



The Crane

Volume 51 Number 5 April-May 2010

April and May Field Trips

Saturday, April 3, 7:30 am—Ocala National Forest

Meet Bob Simons at Sweetbay/UF Bookstore II at 2002 SW 34th St. General ecology interest. Avian highlights include Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Bachman's Sparrow, and Florida Scrub-Jay. Pack water, a snack, and dress for exposure. Difficulty: 3

Sunday, April 11, 8am—LaChua Trail

Meet trip leader Rex Rowan at the LaChua Trailhead on Camp Ranch Road to look for arboreal migrants along the forested prairie bluff and lingering sparrows and early migrants in the prairie basin. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, April 17, 8 am—San Felasco Hammock-Millhopper

Meet Steve Hofstetter at San Felasco trailhead on Millhopper Road. Don't forget the \$2/vehicle access fee. Meandering streams, sinkholes, ridges, and slopes set the stage for a very diverse bird habitat during spring migration's peak. Difficulty: 2

Sunday, April 18, 8 am—River Rise State Park

Meet trip leader Ivor Kincaide in the High Springs Winn-Dixie parking lot for this special access trip to the Black Lake Loop at River Rise State Park on the Santa Fe River. Black Lake Loop runs alongside the underground portions of the Santa Fe River where gentle bluffs provide a high vantage point into swampy wetland depressions. \$4/vehicle entry fee. Difficulty: 3

Saturday, April 24, 8am—Fort DeSoto County Park

Fort DeSoto in Pinellas County is one of Florida's best known migrant traps. Meet John Hintermister in the parking lot of Ft. Desoto County Park Visitor Center. Previous Fort DeSoto trips have produced over 20 species of warbler. Difficulty: 2

Sunday, April 25, 6:30 am—Cedar Key

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

Saturday, May 1, 8 am—Palm Point

Meet Mike Manetz at Powers Park to view migratory birds at a local classic migrant trap. The edge of the cypress swamp can be an excellent place to observe migrant activity. Difficulty: 2

Sunday, May 2, 8 am—Bolen Bluff

Meet Adam Kent at the Bolen Bluff trailhead (east side of US 441 on the south rim of the prairie). Bolen Bluff is one of Gainesville's perennial favorite birding locations, especially during the peak of songbird migration. Difficulty: 2

Saturday, May 8, 8 am—Mill Creek Preserve

In 2002, the Alachua County Forever program made its first conservation land purchase - the 1,190 acre Mill Creek Preserve. Meet leader Michael Drummond at the Tag Agency on NW 34th St. and carpool to Mill Creek Preserve to bird through the pine and hardwood forests. Migrants and summer breeders should both be visible. Difficulty: 2

Saturday, May 15, 9 am—SPECIAL EVENT

Wildflowers with Dana Griffin

Call Wild Birds Unlimited [352-381-1997] for details and to find out where to meet. Dr. Griffin likes the freedom to choose the best location at the last minute depending on what is blooming and where. In any case, Dr. Griffin's knowledge of botany and style in the field are legendary. Difficulty: 2

Saturday, May 22, 10 am—SPECIAL EVENT

Butterflies with Kathy Malone and Mike Meisenberg

North American Butterfly Association chapter president Kathy Malone and AAS past president Mike Meisenberg co-lead this early-season butterfly outing to Kathy Malone's own butterfly garden. There are few places as good for comfort and close observation of so many species of butterfly. Meet at the High Springs Winn-Dixie. Difficulty: 1

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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Crane Circulation	Erica and Bob Simons, Paul Moler, and other volunteers
AAS Website	www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud

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 Alachua Audubon Society and fulfills stated objectives and goals of Alachua Audubon Society. Annual subscription to *The Crane* is included in AAS dues. Non-Audubon members may subscribe to *The Crane* for \$8 annually. All checks for subscriptions or changes of address should be mailed to Paul Moler, Membership Chairman: see back page for address. Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. *The Crane* is printed on recycled paper.

