also be obtained at Wild Birds Unlimited. Please check the website for last-minute changes although these are rare. All trips are free and open to the public. Come join us and bring your binoculars!

Saturday, May 4, 8:00 a.m.

Sweetwater Wetlands Park: Meet trip leader Becky Minnick in the SWP parking lot on Williston Road about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile east of US-441. By early May, our marsh birds should be involved in courtship and nesting. We'll be looking for Purple Gallinules, Least Bitterns, Limpkins, and a variety of wading birds, as well as some late migrants such as sandpipers, swallows, and Bobolinks. Entry fee \$5 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, May 5

Cedar Key by Boat (sign-up required): Join trip leader Jonathan Varol and the Tidewater Tours crew on a canopied pontoon-boat ride into some of the lesser-known shorebird haunts of the Cedar Key area. Tidewater Tours owners offer a special Alachua Audubon price of \$25 per person for this trip. Call Wild Birds Unlimited (352-381-1997) to reserve a spot and for details on where and when to meet. **Note:** This trip is currently full. Difficulty: 1.

Saturday, May 11, 8:00 a.m.

Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve (CLEP): Meet trip leader Michael Drummond at the Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve parking corral on County Road 325 2.3 miles south of

State Road 20. We'll hope to see Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Red-headed Woodpecker, but birds won't be our primary quarry; we'll be looking at everything – trees, wildflowers, insects, reptiles, whatever we find. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, June 1, 6:15 a.m.

June Challenge Kick-off: June Challenge Kick-off: Meet Rex Rowan in the parking corral of the Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve (on CR325, 2.3 miles south of Hawthorne Rd.) to kick off The June Challenge. We'll try to find Common Nighthawk and Bachman's Sparrow at Longleaf. Next we'll go to Windsor to scope Newnans Lake for Bald Eagles and Laughing Gulls. If time allows we'll also visit Powers Park and Palm Point for additional views of Newnans Lake and possibly some late migrants. Our last stop will be Sweetwater Wetlands Park (\$5 per vehicle entry fee) to search for Least Bittern, Purple Gallinule, Limpkin, Snail Kite, Indigo Bunting, and Bobolink. We'll be done by lunchtime with 50-60 species on our June Challenge lists. Difficulty: 3.

Note: Field trips will resume in September.

This issue of *The Crane* is dedicated to the memory of John Hintermister, 1943-2019. He was the last surviving charter member of the Alachua Audubon Society, having signed its charter on January 11, 1960, just after his 16th birthday. Tributes to John begin on [page 6](#).



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 be greater than two miles.

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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.

Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. Deadline for the July-August issue: June 15th

Content of *The Crane* is the sole responsibility of the editor and fulfills the stated objectives and goals of the Alachua Audubon Society. Annual subscription to *The Crane* is included in National Audubon and/or Alachua Audubon membership. Please see the back page for complete information. Additional advertisers are welcome. Please contact the editor for information at: 352-213-4257 or karenpbrown1953@gmail.com



Each spring I try to keep tabs on the first arrival dates of returning migrants but this is becoming more and more difficult due to the number of migrants that refuse to migrate! For instance, Bill Pirzer noted what was probably our first returning American Redstart in his yard April 7th but we can't be entirely certain the bird

wasn't one of more than a dozen that over-wintered here. The same problem exists with Summer Tanagers and several other warbler species. Fortunately for this endeavor some species still seem to leave us entirely in fall. Our first returning Louisiana Waterthrush was spotted March 12th at San Felasco Hammock. Hooded and Worm-eating Warblers were also noted at San Felasco respectively on March 24th and April 11th. Matt Bruce had an Orchard Oriole in his yard April 5th, and Ron Robinson spotted a Yellow Warbler on his property three days later. Our first Bobolink was reported at Sweetwater Wetlands Park (SWP) April 13th by George Ross; the same day, Frank Goodwin had an early Gray-cheeked Thrush at Poe Springs Park. Our first reported Mississippi Kite was spotted by Alicia Conrad and Shipman Mallard April 14th at SWP.

Snail Kite researcher Caroline Poli and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission have been conducting regular airboat surveys on Paynes Prairie basin documenting the historically unprecedented expansion of that species in our area. During the most recent survey March 21st, Caroline and FWC employees Sarah Dudek and Robin Boughton tallied the highest number of kites yet recorded on the basin: thirty-six free-flying birds, plus three active nests containing eggs, and a fourth nest hosting a large chick. We have to keep reminding ourselves that up until two years ago there had been only three or four records of Snail Kites in the county over the previous hundred years!

Another species that seems to be expanding in our area is Canada Goose. Formerly considered a rare winter visitor and vagrant here, a small group of as many as five has been seen with increasing frequency around small ponds at the south end of the county and as fly-overs at random places in southwest Gainesville. No nesting has yet been reported but it would not be surprising if, by the end of summer, we had our first breeding record. Short-tailed Hawks used to be rare here too, but for the past several years we've had a pair at Nenwnans Lake and another along the north rim of the basin ranging between La Chua trail and SWP. The basin pair, one light and the other dark morph, returned in early March and has been seen repeatedly at SWP.

Fulvous Whistling-Ducks made their first appearances in the state during the 1960s and soon became fairly common in marshes around the county. For unknown reasons their range suddenly contracted and they became very rare here, so we were excited when out-of-town birder

Continued on page 10

No Trespassing

Planted Pine tree harvesting isn't all bad as I learned recently. It was a beautiful spring day and I was overlooking the freshly harvested clear cut pine plantation on the southern border of our property, when I spotted the resident family of Eastern Kingbirds feeding freshly caught prey to their three fledglings. The parents and offspring were assembled together on a mound of broken limbs and branches that had been pushed up in a pile to slowly rot away—making ideal insect breeding grounds for a family of Kingbirds and an unsightly mess to the casual passerby.

Off to my left, I could see a male Red-Tailed Hawk who had inserted himself into this disturbed ecosystem. The hawk was sitting quietly in the upper branches of a tall Loblolly Pine on the eastern edge of the clear cut. After a short time, the hawk, suffering from harassment by a Mockingbird, decided to swing out over the clear cut either looking for lunch or for respite from the hostility of our state bird. It is ironic that tourist-friendly Florida's state bird is among the least accommodating bird to strangers in its territory, but that is a story or a philosophy for another day.

On this particular day, as the hawk lifted off, I could clearly hear the Kingbirds' call heighten in alarm and intensity. The distinct sparking electric call of the Eastern Kingbird, sounding much like two live wires rubbing together, has always reminded me of Glen Campbell's lyrics "singing in the wire" from *Wichita Lineman*. It's a nostalgic and lonesome sound to me and does not befit the regal appearance of the aptly named Kingbird. One might expect a proud and noble chorus from a Kingbird to be similar to the Mockingbird or even a Carolina Wren in volume, not a scratchy crackle. But apparently the Kingbird was not given its name for its melodic proclivities.

As I was ruminating the disparity of bird to song, I was able to witness exactly why this bird may have been given its name, i.e. King of Birds, or its scientific name, *Tyrannus dominicensis*. As the earlier cited Red-tailed Hawk arose from its perch in the pine tree, its very presence drew a territorial defense response from the Kingbird parents guarding their defenseless young in the pine detritus below. Both Kingbirds flew directly up at the approaching hawk. One of the parents (whether the male or female being impossible to determine) rose to an altitude significantly higher than the hawk's flight path. The Kingbird up above suddenly plunged down at the hawk's back and landed square on the nape of its neck as the hawk coursed forward. Once the Kingbird appeared to secure a purchase on the hawk's shoulder, it began to savage the hawk with a long series of ferocious pecks to the back of the hawk's head. I watched this assault thinking that although the chorus of a kingbird may resemble electric static, this attack was anything but a static defense. The entire offensive lasted about thirty seconds or more. I watched fascinated, stunned, and delighted all at the same time. I assume the hawk was stunned also—but not delighted. Both hawk and kingbird emerged intact. But I believe the King of Birds came out defending its babies and its title at the end of the bout.

