

# The Crane

*Alachua Audubon Society*

*Volume 41 Number 7, March 2000*

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## **March 18 Program: Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Goethe State Forest**

Carol Wooley, one of the biologists working at Goethe State Forest, is the speaker for this month's program meeting, which begins at 2 p.m. at the Millhopper Branch Library.

Goethe State Forest, located between Bronson and Williston, is probably the closest nearby spot to reliably see Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. The majority of the land making up Goethe was acquired as a new state forest in 1992. It has what is likely the largest continuous tract of longleaf pine flatwoods in the state and has several Red-cockaded Woodpecker colonies. These were an important consideration in the state's decision to acquire the property.

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*Join us March 18 at 2 p.m.  
3145 NW 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
(Millhopper Branch Library)*

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Red-cockaded Woodpeckers—  
or RCWs as they are commonly  
referred to by those working

with the birds — are endangered both in Florida and throughout their range in the Southeast. They require mature to overmature pines for nesting and roosting cavities. This specialized habitat requirement and its conflict with widespread timber management practices is the main cause for the bird's decline.

Carol, a native of Texas and a UF graduate, has been working at Goethe for the past five years. She will tell us about the life history and ecology of RCWs and how the management plans at Goethe are implemented to help ensure this bird's survival in Florida.

Please bring your birding questions and join us for this informative presentation. As usual, there will be refreshments and a chance to exchange birding stories with other Audubon members.

*- John Winn, Program Chairman*



## AAS Calendar

### ➔ Wednesday, March 8, 6:30 p.m.

#### **Board Meeting**

All AAS members and the public are invited to attend monthly board meetings, held in the Conference Room of the Florida Museum of Natural History on the University of Florida campus.

### ➔ Saturday, March 11, 8 a.m.

#### **Camps Canal / Cones Dike**

Meet at 8:00 at the Bolen Bluff Trail parking lot, which is on US-441 about 4 miles south of Williston Road (SR-331). We'll carpool from there. Rex Rowan will lead this half-day walk. Birds should be singing, butterflies fluttering, trees putting out new leaves and flowers blooming as we walk along the raised trail adjoining Camps Canal, excavated in 1928-30 by rancher W.N. Camp, who planned to drain Paynes Prairie for grazing land. Once we get to the Cones Dike Trail, we'll follow another levy a mile or so onto the Prairie basin, but what we'll find there is anybody's guess. Water levels have been very low, and the ducks and waders we'd normally expect may or may not be present. We should find a miscellany of wintering raptors, wrens, warblers, and sparrows, however. New spring arrivals Northern Parula and Yellow-throated Warbler will be evident, and possible early migrants include Prairie Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush.

### ➔ Saturday, March 18, 2 p.m.

#### **Program at Millhopper Branch Library "Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Goethe SF"**

### ➔ Friday, March 24 (FAS/NAS event)

#### **State-wide Birdathon celebrating Audubon**

**Month** - contact Larry Thompson (850) 222-2473  
e-mail [lthompson@audubon.org](mailto:lthompson@audubon.org)

### ➔ Saturday, March 25, 6 a.m.

#### **Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area**

Meet in the parking lot of the Target store (Archer Road just east of I-75) to carpool. Bryant Roberts will lead the trip to this wildlife-rich Central Florida location where Snail Kite, Crested Caracara, Whooping Crane, Wild Turkey, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Swallow-tailed Kite, and even White-tailed Kite (which nested there last year) are all possible. Most (or all) of the birding

will not require you to travel far from your car. Bring a lunch and plenty to drink. If you're a recent transplant from out of state, this trip is for you; the birds are among the best Florida has to offer.

### ➔ Sunday, March 26, 8 a.m.

#### **Colclough Pond Sanctuary cleanup**

Meet at the sanctuary parking lot: from University Avenue go south on Waldo/Williston Road (SR-331) 2.5 miles. Turn right onto SW 32nd Way, which is your first right after crossing SW 16th Avenue, immediately right again onto SW 1st Way, which will bring you to the parking lot at the end. Colclough (COKE-lee) Pond is a 38-acre sanctuary owned by Alachua and Florida Audubon. It is in the midst of a long-term habitat enhancement program, and we hope to further that aim by removing exotics (Ardisia and Boston Fern), planting some good wildlife trees, and culling out spindly, overcrowded Laurel Oaks and Sweetgums to create sunny clearings. Bring work gloves, loppers, shovels, and something to drink. We'll probably be done before lunchtime.

