



The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 41 Number 1, August 1999

Programs Set for 1999-2000 AAS Club Year

This year's Alachua Audubon Society Program Chairman John Winn has been busy the past few weeks arranging a full schedule of interesting, informative, and entertaining program meetings.

John said, "When I heard that someone was needed to arrange this year's program meetings, I thought that this might be a good way for me to make sure the program topics would be ones I'd be interested in."

But John clarified that by adding, "No, that's not true. But I did want to line up some varied speakers and subjects so that there would be something of interest for everyone. I hope you'll find some—or all!—of these programs ones you'll want to attend."

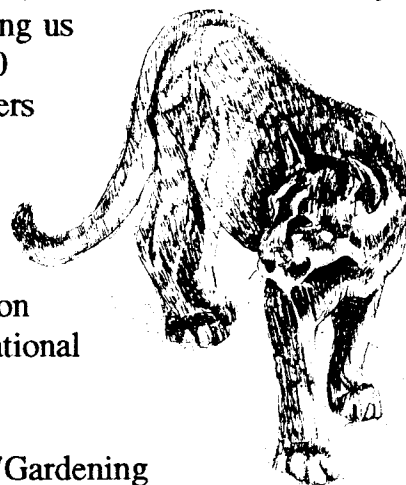
Here's what John has arranged for us:

✓ **September 25:** "Everglades Restoration," Peter Frederick, Associate Research Professor, UF Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. Peter spoke to us several years ago on the ecology of wading birds and will bring us an overview of the plans for restoring the natural water flows to the Everglades and how this might affect the bird populations there which have been reduced by 90%.

✓ **October 16:** A Double-Feature. "In the Footsteps of Darwin, Endemic Rainforest Birds in Southern Chile," Katie Sieving, Associate Professor, UF Department of Wildlife Ecology

and Conservation, and "Protecting Wild Areas in Our National Forests," Alix Davidson, Heritage Forests Coordinator, National Audubon Society. This program is composed of two half-hour presentations, and John is looking forward to having the chance to imitate John Cleese from Monty Python's Flying Circus by saying, "And now, for something completely different..."

✓ **November 13:** "Florida Panthers," Steve Williams, President, Florida Panther Society. Steve will be telling us about the 30 to 50 endangered panthers surviving in the Big Cypress area and the efforts so far to place a second population in the Osceola National Forest.



✓ **January 22:** "Gardening With Native Plants," Joe Durando, President, Paynes Prairie Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society. This program will be at just about the time when cold weather should be coming to an end, and we're starting to get excited again about working in our gardens.

(continued at top of Page 2)

This year's Programs - continued

✓ **February 19:** "Polar Bears," Steven Morello. Steve is a professional photographer and trip leader for Natural Habitat Adventures. Each October and November, he accompanies groups to Churchill on Hudson Bay to witness the gathering of polar bears there and will be sharing his pictures and experiences with us.

✓ **March 18:** "Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Goethe State Forest," Carol Wooley, Biologist, Goethe State Forest. Carol is leading the Division of Forestry efforts to rebuild the Goethe State Forest population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers from the present nearly 30 colonies to the 60-something which historically might have been there. She'll be telling us about that and where and when are the best times to visit to see the woodpeckers.

Join us for these program meetings. All the dates are on Saturdays and will be held at the Millhopper Branch Library (or the Tower Road Branch if Millhopper is unavailable.) Exact times and more details will be in each month's *Crane*.

For Year-Round 24-hour AAS Information:

Call *SunDial Bird Line:* 335-3500, ext. BIRD (2473) for information on field trips, programs, where to see birds, and what's happening in AAS.

Visit AAS Web Site:

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud/aud.htm>



The Crane is published monthly throughout the year except June and July. Content of *The Crane* is the sole responsibility of the editor and fulfills stated objectives and goals of Alachua Audubon Society. Annual subscription to *The Crane* is included in AAS dues. Non-Audubon members may subscribe to *The Crane* for \$8 annually. Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed, can be e-mailed or on disk or hard copy and must be received by **August 25** to be included in the September issue. Please limit each article to no more than two pages. Mail or bring your disk or hard copy to Evelyn Perry, The Branch Office, 519 NW 60th St., Suite A, G-ville 32607. Or fax to 331-2585. Or e-mail evperry@aol.com.