After witnessing this powerful defensive maneuver, I returned to the house and to my book case, looking for corroborating evidence that other people had also witnessed what I had just seen. According to "Audubon Society's Encyclopedia of North American Birds", 1980 edition, p. 389, (citing Tyler, 1942) the Kingbird "fearlessly attacks hawks, crows, vultures diving and sometimes alighting on the back



Eastern Kingbird. Photo by Bob Simons.

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EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Wednesday Morning Bird Walks at Sweetwater Wetlands Park

Meet AAS volunteers each Wednesday at 8:30 am from September through May to search for wetland birds such as Least Bitterns, Purple Gallinules, and ducks at Sweetwater Wetlands Park. The park is teeming with plants and wildlife and improves water quality while providing one of the best birding spots in Alachua County. It is located on the south side of Gainesville, 3/4 of a mile east of the intersection of SW 13th Street/US-441 and Williston Road. Look for the sign on the south side of Williston Road. We'll meet at the covered shelter by the entrance.

Guided walks are free, but park admission is \$5/car. Bring a hat, binoculars, sunscreen and water. Learn more about the park at SweetwaterWetlands.org.



Look for [Alachua Audubon](#) on Facebook!
Also see [Alachua County Birding](#)
and the
[Alachua County Rare Bird Alert](#)
on Facebook.

Zen Birding: A Yoga and Birding Experience

Zen Birding combines yoga and birding for a unique experience. All are welcome regardless of yoga or birding experience. We meet at 9 am on the fourth Sunday of the month at the covered pavilion at Possum Creek Park, 4009 NW 53rd Avenue in northwest Gainesville. We start with a beginning yoga workout led by a certified instructor, then enjoy a short stroll around the park to listen and watch for birds and other wildlife. The experience lasts about 90 minutes. Binoculars and yoga mats are available for loan if needed. *Previous yoga or birding experience is not required.*

Our next meeting will be Sunday, April 28th. After a summer break, we will resume Zen Birding in September. Namaste.

High School Scholarship Program

Alachua Audubon Society is pleased to announce the awarding of the 2019 High School Scholarship to two applicants, Erika Castillo and Natalie Brooks, both juniors at Buchholz High School.

Through their course of study in high school as well as extracurricular activities, Erika and Natalie have indicated their interest in nature and a desire to continue this course with plans to attend Santa Fe College and the University of Florida.

Alachua Audubon wishes these students the best of luck with their future endeavors.

Guidelines for the 2020 Alachua Audubon High School Scholarship will be published at the beginning of the next school year in *The Crane* newsletter and on the AlachuaAudubon.org web site.

Congratulations, students!

Monthly Birds and Brews

The AAS Birds and Brews event continues to be a popular event for both new and experienced birders. Meet the first Sunday of the month at **First Magnitude Brewery**, 1220 SE Veitch Street. Arrive early as parking can be scarce. There will be an Alachua Audubon table set up and loaner binoculars will be available. On **May 5th** we will meet up at **6:15** for a **6:30 pm departure** to Depot Park. On **June 2nd** we will meet at **6:45** for a **7:00 pm departure**. It's a lovely time of day for a leisurely stroll around the ponds to look for birds. Then we'll return to First Magnitude for an optional cold brew and good conversation.

All birding skill levels welcome.

Next event: Sunday, May 5th at 6:15 pm.



What's Summer Without The June Challenge? Nothing But Hot Air.

The June Challenge, that epic struggle of birder against birder, of birder against bird, of birder against time itself ... um, I forgot where I was going with this.

Anyways, birders play a lot of competitive games, and The June Challenge is one of the best. Given one month, June 1st to June 30th, and Alachua County's more than 969 square miles – given those specific limitations of time and space – how many species of birds can you see? Last year's winner, Chris Cattau, saw 112 species. Can you beat that? Can you imagine anything more fun than trying?

I'll be leading a field trip on Saturday the 1st to get the Challenge underway. We'll meet at 6:15 a.m. in the parking corral at Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve (on County Road 325, 2.3 miles south of Hawthorne Road) to look for Common Nighthawks, Bachman's Sparrows, and Brown-headed Nuthatches. Afterward we'll visit Newnans Lake and Sweetwater Wetlands Park, and you can expect to head home around lunchtime with 50-60 species on your list. Sound like a good time?

If you're interested in joining us, here are the rules: (1) Only birds seen in Alachua County during June may be counted. (2) Heard birds do not count; you've got to SEE those Chuck-will's-widows and Eastern Screech-Owls. So don't trust eBird with your June Challenge list, since it lists heard birds the same as seen ones. (3) You are free to put Muscovy Ducks and retention-pond Mallards on your list, but no other domestic birds. (4) Email your list to me by midnight on Sunday, June 30th. We'll have a party within a day or two afterward to hand out prizes and have a good time.

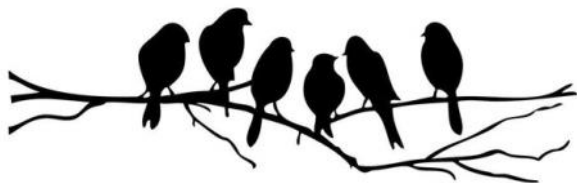
It's that simple. Now here are a few tips: Do as much birding as possible during the first few days of the month. You're more likely to see lingering spring migrants that way. Purple Martins, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and Orchard Orioles may complete their nesting and leave before the month's end, 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 Waterthrushes, Black-and-white Warblers, and Greater 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; San Felasco Hammock for Hooded Warblers; and Sweetwater Wetlands Park for Least Bitterns, Limpkins, and Purple Gallinules. There are over 100 species possible here in June (the record is 129). The first and last few hours of daylight are best. Birds tend to sing early in the morning.

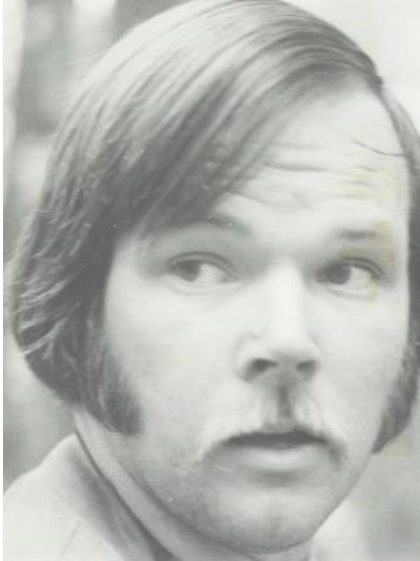
News and updates will be posted to the Alachua Audubon Society's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/. Please send me news of your good sightings and, if you take pictures, send those too. Email me at rexrowan@gmail.com or leave a message at 352-371-9296. Or put it on your own Facebook page and share the post with the Alachua Audubon page.

Good luck to all of you who decide to join us! Again, let me know when you see an unexpected bird so I can pass the word. Don't keep it a secret – the Challenge is a friendly competition, based on our shared enthusiasm for birding rather than a desire to come in first.

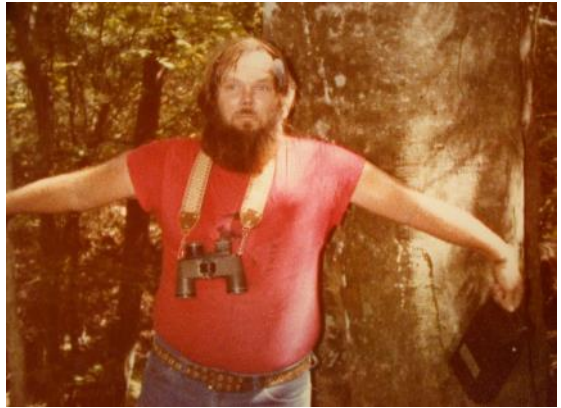
By Rex Rowan



JOHN HINTERMISTER, 1943-2019



*Top left: John ca. 1970.
Top right: John at national
-champion sugarberry tree,
September 1978.
Middle left: AAS meeting,
February 1980 .
Bottom left: Performing
“list maintenance” in 2013.
Bottom right: Greg
McDermott & John with
Oilbird feather in
Trinidad, 2005.*



JOHN HINTERMISTER, 1943-2019

John had been slowing down recently. After leading the Paynes Prairie Basin CBC team for decades, last year he asked Debbie Segal to take over. Alachua Audubon could always count on him to lead some of our more far-flung field trips like the St. Augustine falcon watch, the Road to Nowhere, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Last year he gave notice that his customary trip to St. Marks in early January would be his last trip for Audubon. He was just getting too tired. It was wearing him out.