Deadline for June/July Crane: May 15th

Around The County... By Mike Manetz

By the time this issue of the Crane reaches your mailbox spring will be fully underway, but as I write in early March, winter has only just loosened its icy grip. Our year-round residents have been earnestly singing for a while now, each morning intensifying the appeals of male **Cardinals**, **Titmice**, **Thrashers**, and **Wrens** for mates and territories. Over this chorus, early April will layer a sonic weave of our newly arrived neo-tropical breeders with the occasional solos of soon-to-depart winter visitors, producing

a delightful early morning symphony at most any of our deep woodland parks and preserves. You can enhance the mix a little, adding the gentle descending phrases of **Yellow-throated Warbler** and the penetrating sweet-sweet-sweet of **Prothonotary Warbler** by visiting Lakeshore Drive, or sprinkle in **Hooded Warbler's** insistent whee-ty-wee-oh at San Felasco Hammock. Either way, it's a refreshing change that makes a dim memory of what most would consider a fairly harsh winter.

It was also a fairly ducky winter. Not only did we get our usual several hundred teal at Alachua Lake, there were unusually high numbers of **Shovelers**, **Wigeons**, and **Pintails** that lingered well into February. Pat Burns found a **Greater White-fronted Goose** there on the first of February. John Hintermister discovered a flotilla of thirteen **Redheads** January 26 at Deerhaven pond. John, along with Rex Rowan, boated around some area lakes February 11 found a thousand **Ruddy Ducks** at Newnans, as well as forty-one **Horned Grebes**, ten **Buffleheads**, and a **Snow Goose** at Lake Santa Fe.

There was a bit of **Fox Sparrow** mania in February. Bob Carroll found a couple of them at San Felasco County Park while searching for **Golden-crowned Kinglets** reported by Pat Burns the previous day. The sparrows proved to be skittish, and only a few birders were able to relocate them. Andy Kratter came upon one a week later along the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail. This bird proved a little more accommodating to viewers, much to the delight of us locals as well as birders from several parts of the state.

Tusawilla Prairie and Gum Root Park proved to be reliable spots for viewing **American Woodcock**. Woodcocks are difficult birds to observe. Unless you are lucky to come upon one roosting, your best bet is to be at a site pre-dawn or just after dusk to hear them peenting and see them flying back or forth between feeding area and roost. It's an esoteric pleasure for sure, to be out on an icy dawn hoping to glimpse the skittering silhouettes of these amusingly plump birds, but makes for a memorable experience.

Steven Goodman had a memorable experience February 27 as he and his father were along the shore of Biven's Arm Lake. There he noticed a bird fly-catching from a tree along the lake edge; upon inspection, the bird turned out to be a **Western Kingbird**. The bird stuck around several days for several birders to see this local rarity.

Winter is the high season for backyard bird feeding. I had a high of about a hundred and fifty **Chipping Sparrows** gnawing at my feeders. Bubba Scales at Wild Birds Unlimited reported a spike in backyard **Painted Bunting** sightings by his customers. It was not exactly a **Pine Siskin** winter, but John Martin had at least one visiting his feeders; and while **Wilson's Warblers** were likewise scarce this year, Glenn Israel found one in his yard on February 13th.

We still have space on the July Birds and Conservation trip to Costa Rica. Please consider joining us for some great tropical birding and a look at some of the remarkable efforts at conservation that Costa Ricans have made in their beautiful country. For more information email me at manetz@yahoo.com. Thanks to those who shared their sightings through March 11, 1010

Annual Pot Luck Dinner and Election of Officers and Board of Directors Wednesday, April 21; 6:30pm

Please join us for our annual end-of-the-year pot luck and election of officers and Board of Directors. Spring has arrived and it is time to elect the officers and members to your Board of Directors for 2010-2011. This Alachua Audubon chapter is a volunteer-based organization with four officers and fifteen Board of Directors. Your Board of Directors serve a three-year term with five members up for consideration each year. We have three new members on the slate for the Board of Directors and many returning members who wish to continue to contribute their time, energy, and ideas for the leadership of your Alachua Audubon.

Many of you participate in field trips, attend programs, or send information on the birds you see throughout the year. Maybe you participate with the Fall Migratory Bird Count or the Christmas Bird Count; stop by our booth at special events; or take a birding class. Whatever your pleasure with regards to birds, please join us for our spring social gathering.

Bring some food to share for the pot luck. We will gather at the home of Bubba, Ingrid, Key and Astrid Scales (3002 SW 1st Way, Gainesville; located in the Colclough Hills neighborhood between south Main Street and Williston Road).