***The Crane* is printed on recycled paper.**

Around the County...

by Mike Manetz

Welcome to another year of birding in Alachua County. Before we get to our reports on summer nesting and fall migration, let me welcome those of you who are new to our area or new to the Crane. If you are an experienced birdwatcher, we invite you to help out on our migration or Christmas counts. If you are a beginner or relative novice, you might want to check out birdwatching classes sponsored by Alachua Audubon and advertised in Santa Fe Community College's Continuing Education catalog. Also consider attending our scheduled nature programs and field trips. These are all great ways to meet our birding and nature-oriented community and acquaint yourself with some of the wonderful natural areas in and around Gainesville.

This was certainly the most remarkable summer in recent Florida birding history. Normally, if someone told me I could see breeding Dickcissels and White-tailed Kites as well as Whooping Cranes and a Ross's Goose, all within three hours of Gainesville, I would likely have advised him or her to check the dosage of their medication. That said, at least two pair of Dickcissels were confirmed nesting at Zellwood, the Kites are nesting near St. Cloud, Whoopers are wandering in Polk County, and a not-so-wild Ross's Goose persists at a park in Crystal River. How 'bout that!

Alachua County had its share of oddities as well. Black-neck Stilts, first spotted along Cone's Dike at Payne's Prairie during the Spring Migration Count, stayed around to provide only the third breeding record ever in our county. On July 10 Rex Rowan and David Wahl reported 4-5 adults (one on a nest) plus 7 downy young in 2 broods. Black-bellied Whistling Ducks were noted all summer at the north rim of the prairie, but as of yet there has been no definite proof of breeding. If someone finds adult Black-bellies with young in tow, please report it, as this would be a first record for our county.

Our first fall migrant was a Louisiana Waterthrush found July 8 by John Winn at his home on Lake Alto. Word must be out that John is serving up gourmet fare for migrants, because the waterthrush was found feasting on a plate of meal worms at John's feeding station. The Louisiana is usually the earliest arriving fall warbler in our area, but July 8 is exceptionally early. Rex Rowan and Diane Reed, while birding Palm Point July 23, marked a few other warbler species that typically make up the vanguard of fall migration. They found 3 Black-and White Warblers, 1 Prairie Warbler, and 2 American Redstarts. When John Hintermister and I checked Palm Point the following day, we found a similar assortment including 6 Redstarts plus a Spotted Sandpiper.

Rex, along with David Wahl, also picked up a couple of other early migrant shorebirds, Least Sandpiper and Lesser Yellowlegs, along Cone's Dike July 10, which was the

same day they reported the Black-neck Stilt chicks. On July 21, John and I checked the same spot and found 13 Least and 14 Pectoral Sandpipers, plus a Lesser Yellowlegs and several Black-necked Stilts. Also in the shorebird department, Pat Burns reported the first Solitary Sandpiper of the fall on July 29 at the Hague Dairy.

We have a couple of major birding events scheduled for fall. First, our annual North American Fall Migration Count is slotted for September 18. All reasonably skilled birders are invited to participate. The following weekend, Alachua Audubon plays host to a "flocking" of the Florida Ornithological Society. Both of these events will result in extensive birding coverage of our county during two of our best weekends for fall migration, so don't be surprised if a number of good birds (and birders) turn up.

Thanks to those who shared their observations through July 29, 1999

September Field Trips Planned

There will be no AAS field trips in August. The first trip of the new club year is:

Saturday, September 4, 7:30 a.m.

San Felasco Hammock State Preserve

Meet in the parking lot of the Hunter's Crossing Publix (NW 53rd Avenue and NW 43rd Street) to carpool; this will prevent crowding in the parking lot and save most of us the \$2 parking fee. What better way to start the football season than by ignoring the Gator's opening game and going birding instead? Fall migration is always a little chancy in early September, but we should have a fair shot at Kentucky Warblers, Worm-eating Warblers, Ovenbirds, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and Veeries, as well as such resident species as Hooded Warblers and Acadian Flycatchers.