During the St. Marks trip he began to feel sick – so sick that he nearly gave up and went home. He managed to finish out the weekend, but as soon as he returned to Gainesville he checked himself into the hospital. There he learned that he had Stage 4 pancreatic cancer. The doctors gave him about a year. He started chemo, but it didn't go well. The doctors tried a different regimen. This one showed more promise. He started feeling better and began making plans. But on the night of March 24th he started to have trouble breathing. His son Josh called an ambulance and he was taken to the hospital, but suffered a respiratory failure and died on the morning of March 25th.

He was the last surviving charter member of the Alachua Audubon Society, having signed its charter on January 11, 1960, a little over a month after his 16th birthday. He eventually served as its president, and spent many years on its board of directors as well. But more than that, for half a century John was synonymous with Alachua County birding. He did more and he knew more and he found more than anyone else. He mentored countless birders. He led field trips near and far. He instigated an absurd number of rare-bird chases and foreign adventures. He compiled seasonal reports for *American Birds* magazine. He modernized Gainesville's Christmas Bird Count. Our birding community came into existence around John Hintermister and for fifty years he was its central figure, its exemplar, its godfather, its heart and soul. He loved every minute of it, and so did we.

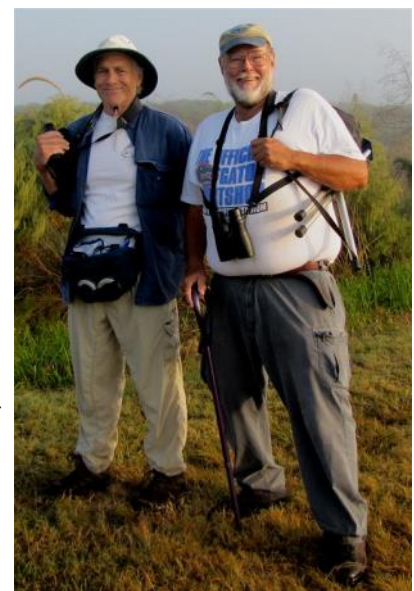
We've asked some of the people who knew him longest and best to share their memories of John for this special edition of *The Crane*. You can read them below.

By Rex Rowan

John Hintermister Steve Nesbitt

John was one of the first people I met after moving to Gainesville in 1971. Ironically we met at an Alachua Audubon meeting. Back then the meetings were held over lunch at the Windjammer. If memory serves we were sitting at the bar waiting for things to get underway. The conversation quickly turned to birds, a subject that was never far from the center of our friendship for the next 48 years. During that near half century since, we shared many experiences, most of which involved our mutual fascination with birds and the habitats that support them. One of the earliest was an annual spring canoe-camping trip down the lower Suwannee. The inspiration for these trips was the hope of encountering a member of a not-quite-extinct population of Bachman's Warblers. John had figured that, since this was an area where Frank Chapman had reported so many around the turn of the last century, this would be a good place to look. Needless to say, though we enjoyed the river and woods in early spring, our quest was never fulfilled.

A few years later the Florida Fish and Game Commission began a project to reestablish a non-migratory population of Whooping Cranes in Florida. When it came time to hire someone to help with the



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JOHN HINTERMISTER, 1943-2019

(Continued from page 7)

field work, the first person I thought of was John. We worked together in the early years of that study capturing, banding, and individually color-marking Florida Sandhill Cranes. The capture method we used involved whole corn and orally administered tranquilizers. The cranes would come to our bait site, eat the corn and doze off. Then we were able to creep up and put a net over them. Boat-tailed Grackles also enjoy the corn, but the right dose of corn for a crane was too strong for a grackle. John figured out that if we first sifted the broken chips of corn out of the bait, the grackles would get just enough whole corn kernels to render them safely tranquilized and catchable. Because of John we were able to capture and band over 2,000 Boat-tailed Grackles with very little incidental mortality.

More recently, once we both retired, John and I traveled together to several destination bird locations. I think we both realized it was time to go to those places that held the birds we most wanted to see. There were trips to New Mexico for rosy-finches, Minnesota in winter for owls, Arizona for some of the south-east Arizona specialty birds, south Texas for that group of unique species, and Alaska for alcids and everything else Alaska had to offer. One thing I noticed during all those years of birding with John was that he could find something interesting and marvelous about every bird he saw no matter whether it was a Spectacled Eider in Nome, Alaska, or a Eurasian Collared-Dove in downtown Gainesville. I don't believe I ever asked John what his favorite bird was but I think I know. It was the last bird he had seen that day.

Steve Nesbitt was a biologist for Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission from 1971 to 2006.

The Masked Duck

Bob Simons

In January 2009 Pat Burns found a female Masked Duck at Alligator Lake. John called and told me I needed to go see it. I asked how far I would have to walk, and he told me. It was too far. I had just gotten out of the hospital after having my prostate gland removed and was unable to walk long distances. Plus, I still had a catheter in, with its tube and little collecting bag strapped to my leg. But John wasn't giving up. He asked, "Well, can you drive to my house, and can you walk 100 yards?" I said I could, so he told me to come on. When I got to his house, he took me and his boat to a boat ramp on Alligator Lake and then ferried me by boat to a place on the dike where I only had to walk 100 yards to see the duck. We both got good looks.

Bob Simons, a long-time member of Alachua Audubon's board of directors, is a forester and conservationist. He and Helen Hood were chiefly responsible for the state's acquisition of San Felasco Hammock in 1974.

JHHV

Bob Wallace

John Henry Hintermister V was born in Gainesville in 1943, the eldest of 3 brothers, went to Gainesville High School and grew up hunting ducks in local ponds and fishing at Suwanee, where his dad kept a boat and they went fishing for grouper and king mackerel in the days when there were still plenty of fish. His father owned the restaurant at the Holiday Inn on Newberry Road, and was a successful business man. John worked in the restaurant growing up, and served a drink to Bob Hope on one of his trips to Gaines-

Continued on page 11

No Trespassing

(Continued from page 3)

of the larger bird: has even been known to attack low flying airplanes crossing its territory.”

The second reference I discovered was provided by the town of Archer’s own T. Gilbert Pearson in the 1940 edition of “Birds of America” p. 192, which describes the Kingbird’s defensive ferocity as follows:

The Kingbird’s remarkable courage and persistent aggressiveness in attacking his natural enemies, especially hawks and crows, have made his name one to conjure within the feathered world. Perhaps no American bird, great or small, displays these characteristics in a more marked degree: certainly none makes a more conspicuous display of them; for a Kingbird in hot pursuit of a hawk or crow, dashing down on the bigger bird and striking repeatedly him with his bill, or even actually alighting on his enemy’s back and clinging there to do all the damage he can, and screaming incessantly meanwhile, is one of the real spectacles of bird-life.

I feel so fortunate to have witnessed this behavior personally and at such a close range. Living in rural settings has allowed me to experience the courageous and regal Kingbird on more than one occasion. Years ago, a harvesting combine was cutting 430 acres of field corn next to my property. I witnessed a group of 21 migrating Eastern Kingbirds which swooped in to take advantage of the cloud of insects stirred as the combine rumbled down the rows of corn.

And as described above, the harvesting of a plantation of pine trees created an open, insect laden, disturbed habitat for these opportunistic Kingbirds to exploit. They prefer large open vistas with a few scattered small trees for perching and nesting sites.

By Ron Robinson

Around the County

(Continued from page 2)

Audrey Whitlock found one, and possibly two, March 25th at SWP. At least one was still present there in mid-April. Brown Pelicans can be fairly rare inland but we had a few reports this spring. One was at La Chua trail March 19th, another at Bivens Arm Lake April 3rd, and four were spotted April 11th at SWP.

Another occasional wanderer from the coast is Royal Tern. Darby Guyn reported one at SWP April 9th.