Alachua Audubon Society slate of officers for 2010-2011:

President- Helen Warren
Vice President- Scott Flamand
Secretary- Anne Casella
Treasurer- Dotty Robbins

Slate of Members to the Board of Directors for a three year term to expire in 2013 are returning members Caleb Gordon, Philip Laipis and Rex Rowan and newcomers are Day Bennett, Ron Robertson, and Debra Segal.

Other members to the BOD include: Kathy Haines, Ivor Kincaid, Geoff Parks, Bob Simons, Joni Ellis, Adam Kent, Mike Manetz, Stacy Porvasnik, and Emily Schwartz.

We have some members who have been active board members for many years and are taking a break but still staying involved as they are able. We want to thank Mike Drummond, Stephen Hofstetter and Cecelia Lockwood for their contributions in keeping this chapter active.

Helen Warren

CHIMNEY SWIFT ALERT

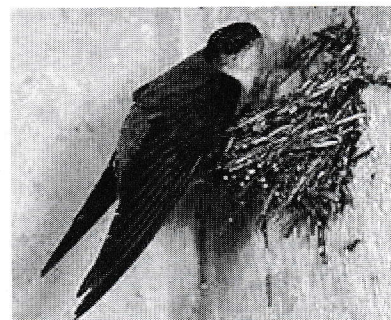
Chimney swifts are small, cigar-shaped black birds with slender pointed wings. They are the only swift species in the eastern U.S. These birds migrate from Chile to breed and raise their young here in the states. They will be scouting for nesting places during March but because of habitat destruction, many of the large tree cavities and rock crevices used as nesting sites are gone. One nesting alternative is to use human structures such as buildings and chimneys. We are encouraging everyone to leave a safe nesting site open for chimney swifts. If you have a real stone or brick fireplace please keep the top open and the damper to the flue closed from March through September. The parents and little ones will be long gone before you start any fires. If you don't have a damper, you can place a large piece of foam rubber into the opening to seal it and prevent the adults from flying into the house. Heavy rains and high humidity can weaken the nest of young swifts and cause it to collapse. The damper (or foam) will stop their fall and the parents will continue to feed the young as they cling to the wall of the chimney.

You will know if you have chimney swifts by the chattering in the chimney when the parents fly in to feed the babies. You will also observe their aerial acrobatics as the adults and fledglings feed around your house. Either early March or October is the time to get your chimney cleaned. This will keep your fireplace safe for winter use and provide a better surface for chimney swift nests to adhere to. (note: If you have a metal chimney PLEASE make sure it is capped properly. Any animal that enters a metal flue will fall to the bottom and be unable to climb the slippery walls.)

CHIMNEY SWIFT FACTS

- « Consume up to 1,000 flying insects daily
- « All four toes point forward, they can only cling to vertical surfaces
- « Gelatinous saliva is used to glue their nest together and to the wall
- « Collect small twigs for the nest by snapping them off in mid-flight
- « May nest twice in one season
- « Often return to the same nesting site each year
- « Young birds often return to the area where they were raised to nest
- « Nest from April to August
- « Usually one breeding pair at a site
- « The nest takes two to three weeks to construct
- « Eggs are laid while the nest is being built
- « They lay two to six eggs, each a day apart
- « First flight at 4 weeks of age but practice inside the chimney before that.

Leslie Straub



AAS Fieldtrip to Tall Timbers and the Wade Tract

Twelve AAS members embarked on a wonderful, AAS-sponsored field trip on February 6th. Participants met at the Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS) and Land Conservancy, just north of Tallahassee on Saturday afternoon and were greeted by the leaders Adam Kent and research assistant Michael McDonald. TTRS is a 4,000 acre research station that is dedicated to the study of fire ecology, game bird management, vertebrate ecology, and forestry. Tall Timbers is where the science of fire ecology began and it is an advocate to protect the right to use fire for land management. As a land conservancy, it has protected over 100,000 acres in north Florida and south Georgia through conservation easements. Michael and Adam led the group around the TTRS where we saw many interesting birds including both **Brown-headed** and **White-breasted Nuthatches**. While birding through the fire-maintained pine forest we were treated to the stunning vista overlooking Lake Lamonia and learned of the research that has occurred at this legendary institution over the last half century. The group slept in the student bunkhouse and then assembled early the next morning to meet Jim Cox, the senior research biologist at TTRS, and to drive to the Wade Tract in southern Georgia.