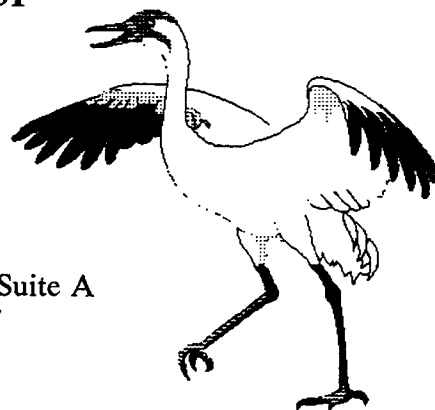
### ➔ Friday, March 31

#### **Crane deadline for April**

- e-mail:  
[evperry@aol.com](mailto:evperry@aol.com)

or

- mail or deliver to:  
The Branch Office  
519 NW 60th Street, Suite A  
Gainesville, FL 32607



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 March 31 to be included in the April 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](mailto:evperry@aol.com).

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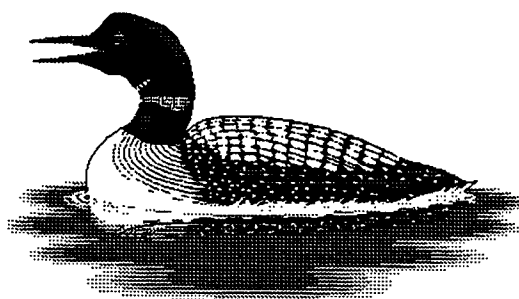
# Around the County...

by Mike Manetz

Birding this February was not quite as breathtaking as it was in January. Of course, it's hard to top the likes of the Ruff, Winter Wrens (several), Brown Creeper, and Black-headed Gull, all of last month's fame, but there was room for a few new surprises. In addition, our local breeding birds started to show signs of amorous intent by singing and becoming a little more territorial, and the earliest neo-tropical breeders began arriving. You may have noticed our domestic Northern Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, and others have commenced their dawn melodies after a winter of vocal obscurity. Lyn Badger called Jan. 30 to report **Purple Martins** returning to her martin houses on Kanapaha Prairie, and several people had seen **Northern Parulas** by the last week of February. Notable also were several very early reports of **Great-crested Flycatchers** around town, but winter birds still continued to capture most of the attention during the month.

Most interesting was a report of what Bill and Michele Lever believed to be a **Western Tanager** visiting their birdbath near Lake Elizabeth Feb. 28. From their description it sounded like a winter-plumaged male. Unfortunately the bird made no second appearances. Dot Fagan had noted a probable *selasphorus* hummingbird in her yard as early as November, along with another hummer that she described as being bigger than the *selasphorus*. Unfortunately the identity of the second bird remains a mystery.

**White-crowned Sparrows** were in short supply early this winter, but checking Feb. 12 along Cone's Dike, I found 3 of them. The following day at LaChua trail, I encountered another 10 White-crowns, (8 immature, chaperoned by 2 adults) feeding on the trail at the base of the slope. **Lincoln's Sparrows** had also been largely absent this winter, but Rex Rowan and Andy Kratter ended the drought Feb. 19 by finding one on an obscure portion of the prairie basin, along with an **American Redstart** and yet another **Wilson's Warbler**. Both warbler species are normally quite rare here in winter, but for some reason an extraordinary number of Wilson's Warblers have shown up in the county this year. Another great find was uncovered by Bryant Roberts and the Alachua Audubon birding class Feb. 20 at the Hague Dairy. There they encountered not one, but two **Painted Buntings**, one of which was an adult male. Painted Buntings, while expected in small numbers during spring and fall migration, are also very rare here in winter.



I did not hear of any unusual waterfowl reports during the month, but I spent a frigid morning Feb. 5 on a dock at Earleton looking over Santa Fe Lake scanning for loons and grebes. I found several candidates in both departments, but between the distance, wind, and glare, I had to give it up. The following weekend I checked again and was rewarded by a relatively close view of 13 **Common Loons** and 16 **Horned Grebes**. Interestingly, both species was segregated into two separate rafts, with very few other species anywhere on the lake.