By the time this issue of *The Crane* reaches your inbox or mailbox, spring migration will be in full swing, and it will soon be time to start planning for the June Challenge. Check for details on that event elsewhere in this issue, and see you out there!

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through April 15, 2019.

By Mike Manetz

Local Birder Makes News

Local birder and former AAS board member **Dotty Robbins** got a mention in the April issue of the ABA’s *Birding* magazine (page 22): “Dotty Robbins of High Springs, Florida, saw her 6,000th world bird in Flores, Indonesia, on Thurs., Sept. 6, 2018: an unspectacular, but cute White-browed Whiteeye. Her trip ended with 6,018 world birds. On other listing fronts, the Great Black Hawk in Portland, Maine, on Sat., Dec. 1, 2018, was her 833rd ABA Continental species. Her list of Florida ABA-countable birds stands at 463. And for Florida’s 67 counties, Dotty’s “total ticks” are 12,425, second highest in the state.”

Congratulations, Dotty!



JOHN HINTERMISTER, 1943-2019

(Continued from page 9)

ville for Gator Growl. John was as dyed-in-the-wool a Gator fan as they come, and went to all of the games for many years, watching Spurrier beat Auburn by kicking the field goal in 1966 and win the Heisman, Lindsey Scott break Gator hearts in Jacksonville, Reaves to Alvarez in 1969. We talked or texted each other every game for decades. John never had a bad thing to say about anyone, unless it was Bobby Bowden, the Dawgs, or Gator coaches that ran the option.

John got into birding from a couple of older women who took him along as a boy on area birding trips to places like Lake Alice. I was 12 years old in 1968 when I met John and Candy, and they offered to take me and my birding buddy Jimmy Horner on the local Audubon trips. There was a call-in radio show, "The Bird Watcher," hosted by WRUF announcer Bob Leach. Area birders would call in with their sightings, and Dr. Oliver Austin, the grumpy Curator of Birds at the Florida State Museum, would weigh in on the validity of some of these sightings. John was a caller, and Jimmy and I had a neighbor, Mrs. Caroline Coleman, who was also interested in birds. My mom would sometimes let me skip school to stay at home and call in if I had seen a particularly rare bird. Alachua Audubon put on almost weekly trips in those days, and John and Candy would carry Jimmy and me on the trips, and on the Christmas Bird Counts, which ended at noon at Archie and Marjorie Carr's house in Micanopy for the count up. There were some particularly good birds then – Evening Grosbeaks and Purple Finches made an invasion the winter of 1972-73. Dot Baer used hummingbird feeders in winter and attracted a yard full of orioles. Barbara Muschlitz was the compiler of the area sightings. Everyone stayed in touch with what they found and it was a great community to become interested in birds.

Starting in 1970, John, Jimmy, and I travelled all over Florida together on those Audubon trips. There were local adventures to ranches on Kanapaha Prairie and Wacahoota Road, to Lake Alice, Newnans Lake, the Prairie before it was a state park, Cedar Key and Ft. De Soto for migration and the hope of a fallout. We went to Huguenot Park in Jacksonville, and St. Marks was always an adventure, where John continued to lead trips for almost 50 years, with his final trip there this January. We went to Zellwood's Duda Agricultural fields for shorebirds in the August heat, and on pelagic trips out of Mayport. On one pelagic, the "Miss Jacksonville" started taking on water, and everyone had to be transferred to another vessel to be taken back to land. But we added rarities to our list like Greater, Cory's and Audubon's Shearwaters, storm-petrels, jaegers, and Bridled Terns. We went on trips to the Everglades and Dry Tortugas together, stopping in Miami for Red-whiskered Bulbul, Hill Myna, Red-crowned Parrot, Java Sparrow, and Blue-gray Tanager (the last 2 now both extirpated). John, Jimmy and I set up the first Florida rare bird hotline, a phone tree with birders from all over Florida, so that all the avid birders in the state would know about a rarity within a day. This was in the mid-1970s, before answering machines were invented.

We twitched rarities together, once driving all night to Opelika, Alabama, to chase a Snowy Owl, only to learn that it had left the church steeple it was roosting on just hours before our arrival. That was a long drive back to Florida and my first dip. It was 20 years later that John called me with news of a Snowy Owl on St George Island, Florida's first record. That reawakened in me the thrill of the chase that had gone dormant in the process of building a farm and raising a family. Another time John and I made 2 trips to Marathon in the Keys in a week – dipping on a Thick-billed Vireo and then driving right back down 4 days later when it was refound and ticking it on the second trip. It was on those long drives that we shared so many stories, ideas, bird knowledge, and the everyday life of families, marriages, and raising kids. John was truly one of the most knowledgeable birders in Florida – not just a twitcher or stamp-collector only interested in his list, but a true student of birds – plumages, habits, range, biology. We figured out how to find rarities to build our lists. We had almost identical totals for our Florida lists, but enough different species each so that if we combined them we were equal to Wes Biggs, who claims the largest list total in Florida. John and Wes were friends for decades. I remember one pelagic out of St. Augustine that John and Wes

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sat up all night talking on the run offshore, until some of the fishermen told Wes to shut up about politics or he would have to find an alternate way to get back to land. We laughed about that for years.

John worked initially as a clothier and sold suits at Sears when it was at 13th Street and 23rd Avenue at the old Gainesville Mall. His wife Candy was a nurse. John worked with Steve Nesbitt at the Game and Fish Commission on Sandhill Cranes, and set fire to the Prairie with a spark from the catalytic converter on one of the GFC trucks. It burned hundreds of acres (which actually was a good thing) and the smoke shut down I-75, another story we laughed about many times. John built a cracker-style home on his land north of Gainesville, doing almost all of the work himself. I helped him on some big work days framing his house, and he in turn helped me on my initial barn raising for my house on my farm. He became a potter, and for many years did the weekend art-show circuit, selling his signature coffee mugs and bowls. When he said to Candy that he was thinking about finally retiring, her response was, "From what?"

John went on ABA trips, going with Candy and Jimmy Horner to Ecuador and the Galapagos on a tour led by Arnold Small, one of the ABA founders. John was always a big guy, and all of the Small family were barely over 5' tall. John found that very amusing. In later years he bought a travel trailer and took it to Texas, where I met up with him and we found a Tamaulipas Crow at the Brownsville dump that had not been seen there in years. He took the trailer to Colorado, Arizona and California to fill in his ABA list. There is a picture of John in the snow in Gunnison, with a very territorial Dusky Grouse holding onto his thumb with its beak.

John was very active in Alachua Audubon, and he was the compiler of the Gainesville Christmas Bird Count for decades. Gainesville is always one of the top inland counts in the nation that is not on the ocean, in part due to Gainesville's very active birding community and John's service as planner and coordinator.

John and Candy were married 40 years. John was the primary caregiver for their son Josh, since Candy had the 8-5 career. John took Josh to school, cooked the family meals, and took Josh to judo competitions where he became a national finalist at only 13 years old. John used his clothier's skills to help with the Gainesville High School Marching band uniforms where Josh was a drummer. He went to many band events and all of the games for years. Candy passed away from a rare genetic disease, but John never remarried. I think he was tempted once, but he didn't want marriage to get in the way of his love for birding.

In the last decade John became a fan of the Gator Women's softball team, going to every home game as they won or contended for several national championships. I was reading back through some of our texts, and I was complaining about Gator football, and he said, "Come to a softball game with me – I'll show you what a real winning team looks like!"

John and I talked almost every week for 50 years. I called him Bubba – he was my big brother. He was always there with an ear to listen, and offer some simple sage advice to whatever I might be facing. He struggled with his knees, but he kept birding, going somewhere almost daily after Candy's passing. He called me when he found out about the cancer. He joked that he wanted his gravestone to read, "I told you I was sick." I think he had known for a while.

We went to dinner recently at the little Mexican restaurant on NW 6th Street where he always had the stuffed pepper rellenos. John told me how he wasn't going to chase any more, that he wanted to study the birds, the common and familiar ones in his yard, to really learn and understand their behavior, and to appreciate their beauty. He told me about a White-throated Sparrow that he had seen at his feeder, and how he watched it for over an hour. He described to me just how beautiful it was. He had come full circle.