The Wade Tract is a 3,200 acre private estate near Thomasville, Georgia. It consists primarily of old-growth longleaf pine/wiregrass woodlands and is one of the very few old growth stands that has been consistently managed with fire. The Wade Tract offers a visual example of how the natural landscape may have appeared prior to European settlement. Multiple families of **Red-cockaded Woodpeckers** (RCWs) nest at the Wade Tract and have been banded and studied extensively by Jim and other researchers at TTRS. We arrived at the Wade Tract before sunrise in hopes of netting and banding a RCW before it emerged from the nest tree. Although we were unable to net the bird before it emerged, we were treated to the sight of several RCWs emerging from the nest tree, and flying from tree to tree.



Photograph of Michael McDonald at the Wade Tract; Photo taken by Craig Faulhaber.

Bachman's Sparrows breed at the Wade Tract and have also been banded and studied by researchers from TTRS. Jim was prepared to demonstrate to our group how to net and band these sparrows. We formed a long line and walked side-by-side through the forest in hopes of flushing a sparrow. Once flushed, we noted where the sparrow landed and then assembled the net. We then formed another long line and flushed the sparrow towards the mist net. Our first four attempts at netting a **Bachman's Sparrow** failed when the bird failed to flush a second time or flew past the assembled net. The fifth attempt was successful and we were able to temporarily capture and then band a **Bachman's Sparrow**. We then drove to a slightly wetter area of the Wade Tract where **Henslow's Sparrows** winter. Our first attempt at netting and banding a Henslow's was successful and we all marveled at the beauty and intricate patterns of this lovely bird.

Our final stop was at the nearby Greenwood Tract where RCWs and nuthatches (brown-headed and white-breasted) are known to breed. Here we were entertained by close views of the nuthatches. What a memorable AAS-sponsored fieldtrip this was!

Debbie Segal



Photograph of Henslow's Sparrow after netted and banded. Photograph by Craig Faulhaber.

Alligator Lake Spring Festival Lake City, FL—Saturday, April 24th

This will be a free community event celebrating Nature. Sponsored by Four Rivers Audubon and Gateway Wildlife Habitat Organization. Activities to engage and educate folks about water, healthy yards, birds, flowers, native plants, and enjoying the outdoors. Nature walks, educational displays, speakers, and vendors will be present. A bird walk from 8:00 - 10:00. Displays and vendors open at 10:00. Speakers include Julie Wraithmell (Audubon of Florida), Kathy Malone (North American Butterfly Association), and Sam Cole (Ichetucknee Springs State Park). For more information, contact Jacqui Sulek at jsulek@audubon.org for more informa-

Kid's Christmas Bird Count

The 2nd annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count was held on January 9th, beginning at a variety of times between 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. There were five teams, and a total of 28 kids, with grade levels ranging from elementary to high school. The teams visited a variety of favorite birding spots around Gainesville including Payne's Prairie, Newnan's Lake, several Gainesville ponds (such as Chapman's Pond and the Home Depot Pond), plus a few sites on the U.F. campus, including Lake Alice. The temperature hovered in the 30°s all day, presenting the birders with another challenge besides identifying the flighty birds in the bush!

All in all, an extraordinary 98 species were observed! Three of the teams started off their sightings with a **Bald Eagle**, and from there, things only got better. Highlights of the morning included a flock of warblers, amongst which a **Black-and-white Warbler** was identified, a group of four **Ruddy Ducks** on Lake Alice, and a long look at the usually secretive **Hermit Thrush**. The groups on the Prairie were blessed with a very cooperative **Red-shouldered Hawk** that gave the birders a stunning view and a majestic **Merlin** wheeling over the treeline. Most would agree that hot chocolate was another "highlight", providing a welcome relief from the bitterly cold weather. At noon, the birders turned in and met up at the Mill Pond clubhouse to share their sightings and nourish themselves with pizza and hot cider.