An AAS guided trip is also set for **Sunday, September 12 to Palm Point and Lakeshore Drive**. Details will be in next month's *Crane*.

North American Migration Count

Saturday, September 18

Experienced birders are needed for this county-wide survey. Call Mike Manetz at 377-1683.

New Species Discovered in National Forest!

After reading the description of the Apalachicola National Forest in AAA's *Florida Tourbook* (p. 40), birders may wish to plan a trip there in order to add a new bird to their life lists: "Hikers may catch glimpses of such rare and endangered species as Florida alligators, *red cockeyed woodpeckers*, indigo snakes, and southern bald eagles."

- Submitted by Elizabeth Van Mierop

Our Annual Listing of Audubon Society "Vintage" Members

35 plus years

Dr. George Cornwell; Dr. Mary Clench; Ernest Casey, MD; John Mahon.

30-35 years

Elizabeth Sugalski; Clinton Shepard; Dr/Mrs. M. Jack Ohanian; Gordon Ward; Audrey/Jape Taylor; Thomas Walker; Mr/Mrs. Arthur Fabrick; Mrs. Audrey Clark; Mr/Mrs. John Hintermister; Mr/Mrs. E. E. Muschlitz, Jr; Mr/Mrs. Joseph Little; Richard Struble; Mr/Mrs. Michael Corn; Mrs. Brock Hamacher; Dr. Thomas Emmel; W. Patrick Brewster; Dr. Frank Mead.

25-30 years

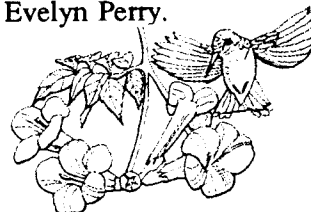
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20-25 years

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15-20 years

K. Cantwell; Carmine Lanciani; T.J. Wronski; Mary Christopherson; Dr/Mrs. Leonard Furlow, Jr; Marilyn Adams; Jerry Donaldson; Gene Meurlott; Loretta Person; Rebecca Enneis; Jacquilyn Roberts; Andrea Brinsko; Donna Backen; D. Dohrmann; Marion Hylton; David Yonutas; Joseph Alba; J. Barry; B.E. Gibson; Mr/Mrs. Steven Noll; Zachary Neece; David Wilson; Reed Pedlow; Marguerite Girard; Pamela Killman; Margo Duncan; Lee Trepanier; Dr. C. Kenneth Dodd, Jr; Jerry Williamson; Leslie Straub; Evelyn Perry.





A Year in the Dark

by Rex Rowan

"I have been one acquainted with the night," wrote Robert Frost.

Yes, well, me too. But I have been one acquainted with the night primarily as a paperboy, from July of last year to June of this. Being a

paperboy — galling for a middle-aged man, you have no idea — required me to rise at three and drive to a drop site downtown where I claimed my papers, folded and bagged them, and then delivered them, one by one, throughout four apartment complexes near the Oaks Mall. I usually got home before the sun came up.

("Yes, all very interesting," you say, "But what is it doing in the Audubon newsletter?")

With nothing to do but walk around in the dark, I was grateful for the distraction afforded by the animals in my subscribers' neighborhood. As summer yielded to fall and, almost immediately, spring began to struggle out from under winter, I watched the insects and frogs and reptiles come and go.

Cicadas were so abundant in late summer that they might be considered the animating spirits of that season — if anything can be said to "animate" such muggy and exhausting weather. They comprised much of the litter in the breezeways and stairwells: in July and August it was their nymphal shells, and in September and October their dead and dying bodies.

September and October brought the bird migration as well. Although I laid eyes on only one migrant — a Common Yellowthroat roosting in a third-floor doorway — I heard many more calling as they flew overhead. Most I couldn't recognize, but I heard large numbers of Indigo Buntings in October, and the whistling of thrushes was easy to identify (if not to species).