Bob Wallace owned the Chestnut Hill Nursery in Alachua for many years. Now retired, he lives in New Smyrna Beach.

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One of a Kind
Don Morrow

John Henry Hintermister was one-of-a-kind and a man of strong passions. Gator sports, a ketchup-splattered bowl of grits, or the music of Emmy Lou Harris; all could put a big smile on his face and elicit a laugh. His biggest passion though was for birding.

I first ran into John at a Gainesville Christmas Count meeting he was leading in the mid 1970's, but I really got to know him when we worked together at Morningside Nature Center a few years later. His first day on the job I was walking with him across the parking lot when he stopped, looked up and said, "Water Pipit" as a small bird flew over. I made a mental note that there was a new bird expert at Morningside. I ended up talking and birding with him for over forty years. I am much the better for the experience.

John was always a study in contrasts. He was patient and ornery. He led preschoolers and college groups on nature walks, and patiently explained to beginning birders how to tell Least Sandpipers from Western Sandpipers by the way they walk, but laughed out loud at a German birder who mispronounced "Phoebe" as "Fobe."

Starting in the 70s I probably did over a hundred Christmas Counts with John. Gainesville Counts where he assigned me where he needed me and over thirty years on the Paynes Prairie Basin with him. We did Jacksonville Counts and Cedar Key Counts annually. Back in the 90s at Cedar Key we were in an airboat wreck. The airboat hit a mud bank going fast and tipped forward catapulting us out. We cleaned ourselves up, climbed back in the airboat and kept birding. John wouldn't stop, despite a knee that had to be replaced. This year's Cedar Key Count turned out to be our last Christmas Count together.

He was a master storyteller and raconteur. Getting kicked out of Chipola Junior College for setting fire to the dorm, being rescued by the Coast Guard off a sinking boat on a pelagic birding trip, he had some great stories and I was privileged to hear them as they grew and developed over the years. John appreciated his own jokes and sometimes had to motion friends to provide punch lines when his personal appreciation caused him to dissolve in body-shaking laughter from which he could not recover. I still find myself repeating hilarious things he said that made absolutely no sense like, "I see, said the blind man as he picked up his hammer and saw."

I left Gainesville in 1980 to go to graduate school. While I was away I saw a small story in the *New York Times* about a major fire at Paynes Prairie. I called John to ask him about it and he explained that while he was working at the Prairie and driving along, he noted that the catalytic converter on his truck had lit a long fire line. John drove back to the Prairie headquarters and said, "You know how you're always saying that the Prairie needs a good burn?" It burned for three days.

I have birded with John across Florida, Texas and California. We were birding in the mountains in Southern California when he got White-headed Woodpecker, the last woodpecker he needed for his North American list. John said, "Ooh! It pooped! I can add it to my poop bird list too." John kept county lists, year lists, a life list, and it is very possible that John actually had a separate list of all the birds he had seen poop.

I was birding with him one spring at Fort DeSoto when he stopped, pointed and said, "K ... K ... K ... Kirtland's Warbler!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" His first impulse after getting a good look at the bird (a breeding-plumaged male) was to find a phone and get the news out to the listservs so other birders could have a chance to see it. John was a competitive birder, but he wanted to make sure everyone else saw birds too. If you knew John you would get calls like, "Northern Lapwing reported at Lake Toho. Meet me at 4:00 am," or, "We need to go birding. I've been studying and the best place in the state for Connecticut Warbler in spring

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is.....” John was responsible for untold thousands of life birds on other people’s lists.

He was the best birder I have ever met and probably the best damn birder that Alachua County will ever see. The last time I talked with him he told me that he thought he was feeling a little better and was planning to rent a place at Cedar Key to catch spring migration. Sadly, he did not make it.

Don Morrow was a project manager for the Trust for Public Land for 32 years. He lives in Tallahassee.

In Memoriam: John Henry Hintermister **Jack Connor**

Although it is now more than four decades past, I remember well the fall day in 1975 when I first met John Hintermister. My wife Jesse and I had moved to Gainesville only a few weeks earlier and somehow she had convinced me to join her on a field trip to Cedar Key with some group with the odd name of Alachua Audubon.

As a birding ignoramus, I expected to find two or three old ladies in tennis shoes driving a Studebaker at the shopping mall meeting place. Instead, more than a dozen cars were parked there and people of all ages had climbed out to circle around a big, bearded guy who looked like he should be off at football practice with the Gators.

John walked over to welcome us newbies to his gang, and within ninety seconds he was laughing at my bad jokes and flirting with Jesse – a bonding technique that never failed him.

He led that day’s trip as he led all trips – telling stories; sharing ID tips and birding wisdom; gushing about every new bird anyone spotted (“Good find! I *love* Carolina wrens!”); tossing out political, social, and sports commentary at slow moments; and drawing in everyone, even the rawest beginners, so we all felt members of the clan.

Of the top-class, extraordinary birders I’ve met in all the years since, perhaps two or three may have matched John’s eyesight and a different two or three may have matched his ears. But I have never met a birder anywhere I’d rather spend a day with than John Hintermister. His incredible skills as a birder only supplemented his magical and magnetic, full self.

About a year after we met, John drove over to our little cabin on Newnans Lake to ask Jesse and me to take over writing and editing *The Crane*. We typed it on mimeograph paper in those days and, at John’s insistence, we added a column about local bird sightings. I had never written about birds or the natural world before then, but I have been doing so ever since. So, I owe him that as well.

John Henry Hintermister changed my life in more good ways than he knew. I will be grateful to him and cherish my years with him as long as I live.

Jack Connor, Emeritus Professor of Writing at Stockton University, is the author of *The Complete Birder* (1988) and *Season at the Point* (1991). While attending graduate school at UF (1975-79) he originated the “Birdwatching” column in *The Crane* that continues to this day as “Around the County.” He lives in Port Republic, New Jersey.

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John Hintermister

Per Kaijser

I met John Hintermister in 1976 while on a post-doctoral study in physics at UF when we discovered a mutual interest in birds. I grew up in Sweden and knew the birds of Europe well; John helped me learn the birds of Florida. He was, and still is, the most skillful birder I have ever met – with such excellent eyes and ears and knowledge.

During the three years I stayed in Gainesville, John and Candy’s “Hinterland” became a kind of second home to me. We spent many days together, mostly out in the field birding but also building their house. We always had great fun with lots of laughs. He was such a wonderful story-teller – and always in a good mood.

After returning to Europe, I managed to extend several of my business trips to Florida to include a stop at Hinterland. We also met a few times elsewhere over the next thirty-three years. Our last encounter came in Gainesville in 2013, when we spent two wonderful and successful days together, including searching for and finding the Kirtland’s Warbler!

It is a privilege to have met such a good-hearted person and still better to have so many delightful memories. I miss him and our friendship very much. Florida has lost one of its best treasures.

Dr. Per Kaijser, a physicist, lived in Gainesville from 1976-79 on a post-doctoral research fellowship connected with the Quantum Theory Project. He now lives in Munich, Germany.

Big John

Howard Adams

It’s hard for me to grasp that he is really gone. His uncanny ability to locate and identify birds on the wing has always astounded me. I always enjoyed his funny stories as we traveled down the road for hours in utter darkness to seek out an elusive rare bird. Along the way he would provide us a running commentary of his other non-birding passions—the UF Women’s Softball team and their latest team accomplishments and GHS’s Marching Band competitions. I truly miss planning our “feather quests” to far-off locales and the adventure, excitement, and joy of birding with Big John.

A Good Day to Bird

Over the years I have known John I always looked forward to an adventure in the field with him. It did not matter if we were walking through the dense, steamy jungles of Trinidad and Tobago, hiking a mountain trail in the Rockies, slogging thru the muck and mire of Paynes Prairie, cracking through 0.5 inch thick ice sheets at Pea Island NWR in North Carolina, or taking a death march down a boulder strewn trail for countless miles in the blistering heat of Texas’s Rio Grande Valley. Although I have traveled with John to National and State Parks and Refuges to observe birds, I can also remember many memorable days birding cemeteries, massive trash dumps, and wastewater treatment facilities. It did not matter which direction we headed out, I always knew that it was going to be a good day of birding with John.