The Kids' Count has blossomed from the previous year, foreshadowing a promising new generation of Gainesville birders. As before, most of us cannot wait until next year's Count, and plan on participating in other birding events in the meantime. The count wouldn't, have been successful without those dedicated to planning and organizing the event. Our thanks goes out to Chip Deutsch, Ted Goodman, Caleb Gordon, Adam Kent, Sharon Kuchinski, Mike Manetz, and Helen Warren for sportingly agreeing to be team leaders and for supporting us in our quest for winter birds. Adam Kent deserves special credit and our gratitude for spearheading this effort and making it an overwhelming success.

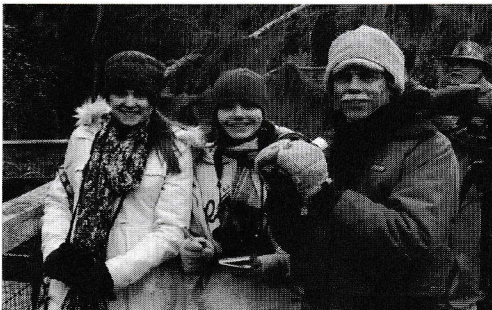


Photo of Jessica Blackband, Kaitlin Deutsch, and Chip Deutsch at the Lake Wauburg bridge at the Paynes Prairie main entrance during the Kid's Christmas Bird Count (Photo by Adam Kent)

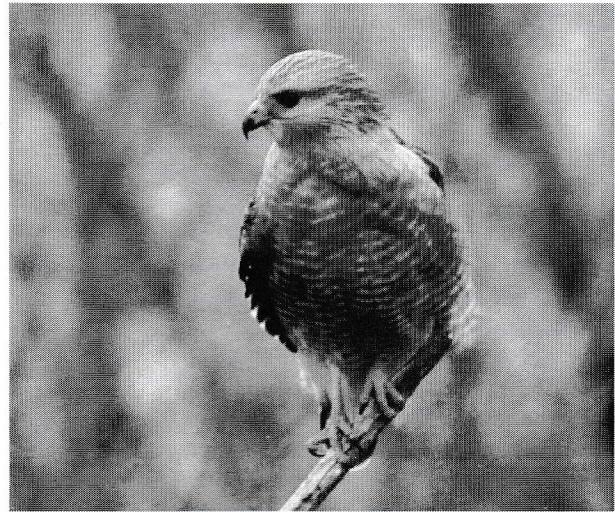
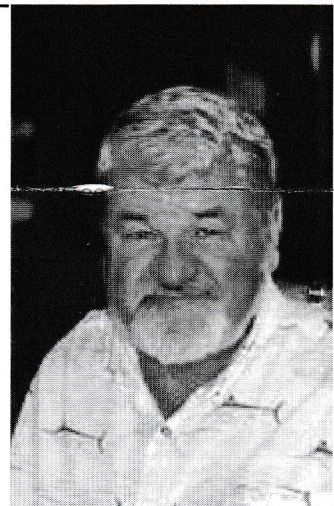


Photo of the Red-shouldered Hawk taken on the 441 Paynes Prairie overlook platform during the Kid's Christmas Bird Count (Photo by Adam Kent)

Ray E. Ashton died March 11, 2010 after his battle with cancer at the age of 64. Over his long career, Ray was active as a professional zoologist, researcher, consultant, museum curator, ecotourism director, educator, and prolific author. His passion was evident for all species of reptiles and amphibians, especially the now threatened gopher tortoise. He and his wife created the



Ashton Biodiversity Institute and the Gopher Tortoise Conservation Initiative to increase our knowledge about this keystone species and to empower Florida's citizens to conserve upland habitats as well as wetlands. Over the last 5 years, Ray served on the Florida Gopher Tortoise Technical Advisory Group that helped draft guidelines for the management of the state listed tortoise. He actively shared his knowledge and expertise with local governments, private businesses, land owners, rehabilitators, communities and citizens. He was a tireless advocate for good conservation practices in Florida. His legacy will live on as we build on the contributions he made to the understanding and conservation of our valuable natural resources.