Shorebirds continued to attract attention along the shores on Newnans Lake. Plenty of **Least Sandpipers**, both species of **Yellowlegs** in good numbers, plus **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Dunlins**, **Western Sandpipers**, the **Ruff**, and the **Avocet** all continued to be seen through at least the middle of the month. Remember, Feb. 28 is the county early date for migrating **Pectoral Sandpipers**. If conditions at the lake stay more or less constant through March, we could be looking at huge shorebird concentrations by April.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through February 23, 2000.

## Put this April 8 field trip on your calendar:

➔ **Saturday, April 8, 7:30 a.m.**

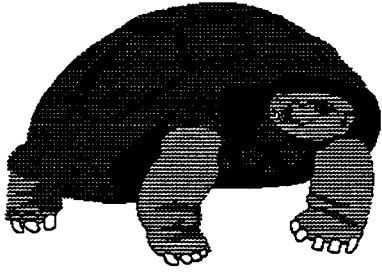
### **San Felasco Hammock State Preserve**

Meet at the Hunters Crossing Publix (NW 43<sup>rd</sup> Street & NW 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue) to carpool; this will keep the small San Felasco parking lot from getting too crowded and prevent everyone having to pay the \$2 parking fee. Craig Parenteau will lead this half-day walk through the fresh spring green of this deep deciduous forest. Our summer birds should be returning—Summer Tanager, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireos, Great Crested Flycatcher – and we've been known to find a migrant or two on this trip as well.

# Someone Pinch Me

by David O'Neill

No, it's not a dream. There are crews out on Paynes Prairie actually building an ecopassage on U.S. 441. I even touched one of the new wildlife underpasses. They're real.



For those who may not be familiar with the long-standing tragedy that spurred the creation of the Paynes Prairie Ecopassage, the two-mile section of U.S. 441 that crosses Paynes Prairie holds the infamous distinction as the deadliest road in Florida for wildlife. Roadkill reports span virtually the entire history of the road and include mass slaughters of hundreds, even thousands, of animals in a night. Most of the victims are frogs, snakes, and turtles, a slaughter that has continued day and night for more than seventy years. That should all change in a few short months.

## The Paynes Prairie

Ecopassage will be the first in Florida built especially for small- and medium-sized animals, which on Paynes Prairie encompass ninety-nine percent of the fatalities. Florida's other ecopassages have been built for large mammals, specifically panthers and bears. The Paynes Prairie Ecopassage will be like a scaled down version designed for a wide variety of smaller animals. It differs from the panther and bear passages not only in size but in scope. By designing the ecopassage for scores of different kinds of animals, the ecopassage should provide community-wide protection for Paynes Prairie's wildlife.

Funding for the project is from the Florida Department of Transportation. In trying to identify a money source for the project, the FDOT redefined their wetland mitigation fund so that it could be used for a wider variety of environmental projects. The establishment of this new fund, the Ecosystem Management Fund, is an important change because it creates a recurring resource that can be used for future ecopassages around the state.

The ecopassage will consist of a series of eight wildlife underpasses connected to a set of four-foot-high guide-walls. The top of the guide-walls will be installed at road level so they will not trap animals on the highway or obstruct the prairie view. The ecopassage is expected to divert animals away from the road surface to safe passage beneath the highway. The system will serve as a model for future ecopassages across the state, and, with the potential for use by dozens of species, has national significance in the continuing efforts to reduce the negative impacts of roads on wildlife populations and ecosystems. Of course for all of us who cherish the prairie, the best part will come when the ecopassage is finished and we can take a walk to our favorite spot knowing that Paynes Prairie State Preserve is now better preserving the treasure of Paynes Prairie. My personal thanks to all who have supported this project.

## Welcome Back Songbird Festival

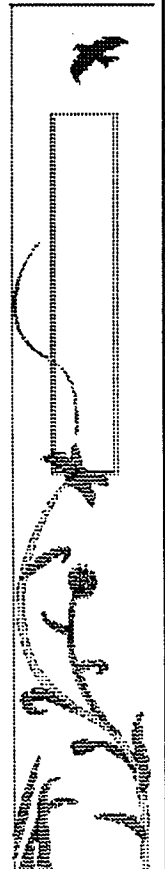
On April 15, join the Wekiwa Wilderness Trust and Orange Audubon Society at Wekiwa Springs State Park for the 3rd annual Welcome Back Songbirds Festival. This event will introduce nonbirders, particularly kids, to the fun of birding.