Brownsville dump, 1/23/1999: Tamaulipas Crow

From John’s eBird checklist: “Once again I was the one who found the bird. This crow appears to be

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smaller than a female Great-tailed Grackle. The face is 'flat.' The call was a strange low croak.”

I remember it was cold and windy and we spent hours looking thru 100s upon 100s of gulls and crows and John finally spots two Tamaulipas Crows. We moved closer and were able to hear its call--it sounded like a tiny frog croak and nothing at all like the Fish or American crow's call.

The Arrival, 12/11/1999: Snowy Owl

From John's eBird checklist: "Don Morrow called me on 12/10/1999 to tell me there was a Snowy Owl at St. George Island State Park. Howard Adams and I met Don at St. Marks and headed for St George Island. We arrived at 8:04 AM and found a crowd of birders already there. I spotted the bird before we were out of the car. It was on top of a tall dune. Before I could get my scope out it flew 200 m to another tall dune. Eventually we were able to study it from as close as 40 m. The eyes were bright yellow and very intense. The top of the head, lower breast and belly, and wings and tail were barred with dark brown. The rest of the plumage was immaculate white. The bill and talons were black. The feathers on the feet went all the way down to the talons. It was an immature bird. All the alpha birders were there—Wes Biggs, Peggy Powell, Howard Langridge, Paul Sykes and others. A great bird and in a place I always predicted one to show up.”

As I drove us into the park John became so energized that the hairs on the back of his neck stood straight out. In the back of my mind I was going over my CPR training in case John reached critical mass! There was almost a presence, an aura of incredible enthusiastic energy radiating from John! As for the owl, to me it looked like it was almost panting from the Florida heat and the white dune-like drifts sure did not feel like the white snow that the owl was accustomed to!

A New Millennium, 1/1/2000

John wanted to do something special for the new millennium so John and Candy Hintermister, Mike and Diana Manetz, and I camped out under the stars on Persimmon Point and spent the first day of birding in the new millennium at the place that was dear to both of us—Paynes Prairie. I remember John talking around the campfire about some of his disastrous camping adventures with Candy many, many years ago. I also remember the following day how ironic it was that the first bird we heard at dawn was not a crow, mockingbird or even a cardinal, but the stately sandhill crane, 4000 of them!

Florida Birding at its Best, 5/3/2003

From John's eBird checklist: "Birding with Howard Adams, Barbara Mollison, Lloyd Davis and others. One of my best days in Florida in years. As we arrived we went by Hospital Key, Masked Booby. ABA and Florida lifer. We arrived at the dock and rushed into the Fort where the Red-legged Honeycreeper, ABA and Florida Lifer, and White-tipped Dove, Florida Lifer, awaited. As we were finishing up with those two, someone yelled that the Black Noddy, ABA and Florida Lifer, was on the coal dock. I about fainted. The next day I added Willow Flycatcher to my Florida list.”

In 15 minutes John had racked up three life birds and several Florida life birds. A spectacular trip to the Dry Tortugas National Park that I will always remember.

Better View Desired, 3/21/2008: Hook-billed Kite

From John's eBird checklist: "Howard, Barbara, and I were on the Hawk Tower with two guys I did not know when two birds got up in the distance. One of the guys said he thought one of the birds was a Hook-billed Kite. I told him it was a life bird for us and he went over all the field marks we could see in the distance. Paddle shaped wings, cupped secondaries, flight style, dark coloration and etc. I was con-

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vinced it was a Hook-billed Kite. I knew for sure that I wanted a better look. When [we] got down off the tower Howard asked me the name of the guy that was giving us the help and when I told him 'Bill Clark' he told me that was the guy that wrote the *Peterson Field Guide to the Hawks*. That made me feel better about the sighting but I still wanted a better look."

Anyway, three days later while birding the Rio Grande Valley, we turned in a new, not quite open, Texas State Park, Estero Llano Grande, got out of the vehicle and a bird quietly glided just over our heads at tree top level. We looked at each other and said together, "What was that?" We quickly tracked down the bird in question and were pleasantly rewarded with several long looks at a Hook-billed Kite lazily soaring just above our heads. So we *did* get a Better View Desired!

The Attack of the Dreaded "Devil Chicken," 4/14/2009: Dusky Grouse

From John's eBird checklist: "I found out from a ranger that there was a Dusky Grouse holding a territory at a maintenance area. We went there and the bird immediately started attacking the tires of the truck. I got out to photograph it and extended my hand down towards the bird who then attached himself to my hand. Barbara got some great photos of this and I got a neat wound."

John was so proud that bird left him with a memory he will always remember—this 'Devil Chicken' as it latched onto the soft, tender flesh between John's thumb and finger and the minuscule drop of blood it left behind.



Spring Cleaning, 4/15/2009

Barbara and I will always remember a very humorous morning in Montrose, Colorado, when during breakfast one chilly, early morning in our little Casita trailer we looked out the window and saw John carrying an arm load of unrecognizable paraphernalia. He proceeded to walk over to a nearby dumpster and pitched the items inside. We were very curious, so later that morning when we were heading out on our "Great Chicken Hunt" we inquired as to what he was doing so very early that morning. It turns out that John's cat, Kitty-Kitty, who had accompanied him on the trip, had demolished the valances and curtain rods in John's trailer. John said that he did not need any of that junk anyway!

OOPS!

Big John always liked to find some greasy spoons to eat at and on one occasion I remember him ordering a large bowl of grits—a favorite of his, being a Florida country boy. We were all sitting around a table in a diner when John snatched up a bottle of catsup on the table and gave it a vigorous shake. Unfortunately some pranksters had left the cap unscrewed on the bottle and catsup exploded out of the top of bottle, streaming all the way to the ceiling! So every time I see a bottle of catsup at a diner I think of John and his flamingo-pink grits!

Howard Adams was a park ranger at Paynes Prairie from 1979 to 2014. He and John were co-compilers of the Gainesville Christmas Bird Count from 2003 to 2014.

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John Hintermister

Mike Manetz

One winter day back in the early 90s when I was still very much a beginning birder I was scanning from the boat ramp at Lake Wauberg when a large bearded gentleman with binoculars, who I later deduced to be John Hintermister, ambled up beside me and drawled, “Whatcha got?” I mumbled, “I think it’s a Red-breasted Merganser.” Glancing through his bins he replied with a mixture of excitement tempered with grave authority, “That’s a good bird for your county list”. I had no idea about a county list, but from that moment I decided I had better start one!

My next encounter with John was on my very first AAS field trip. By that time I had read Jack Conner’s book *The Complete Birder* and had come to realize that John was something like birding royalty. That day I hung by his side and on his every word. At one point he spotted a Golden-winged Warbler, which would have been a life bird for me. I couldn’t see it from where I was standing, so John literally *picked me up* and placed me where I was in line-of-sight of the bird! After the trip officially ended he and I birded together for another couple of hours like it was the most natural thing to do, and from that day forward I was privileged to be included regularly in John’s birding orbit. His early acceptance, encouragement, and enthusiasm put me on a life-long path, and so much of who I am as a birder comes from the bottomless well of knowledge and bird-lore that he imparted on countless outings and chases over nearly thirty years.

John seemed to view birds as a metaphor for life itself, and this was reflected in his approach to birding. For him it wasn’t just an enjoyable hobby or pastime, it was something approaching a noble life-dedicating endeavor. His level of passion and commitment set a high bar to which most serious birders can only aspire.

Mike Manetz wrote “Around the County” in *The Crane* from 1994-2002 and from 2006 to the present. He is co-author of *A Birdwatcher’s Guide to Alachua County, Florida* (1995, 2006).

John Hintermister

Lloyd Davis

John was a wonderful man. He was an inspiring naturalist, a kind and generous soul. I am pleased that I was fortunate to be able to spend time with him. He is greatly missed! Who else would call me and say, “Get your ass out here! I am looking at two Clay-colored Sparrows on Bolen Bluff!”

Lloyd Davis is a retired USDA entomologist.