There were other birds I heard but didn't see — my greatest disappointment was that I never glimpsed an owl during my rounds. Barred Owls were fairly common (and vocal) in the surrounding swamps, and I heard Great Horned Owls hooting during their December and January nesting season. But I never saw even one. Eastern Screech Owls seemed to be absent altogether, perhaps due to the presence of the two larger species, both of which eat them.

In winter I saw mostly mammals, which were unaffected by the seasons (except for the students, of

course, who were migratory). The three native species I encountered, Opossums, Raccoons, and Southern Flying Squirrels, were far less common, or less obvious anyways, than the two exotics, Armadillos and feral cats.

One of the first signs of winter's end was the appearance of the magnificent Luna and Polyphemus moths in February and March. I saw half a dozen during this period, as they emerged from the cocoons in which they'd wintered. Then they disappeared — adults do not eat, and die soon after emergence.

Another sign of spring was the calling of the Southern Spring Peeper, which rang from the swamps even in the coldest weather (herpetologists would tell me it's a winter-breeding frog, and thus its call is not a sign of spring at all, but my clever response would be, Why do they call it the *Spring* Peeper then, huh?). I heard no other frog calls until April 1st, when an ornamental pond, to all appearances empty of life the morning before, vibrated with the trilling of Southern Toads — so loud I first took it for some kind of machinery. Soon after, other species added their notes to the chorus: Bullfrogs groaning from Terwilliger Pond, Bronze Frogs gulping from the swamps, and the lamb's bleat of Eastern Narrow-mouthed Toads from flooded low ground. Squirrel Treefrogs took up their warm-weather posts under porch lights.

Cardinals began singing, like the Spring Peepers, in the dead of winter; I first heard them in January. Their clear notes began as early as five some mornings. Carolina Wrens in the vicinity of street lamps would sing even earlier, presumably fooled by the light. Did they sing all night long? Except for these two species, I didn't hear much bird song until April, when a varied morning chorus began, with Northern Parulas, Summer Tanagers, Red-eyed Vireos, Great Crested Flycatchers — and, alas, Brown-headed Cowbirds, prowling for early nests.

I saw fewer snakes than I would have expected — only four in the course of a year — but three species of lizards were quite common in the apartment breezeways, all of them exotics. During summer and fall 1998, the most common was the Mediterranean Gecko. When the weather warmed up again in spring 1999, the Indo-Pacific Geckos outnumbered the Mediterraneans. Since the Indo-Pacific is parthenogenetic — every last one of them is an egg-laying female — this should not have been too surprising, but I had previously considered it rather rare in Alachua County. Brown Anoles were also fairly common — a diurnal species, but like the wrens active before dawn due to the artificial light.

In the end, being one acquainted with the night turned out to be somewhat educational. But I decided I'd rather be one acquainted with sleeping late.



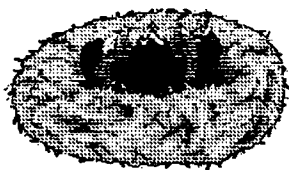
The Nestling

Its world is but a tiny shell
Warmed by a brooding mother's breast,
Safe hidden in a leafy dell,
And cradled in a leafy nest;
But, when the nestling learns to fly,
Its world becomes the boundless sky.

No song is heard within the dell;
But, in the blue, translucent sky,
A most enchanting jargonelle
The waking day doth glorify;
As each small nestling tries its wings,
And, in its triumph, sweetly sings.

O may my dull, prosaic mind
This lesson teach unto my heart;
That I, too, may in nature find
Of my own life a counterpart;
That my soul, yet, shall find its wings,
And rise to higher, nobler things.

-Herbert Spivey Luke
Scholar/Teacher/Poet
1892-1968



New Audubon Members May-July

Membership Chairman Paul Moler reports the following new members joining over the summer months. Welcome to AAS!