The festival will be held at the Youth Camp at Wekiwa Springs State Park from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come early for best birding on the expert-led walks. Mist-netting and bird-banding will be demonstrated by participants in the longest running bird banding research project in Florida. Kids and adults can build wooden bird nest boxes to take home. Kids can also make bird feeders out of recycled materials to take home along with a little bag of bird seed.

Talks include basic bird identification, bird migration for beginners, ask the expert and birding by ear, make your yard friendly for wildlife, and songbird rehabilitation. Bird games for kids and a bird calling contest complete the activities. Environmental groups will sell wildlife food plants, T-shirts, books, and refreshments. Cost of the festival is only \$4 per car park admission (those with annual passes enter free).

For more information, call the park at (407) 884-2000 or e-mail [green@ao.net](mailto:green@ao.net).

-Deborah Green  
(407) 869-7762



## March 2000 is Audubon Month!

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*Governor and Cabinet proclaim March 2000 "Audubon Month" as Audubon of Florida kicks off a century of conservation.*

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Floridians are proud of their environmental wealth. From the country's first National Wildlife Refuge at Pelican Island in the Indian River Lagoon, to Everglades protection, to the recent "Forever Florida" constitutional amendment, Audubon has set precedents for the rest of the nation.

But Florida's environment has also been a battleground, from stopping the slaughter of birds for feathers to supply the fashion industry at the turn of the century to modern day Everglades restoration. Throughout the past century, the Florida Audubon Society has been the active voice of conservation in the state. Working together with its nationwide counterpart, National Audubon Society, FAS has been involved in nearly every significant conservation victory in Florida since the Society's founding on March 2, 1900. In November 1999, the two organizations merged their staff and operations in a strategic alliance to form "Audubon of Florida," further strengthening Audubon's role in the major conservation issues facing the state.

To recognize Audubon's 100 years of leadership in protecting and conserving natural resources in Florida, the Governor and Cabinet proclaimed the month of March 2000 "Audubon Month" in a celebration at the Capitol. The event marks the kick-off for Audubon's centennial celebrations.

Education Commissioner Tom Gallagher, sponsor of the resolution, recognized the longtime contribution that Audubon of Florida has made in preserving Florida's wildlife and engaging people in the discovery of its special places. "Since 1900, Audubon has been known as the "voice of conservation" in Florida and has helped its citizens learn about and appreciate the state's native habitats and wildlife," says Commissioner Gallagher. "It is an honor for me to present this resolution today, saluting Audubon of Florida for a century of conservation work, and establishing March as Audubon Month in the State of Florida."

Governor Bush also recognized the organization. "Audubon of Florida is to be commended for their commitment to preserving and protecting our precious natural resources for the enjoyment of

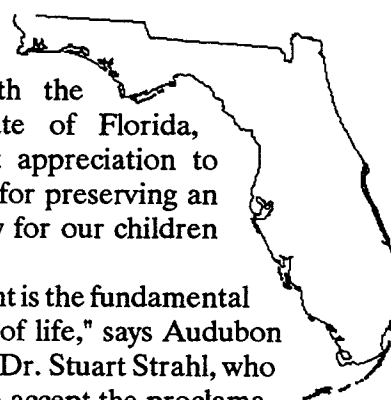
future generations," says Governor Bush. "I, along with the citizens of the state of Florida, extend our heartfelt appreciation to Audubon of Florida for preserving an environmental legacy for our children and grandchildren."

"The environment is the fundamental basis for our quality of life," says Audubon of Florida President, Dr. Stuart Strahl, who was in Tallahassee to accept the proclamation on behalf of the organization. "Audubon begins its second century in Florida with the mission of creating a "culture of conservation" throughout the state. To ensure that our natural wonders are preserved for future generations to enjoy, we must emphasize the inherent value of Florida's ecological heritage as a fundamental component of public consciousness."

Audubon of Florida is proud of its 100-year history and has been nationally recognized for its outstanding conservation and education programs and science-based policy initiatives that have demonstrated a positive influence in ecosystem restoration efforts. "Together with our statewide network of 45 grassroots chapters and eight regional offices from Tallahassee to the Keys, Audubon of Florida offers a compelling record of past accomplishments and is uniquely poised to carry Florida through its next century," says Strahl.

As part of our March celebrations, Audubon of Florida will hold its first-ever statewide Birdathon 2000 on Friday, March 24. That day, Audubon staff, board members, chapters and friends will spend a day counting as many bird species as possible to raise the funds necessary to do our important work.