Thoughts on John Hintermister

Phil Laipis

May 2005. I was a beginning birder, and my wife Sandy and I were taking the AAS Spring Birding Class, with Kathy, Marilee, and Marcy at Santa Fe County Park off 43rd Street. Sandy and M&M were talking about work, and I was ignoring them. On the ride back, Sandy told me that according to M&M, Candy Hintermister’s husband John was “the God of Alachua County Birders.” Candy was Sandy’s supervisor at Gainesville Surgical Group. I asked her to ask Candy if John might be willing to take me birding sometime.

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She did, and Candy said, "Sure, he loves doing that," and it was set up for a weekend a few days later. I asked Stacy Porvasnik to go with us, an avid birder and friend from the lab. John and Candy, Sandy and I, and Stacy set off in John's old Explorer for Cedar Key and Shell Mound. On the way I spotted roadkill, and a brief discussion between John, me, and Stacy ("Dog, fox, coyote?") led to John slamming the breaks, U-turning, and back we go, wives muttering something about idiots in the background. Coyote was the answer. It was a great start to a great day. I got several life birds (Long-billed Curlew for one) and a great new friend. John and I birded frequently after that, and he always remembered to call me when something showed up, and included me in his trips. I learned an immense amount from his patient lessons; he was a good teacher.

January 2010. I had gone with John on the St. Marks trip; probably my 3rd time there. Before the trip, I asked if we could take a few days afterwards and look around west Florida; I'd never been west of Tallahassee. He said sure, and made up a list of target birds from the Birdbrain listserv. We spent 4 days, and at the end of the month, while we were going somewhere else, John said he'd seen 186 species in the month of January and was thinking he'd do a Florida Big Year. Well, I was still working, so I tagged along as best I could, and my year list was 318 species and 44 life birds; John saw over 360, and no life birds, as I recall. The other thing I recall about that year was sheer exhaustion. We drove to the Keys/Everglades 4 times, boat to Fort Jefferson, Merritt Island, Daytona, St Marks again, spray fields at Fort Walton Beach, and lots of other spots. We were up before dawn, and by the time dinner was over, in bed by 11 at the earliest. It was really fun, but I was really tired when it was over.

June 2014. I asked John to drive up with me to New Hampshire, and go birding for 10 days. He wanted Bicknell's Thrush and Spruce Grouse for his life list, and off we went. We saw both birds, the Bicknell's on Canon Mountain, taking the gondola to the top (there was a road race on Mt. Washington, our first possible stop, and the road was closed). This was before John's hearing aids. I was able to hear a thrush singing, and told him, "John, it's singing over in those trees." As usual, he found it and was able to put me on the bird. Couple of days later, hiking in Quoddy Head State Park, I was in front, John behind, muttering something about all the Spruce Grouse were dead, and I saw a young male walking on the trail about 8 feet in front of us. I stopped, stuttering, "John! There's one RIGHT (bleep) there!" We watched it for 10 minutes, walked past as it foraged completely unconcerned by our presence, and we walked out into the bog, our original goal, to look for Olive-sided Flycatcher. John just screamed, "YESSSS!"

Two days later, we stopped at Sunkazy NWR, north of Bangor, Maine, to again check the marshes for Olive-sided. Walking along an overgrown trail to a marked observation point, there was a sudden scream, and something flew between us, about a foot over our heads, landed in a small pine 30 feet away, and continued to scream at us. It was an adult female Northern Goshawk, looking very mad, and like she was going to charge us again. It was all fluffed out, and the white tail coverts made it look about 6 feet wide and two feet tall. We backed away down the trail, very carefully. Later, on the way back (no Olive-sided, of course), we saw that there was a nest, with one near-fledged chick, in the top of a tall white pine we had walked beside. It was a life bird for me and John said it was the best ever look he'd ever had. Two days later I wedged him into a plane seat and sent him back to Gainesville, completely exhausted, with two life birds.

May and June 2016. John, Steve Nesbitt, and I spent nearly 3 weeks in Alaska. I got 34 life birds, I think, and John got maybe 15. The scenery was spectacular, the birding also great, and mostly the weather was good. We were hiking up the "Bristle-thighed Curlew Hill" over rough tundra, and John was lagging way behind. Once we got to the top, a pair flew in, and dropped down. We found them in the scopes, and were motioning to John to get up to us when they took off, circled and headed down the hill, toward John,

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JOHN HINTERMISTER, 1943-2019

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circled around above him once or twice, calling, and then flew away. Nice of them. John made it to the top, and we watched breeding plumage Red Knots for a while before staggering back down. Later, we were on the west end of the Denali Highway, looking at distant Golden Eagle soaring over a mountainous ridge, when I scanned up a bit higher and saw a raven harassing another bird, and said to John and Steve, “Look, there’s a Raven and a Peregrine harassing the Golden.” John took a look, and said, “Son, that’s not a Peregrine, that’s a Gyrfalcon!” One more life bird on my list with “seen with JHH” in the comments section.

January and February 2018. John, Steve, and I drove to the lower Rio Grande Valley, looking for a reported Golden-crowned Warbler, a lifer for John. It was seen the day before we got there, not for the week we were there, and then seen the day we left, as we drove by the location, not stopping because we figured it had left. It was still a great trip. I think I got 6 life birds. John got some year birds.

January 2019. John led the St. Marks field trip for the last time, grumbling the whole way about 30 people showing up, his trademark “and on your right, a Northern Cardinal” was heard pretty often in the car. On the way back, we talked about going back to the valley, there were two Golden-crowned Warblers being seen and we agreed that as soon as he visited the doctor about his stomach problems, we’d leave and spend about 10 days looking for the warbler and whatever else was around. He got sicker, Steve and I went, we saw the Golden-crowned up close and personal, and John was genuinely happy for us when I told him on our return. We talked about a trip to Ecuador when he was finished with the chemo. That was Wednesday, March 20. I was going to visit again Saturday or Sunday when I got the call.

Pat Burns called us the “odd couple.” We weren’t really. We were the same age, within 5 months, similar politics, both loved birds and all things nature, found it easy to talk to each other, and for almost 14 years, best friends. I will miss him.

Dr. Phil Laipis is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the UF College of Medicine.

John Hintermister Debbie Segal

Like so many others, John inspired me in countless ways during my adult years to observe and treasure birds. It was as a young teen that I first discovered birds; however, the bird passion that John fostered in me would lay dormant for the next four decades. My family moved to a cattle farm next to Paynes Prairie in the early 70s and it was then that I started recognizing birds. With a bird book checked out from the library at Gainesville High, I learned to identify the Eastern Bluebird that nested in a cavity in the corner post of the cattle pen, the Eastern Meadowlark that flushed from the bahia fields and occasionally landed on the barbed wire fence and revealed its brilliant yellow breast, the Killdeer that nested on the gravel road and feigned a broken wing when I inadvertently strolled past the nest on my horse, and the suite of wading birds that foraged in the creek next to the barn.

Over the years I continued learning to recognize the obvious birds around me and several of their songs. I maintained a bird feeder and rejoiced each time a Red-headed Woodpecker would visit it. But it wasn’t until around 2007 during a fortuitous birding trip to Palm Point when John pointed out a Yellow-throated Warbler, that I realized a whole new level of beautiful birds existed beyond my own narrow world. For the next year, I experienced an internal tug-of-war as I yearned to learn more about birds but still maintain my time-consuming horse habit. About a year later I traded hobbies – selling my horse and

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JOHN HINTERMISTER, 1943-2019 (Continued from page 20)

replacing it with a new pair of Eagle Optics binoculars.

It was then that John became my birding mentor. He invited me on many of his day trips to various hotspots – Cedar Key, the Road to Nowhere, Hagens Cove, and many state parks – with his other buddies and pointed out birds, patiently explained their diagnostic features, and enriched me with tidbits on their natural history. I recall his excitement one cold day at St. Marks when our long list of tallied species approached and then surpassed 100 species. Many memorable birding days ensued with John, and it was because of John’s patient and enthusiastic mentoring that I learned to slowly pick through a group of shorebirds and eventually learn to identify those cryptic species, or to follow with my binoculars the fast and erratic flight of swallows in search of the “different one” – the Bank or Cliff or Cave Swallow. I wish I could have stored in my memory all the diagnostic tidbits he shared with me so effortlessly. Probably one of the most valuable birding lessons that I slowly learned from John was recognizing the “GISS” – General Impression of Size and Shape. He taught me how to combine the birds’ visual characteristics with the many other features – size, shape, behavior, habitat, and time of year – to reach an identification.