Jon Anderson; Richard Arbogast; Laurie Barnett; Suzanne Bird; Virginia Blinn; Dorothy Brazis; Barbara Brown; Lisa Cherry; Dwyer Family; James Ferguson; Jacquelyn Field; Dr. Eugene Gerberg; Lucius Gravely, III; Betsy Greer; Bob Greninger; Carol Harse; Melissa Hughes; Angela Hunt; Jarrod Jablonski; Yvonne Keraval; Art King; Sally Kuebler; Roberta Lake; Carole Law; Craig Lowe; Shirley Marsland; Laura McConnell; Joel McCormick; Loraine McCosker; Barbara McFarland; Louise McMans; Ender Nesbitt; Lindsay Newman; Glen Norton; Richard Pla-Silva; Mary Reusch; Robert Rice; Linda Ross; Imogene Ryan; Linda Gay Schmidt; Frank Scott; Dolores Slevinski; David/Donna Smith; Melinda Squalli; Joan Stephens; Linda Tambor; Bud Tschirhart; Mr/Mrs G. Walker; Norma Walsh; Ronald Will; Liz Wolfe; Nancy Wright.

BOOK REVIEW:

Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Third Edition. National Geographic Society, 1999.

It's time for the old book to go. Faded by ten years of use, stained by some pre-dawn coffee spill long ago, warped, stiffened, and mildewed from being — what? dropped in a pond? left out in the rain? — it's barely usable. I mean, the last twenty pages have become a solid mass!

Luckily, the National Geographic Society has chosen this opportune moment to bring out a Third Edition, and I've got it right here in front of me, shiny and new. But before I toss out the old book, which saw my life list climb from 260 to 410, let me set it beside the new and survey the changes.

A few are minor but noticeable. For instance, the range maps have substituted salmon for yellow to indicate each bird's breeding range, simply because it's a tad easier to see. The species accounts have stolen from Roger Tory Peterson the idea of using bold-face headings to mark descriptions of plumage, songs, calls, and ranges. And the order has changed. Ever since Peterson's first *Field Guide* came out in 1934, we've turned to the back of the book, just before the warblers, when we've wanted to find the vireos. But the ornithologists have been hard at work, and they've decided the vireos are a much older group than they previously believed. So we must now look for them much closer to the middle of the book, between the flycatchers and the jays. Similar but less drastic changes have been made in other groups, such as the sparrows and the hawks. These changes simply reflect our altered understanding of the avian family tree.

More important than these matters of presentation are matters of content:

The Third Edition (1999) includes 80 species not in the Second Edition (1987), about a fifth of which are of particular interest to Florida birders — for instance, Shiny Cowbird and Eurasian Collared-Dove, both of which can be seen at Cedar Key, and several Caribbean strays to South Florida such as LaSagra's Flycatcher and Cuban Pewee.

The species accounts, though substantially unaltered, have in many cases been rendered more succinct to save space. For instance, in the Second Edition's account of Black-chinned Sparrow, we read, "Female lacks black in lores; black on chin is less extensive, duller, or absent." In the Third Edition, this shrinks to, "Female has less or no black." On the other hand, the Third Edition notes the Black-chinned's long tail, which the Second Edition does not. Other changes appear to be for the sake of accuracy: the Second Edition remarks of the Long-billed Dowitcher,

"Bill on most birds no longer than on Short-billed Dowitcher." In the Third Edition, this has been fine-tuned (though with appalling grammar): "Male's bill is no longer than on Short-billed Dowitcher, female's is."

Of course for most of us, field guides are more or less useful according to the accuracy of their illustrations. There are many new ones in the Third Edition, and not just of the 80 new species. Many existing figures have been redone by different artists (what must the old artists think?). There are 34 pages that are entirely new — all the loons, brown thrushes, and western thrashers, for instance — several more pages on which half or more of the figures are new, and others on which just one bird has been repainted. This reaches an extreme on page 381, on which only one plumage, out of 14, has been redone — the fall male Bay-breasted Warbler. All the other Bay-breasteds, and the three other species on the page, are left as they were. You've got to appreciate that much attention to detail!