For additional information on how to join in on Audubon's statewide birdathon, contact Larry Thompson at (850) 222-2473 or e-mail [lthompson@audubon.org](mailto:lthompson@audubon.org).



### An Irish Blessing

*May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face.  
May rains fall soft upon your fields...*



## Tree Girl

In the red and green of asphalt days  
The children roamed free in summer time  
From twilight far into night, they played  
At Kick the Can, Fox and Hounds, and Keep Away.

Boundaries drawn by mile-far stop lights,  
The luring lake and the trolley tracks.  
All ages ran, curfewed only by fatigue.  
Echoes of their voices in Wisteria-laden  
Air, shouts and calls between the teams  
Told all neighbors where they were.

Grownups sat on porch swings, pared  
Ripe peaches, cored apples, snapped beans  
To fill Mason jars, or formed crescents on the lawns,  
Savored salt-flecked Persimmon or Buttermilk Ice  
Cream.

Among the pack, a tardy-gaited girl  
Lagged behind, wondered at those aimless games.  
By day she celebrated childhood in treetops,  
In the thickets of her memory a query:  
Was she mislaid, misplaced among people  
So alien, she chose the community of trees?

Scented Mimosa, fringed pink-yellow clusters,  
Sensitive plant whose leaves close at touch or dark,  
And branches spread generously to welcome  
The dreamer or the poetry reader.

The Chinaberry tree with its flattened limbs,  
Many forks for a tree girl to perch in.  
One leap and a swing of lanky brown legs  
She gained the sturdiness of this tranquil tree.  
Against the advice of the Chinaberry, she leaped  
Three perilous feet, high into the tall Wild Cherry.

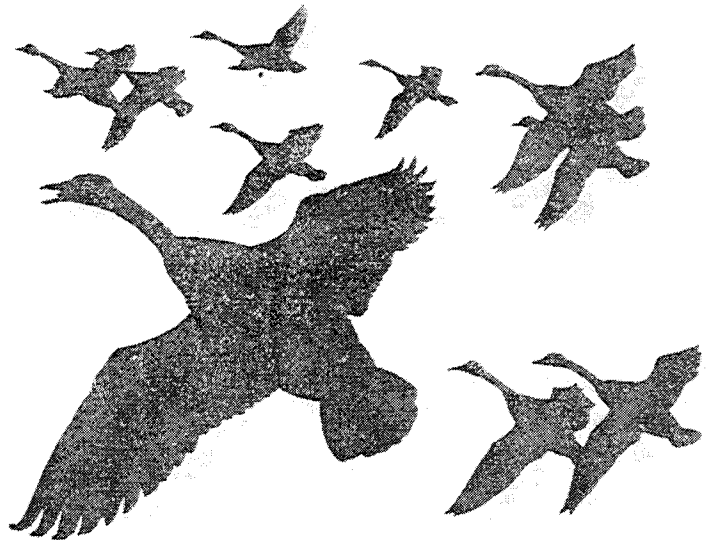
Up the slender spiral with a chill constricted  
Heart, to higher branches where the wind knows  
No predictions. She tasted purple berries and learned  
Of thrill-wind and wanton risk of no direction.

It was there in trees that she saw human vistas.  
But the gloom of Magnolia, the resin barked Pine,  
Convinced the tree girl to settle for willow greens  
Floating over water, in the community of trees.

- Charlotte Perry Dickerson  
1932 - 1995

## Welcome to New AAS Members

Robert Bateman	Henry Bireline
Tina & Gregg Branna	Elise Brodeur
Karen Brown	Nancy Buergelt
A. Hocker Bush	A. D. Champagne
Thelma Crenshaw	Venus Drummond
Wes Fredericks	Ruth Fugmann
Jerome Gold	R. Gordon
Annie Hildebrand	Daniel Hindery
Gregory Jones	Cathy Justis
Rick Keller	Neely Lambert
Jared Miller	Donald Peters
Lila Pittman	Dorothy Polley
Brett Presnell	Mark Prynosi
Jill Reed	Maralee Romfh
Kat Smith	Audra Strahl
Edna Talmor	Richard VanDenBosch
Gil Whitton	Scott Woodruff



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Visit AAS Web Site:  
<http://www.fimnh.ufl.edu/aud>



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Birding Classes.....Kathy Haines 372-8942  
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Alachua Audubon Society  
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Permit No. 18

# The Crane

March 2000



## Join Audubon

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.

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