Community Calendar

Apr 3 and May 1 Sierra Club Ardisia pull, San Felasco Hammock, 9:00 a.m.; <http://florida.sierraclub.org/ssj/outings.htm>

Apr 13 and May 11 North American Butterfly Association program meeting, 6:00 p.m.; <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabancf/Events.htm>

Apr 16-17 Chinsegut Birding and Wildlife Festival, Brooksville; http://myfwc.com/docs/Calendar/Chinsegut_Flyer.pdf

Apr 16-17 Native Plant Sale, Morningside Nature Center; <http://www.cityofgainesville.org/GOVERNMENT/CityDepartmentsNZ/NatureOperationsDivision/Events/tabid/86/Default.aspx#SNPS>

Apr 20 Florida Native Plant Society program meeting, 7:00 p.m.; <http://www.fnps.org/pages/chapters/chapterpg.php?keyword=PaynesPrairie>

Apr 22-25 Florida Birding & Fotofest, St. Augustine; http://www.getaway4florida.com/bird_festival/

May 18 Florida Native Plant Society program meeting, 7:00 p.m.


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To Drill or Not to Drill

Texas oil, powerful lobbyists, and some Florida politicians are making a forceful push to lift the 20 year ban on oil drilling in Florida's off-shore waters. The estimated annual economic gain of 2.3 billion (which many think is an inflated estimate) could negatively offset Florida's 57 billion annual tourism income if oil drilling leads to irreparable damage to Florida's waters, sea life, sandy beaches, and air quality.

There are many potential damages associated with off-shore oil drilling. Senator Victor Crist (R-Tampa) who grew up in New Orleans remembers pulling tar balls off his feet. And according to Senator Dennis Jones (R-Seminole) oil is "an absolutely dirty industry that uses chromium, arsenic, and barium."

Oil drilling is not risk free. Recent spills have occurred in Louisiana and Texas (blamed on old technology) and in Australia with new technology. According to Senator Durell Peaden (R-Crestview) "once beaches are ruined, they're ruined forever." Biologist Enid Sisskin points out that during drilling operations toxic waste (mud, cuttings, sand, sanitary waste, and excess cement) is dumped into the water.

If you are against drilling for oil in Florida's waters and promote generating jobs and revenue by developing cleaner, greener energies for the future, **then please contact the following legislators:**

1. Sen. Mike Haridopolos (pro-drilling)
haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov; 850-487-5056
2. Sen. Don Gaetz (pro-drilling)
gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov; 850-487-5009
3. Rep. Dean Cannon (pro-drilling)
dean.cannon@myfloridahouse.gov; 407-623-5740
4. Sen. Larcenia Bullard (undecided)
bullard.larcenia.web@flsenate.gov; 305-668-7344

And thank the following for trying to prevent off-shore oil drilling:

1. Sen. Jeff Atwater (against drilling - works very hard to prevent it) atwater.jeff.web@flsenate.gov
561-625-5101
2. Sen. Victor Crist (against drilling - remembers pulling tar balls off his feet as a child) 813-975-6658
crist.victor.web@flsenate.gov
3. Sen. Paula Dockery (against drilling - plans to do all she can to prevent it) 863-413-2900
dockery.paul.web@flsenate.gov
4. Sen. Dennis Jones (against drilling - fears it will wreck havoc on our tourism industry)
jones.dennis.web@flsenate.gov; 727-549-6411
5. Sen. Durell Peaden Jr. ("Once you ruin those pristine beaches, they're ruined forever.")
peaden.durell.web@flsenate.gov; 850-689-0556

Thank you for your efforts!

Barb Kerkhoff

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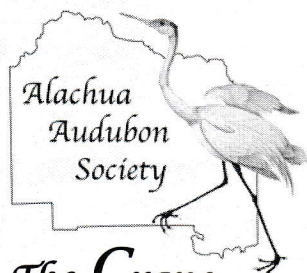
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The Crane
April/May 2010

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Want to Serve on an Audubon Committee?

Existing Alachua Audubon Committees include Education, Conservation, Special Events, Field Trips, Holiday Social, and Crane Circulation. Please contact Helen Warren at helenkwarren@cox.net if you would like to assist with a committee.

Join Audubon!

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

Paul Moler 7818 Highway 346 Archer, Florida
32618

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

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

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Please check level of membership:

£ Basic \$35.00 £ Senior \$15.00 £ Student \$15.00