The Third Edition uses twenty artists in contrast to the Second Edition's twelve, and though I don't see the necessity for *every* new picture, there's not a lemon in the bunch. Predictably, there's a wide variety of styles, but there are standouts. Killian Mullarney's phalaropes, Golden and Black-bellied Plovers, and, especially, his Upland Sandpiper page combine a first-class birder's perceptive eye for shape and posture with rare artistic skill. This is even more the case with David Quinn's two pages of Old World thrushes and flycatchers, and the Fieldfare and Redwing shown a couple pages afterwards. Peter Burke's tanagers, towhees, orioles, and *Myiarchus* flycatchers (Great Crested, Ash-throated, et al.) are more schematic than their Second Edition predecessors, yet manage to be more pleasing aesthetically; furthermore, the simplifications of the schematic approach increase their usefulness, especially in the case of the orioles and *Myiarchus* flycatchers.

The final difference between the two books is in the printing. The Third Edition is darker. Black species suffer most: much of the texture worked into portraits of crows, scoters, anis, and so forth is now invisible, while white feather-edges now offer so much contrast that they come off as products of a bad touch-up job (e.g., Eastern

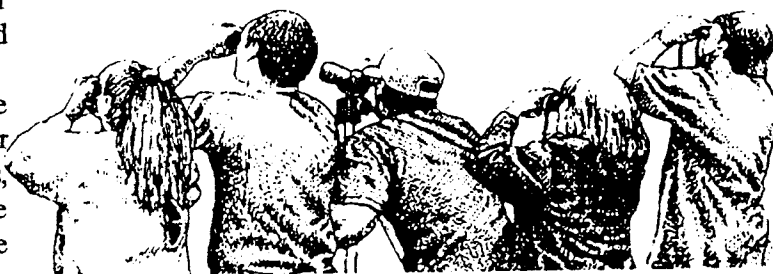
Kingbird). And in a handful of instances, the darker printing has thrown the color off — the back of the Red-eyed Vireo has a bluish cast, for instance. Apart from these instances, the darker look presents no problems; the new illustrations seem exempt from it.

The Third Edition also has finer detail. I hadn't realized, until this side-by-side comparison, how fuzzy the Second Edition's printing actually was. In a very few instances, the sharpness is jarring — the jaegers' ventral barring looks unnatural; the brushwork visible on the juvenile American Dipper gives the illustration a clumsy, amateurish feel. But these are quibbles, and I don't mean to detract from what is really a great improvement. Look at the Reddish Egret in the Second Edition. You wouldn't even know it *had* a yellow eye unless you looked closely. In the Third Edition it jumps right out at you — as does the texture of the neck plumes.

Is the Third Edition a better guide? Yes. But are the changes so drastic that you *need* it? Probably not. Unless you're a true birding bum, you'll find it only marginally more helpful, in a practical sense, than the Second Edition. Hard-core birders will want it, of course, because hard-core birders want every field guide there is. For the rest, it may be best to wait a year, until David Sibley's much-anticipated *Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding* comes out. The first one-man production since Peterson's, it should contain a wealth of highly-detailed information, as well as Sibley's excellent paintings, previewed in *Birding* articles on Sharp-tailed Sparrows (June 1996) and Tufted Ducks (October 1998).

The National Geographic *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (Third Edition) is available in local bookstores even as you read this sentence.

-Rex Rowan



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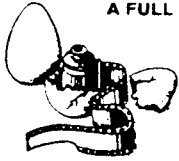
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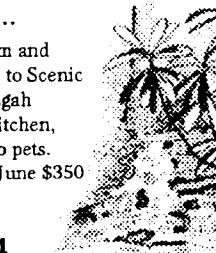
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The Crane

August 1999



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

Paul Moler, 7818 Highway 346, Archer, Florida 32618

Check the level of membership desired and enclose your check payable to:

National Audubon Society

If you have any questions, call Paul at 495-9419.

NEW MEMBERS ONLY

NOT FOR RENEWALS

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please print.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Please check level of membership.

_____ Basic \$35 _____ Senior \$15 _____ Student \$15

_____ **INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP \$20**

_____ **TWO YEARS \$30**