In 2015 when I was writing my historical young-adult novel, *The Idylwild Cowgirls*, I wanted to recognize John for the birding legend that he is to Alachua County. And since John spent so much time birding around Paynes Prairie, which is the same area the cowgirls traverse on their horses, John’s inclusion in the book seemed a natural fit. I asked John if I could weave him into the story as a birdwatcher who sparks the interest of birds in a young equestrian, and he agreed. So in Chapter 7, as the teenage rider is crossing Paynes Prairie along Highway 441, she encounters a man with a broad strong frame and black wavy hair peering through binoculars at the birds at the rookery. When they meet, the equestrian notices the birdwatcher’s large brown eyes that project both excitement and kindness. The birdwatcher introduces himself to the horseback rider as John, John Hintermister the fifth. This analogy of John fictitiously infusing his contagious enthusiasm for birds with this Idylwild Cowgirl, represents John’s real-life birding influence on me. His generous invitation to join him on countless bird outings and the sharing of his time and knowledge about all things birds, is the primary reason for my dedication to the identification and conservation of birds. And I will be forever grateful to John for this gift of birds that he has given me.

Debbie Segal was John’s through-the-woods neighbor. She is president of the Alachua Audubon Society.

A Different View of John Bill Pirzer

My memories of John begin outside of the world of birding. I actually first met him when he and my mother were both involved with the Cedar Keyhole artist co-op. I remember him telling me that his son was in the Gainesville High School Band (this was before I taught there). A few years later when I came to GHS, Josh had already graduated, but John continued to volunteer with us for several more years. He loved our band program and what it provides for all students, not just the brightest or the richest. I remember John being impressed with one family in particular that had three kids in our program but not two nickels to rub together. For four years, he paid the band fees for one of those kids anonymously and invested over \$2,000.00 so this young man could participate with us. The student never found out who his benefactor was, but I remember John being so proud when he found out that the young man’s incredible hard work in high school had earned him a full scholarship to Harvard.

In the time that John volunteered with the GHS band, he would come to visit my predecessor, Mary

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JOHN HINTERMISTER, 1943-2019
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Ann Sickon, and I during the day, help us with things at competitions, and whatever else we needed done. Over those couple of years we never talked at all about the birding world. After his wife passed away, John would still come to see us from time to time and in one of those visits I mentioned that Lori and I had visited La Chua Trail for the first time and how much we had enjoyed seeing the water birds and the bison. It was then that John asked me if I would be interested in going to see some birds with him. Little did I know that a new passion was about to be sparked in my life. I met him out at La Chua with nothing but a cheap digital camera and a bottle of water. I truly had no idea what bird watching was or how to prepare for it. I'll never forget that he loaned me a pair of his retired binoculars and took me out on the trail. He showed me so many birds that day that it blew my mind. I knew what cardinals and crows were, but he showed me the amazing beauty that surrounds us every single day. In those early days he was very patient with me and he took me on a lot of trips to Cedar Key, Bolen Bluff, and La Chua. Up until his last few months we would still laugh at how I sent him a picture of what I thought was a Least Flycatcher on Sparrow Alley, but turned out to be a Mockingbird.

After a year or so he invited me to be a part of the Christmas Bird Count and I have enjoyed every one of the six that I have been involved with. My fondest memories are seeing the way he would get excited about any bird, even his favorite, the Blue-gray Time Waster (John's pet name for the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher). I'm very grateful that I was able to bird with John for six or seven years, but I'm far more grateful that I got to know the amazing artist, band parent, and man that John was.

John, thank you so much for introducing me to this great activity and for helping me learn the difference between a Mockingbird and a Least Flycatcher. I am going to miss our trips out into the woods where a lot of times we would forget that we were birding because we would get sidetracked talking about band, the Gators, or whatever. There will not be a bird or a band student that I see without thinking about this great man for the rest of my life.

Bill Pirzer is the Director of Bands at Gainesville High School.

My friend, John Hintermister

Barbara Shea

The main thing is that he was such a good friend. A good person to *have* as a friend. I am lucky to have gotten to know him and hopefully helped him when he had the need. He was a special guy in so many ways. His knowledge of birds, but even more, his love of them, was a gift he gave so generously to me and to so many others.

Hope he is someplace where the birds are friendly and knees last forever.

Miss you, John.

Barbara Shea, field trip chair for the Alachua Audubon Society, was John's closest friend during the last years of his life.



Subaru Shares-the-Love with Alachua Audubon Society

The Alachua Audubon Society just received a generous check for \$4,462 from Gainesville Subaru. In 2018, AAS was selected by Subaru to be one of four nonprofits, and the only local nonprofit, during their Share-the-Love program. From mid-November 2018 through early January 2019, buyers of new Subarus in Gainesville selected one of the nonprofits to receive \$300 from the purchase price.

AAS is very appreciative of Subaru's generosity in supporting birds and conservation, and plans to use the funds for design and construction of the public use facilities at the new High Springs Treatment Wetlands. High Springs will begin construction this summer with completion slated for 2020. High Springs had originally not planned to open the treatment wetlands to the public, but when AAS met with city staff and offered to fund the public use facilities, the city accepted the offer.

When presenting the check, Ronnie Myles, General Sales Manager at Subaru of Gainesville, stated that "Subaru of America takes great pride in giving back to local communities. This year is no exception. We are delighted that Alachua Audubon is this year's recipient. So, on behalf of Subaru of America, Duval Motor Company, Subaru of Gainesville, General Manager Chris Baynard, myself (Ronnie Myles), and Subaru of America representative (Colin Mondero), we would like to present the Alachua Audubon Society of Gainesville with a check for \$4,462.00." *Thanks, Subaru!*



Left to right: Ronnie Myles & Chris Baynard (Subaru), Trina Anderson, Debbie Segal, Karen Brown, Anne Casella, Sidney Wade, Woody Hartman (AAS), Colin Mondero (Subaru)



Now enrolling volunteers: Jay Watch Citizen Science Training Session



Where: 49th Avenue trailhead, Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, Marion County

When: Saturday, May 18, 2019; 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon

What to wear: lightweight long pants, closed-toed shoes, hat/visor, sunscreen.

What to bring: binoculars, plenty of water, snacks, and a smile!

We will provide: training manual, clipboard, pencil



Jay Watch training sessions are FREE to participants



~An overview of Florida Scrub-jay behavior will be followed by field practice with the Scrub-jays~

Participants will learn :

- Cooperative family group structure of Florida Scrub-jays
- Identifying adults versus juvenile jays and delineating family groups
- Standardized Jay Watch survey methods employed statewide June 15 – July 15



To register or for more information:

Contact: Jacqui Sulek <jsulek@audubon.org>



Alachua Audubon Society
P. O. Box 140464
Gainesville, Florida 32614-0464
AlachuaAudubon.org

The Crane
May – June 2019

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Choosing a higher level provides additional support for our local chapter.

Student	\$10	Individual	\$15
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Purple Gallinule			\$100
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Sandhill Crane			\$500
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Alachua Audubon is a 501(c)3 organization.

Audubon Membership Explained

To join Audubon at the local level, please visit the website where you may use PayPal to pay by credit card. You may also complete the membership form to the left, or print a form at [Alachua Audubon.org/Membership](http://AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership). Choose the membership level that is appropriate for you. Mail the completed form with your check, payable to **Alachua Audubon Society**, to the address provided.

To join Audubon at the National level, go to AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership where you will be directed to their membership page. Your introductory membership (\$20 or more) will be credited to our local chapter and you will become an annual member of the National Audubon Society, Audubon Florida and Alachua Audubon, with one-year subscriptions to National *Audubon* magazine, Audubon Florida's *Naturalist* magazine, and Alachua Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Crane*.

Please send any questions to
AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com