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Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 42 Number 1 💠 August/September 2000

The Great Florida **Birding Trail**

-- first program meeting of the year --

Julie Brashears, Birding Trail Coordinator for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will be our speaker. The meeting is September 30 and begins at 2:00 p.m.

in the Millhopper Branch Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street.

The Great Florida Birding Trail will eventually extend throughout Florida, identifying outstanding birding sites. The trail will enable

Florida birders and out-of-state visitors to follow a route taking them to the state's best birding sites.

The first section of the trail is nearly complete. This section comprises 18 counties in northeast Florida and will be officially opened at this year's Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival. Highway signs bearing the Trail's Swallow-tailed Kite design will mark the sites. There will be special maps and later a guidebook.

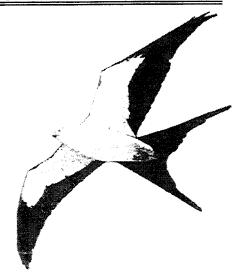
> The next section of the Trail will include Alachua County. Site nominations will be open from September 1 to January 15, 2001. Anyone can nominate a site. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the Birding Trail website (www .floridabirdingtrail.com) or obtained from Julie at the program.

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

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- Special Insert - Fall Field Trips and Programs Listing --



It's up to you.

Get Involved!

Join Us on These AAS Field Trips Saturday, September 9, 7:30 a.m. Palm Point and Lakeshore Drive

Meet trip leader John Winn at Powers Park, on SR-20 (Hawthorne Road) about four and a half miles east of Waldo Road (at the south end of Newnans Lake). Early warblers will be the aim of fall's first field trip to our best migrant hotspot. We always hope for the glamour birds which pass through at this time, like Cerulean and Golden-winged Warblers, but there ought to be plenty of other things to look at, such as Veeries, Blue-winged, Yellow, and Black-and-white Warblers. American Redstarts, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. The trip involves a mile or two of walking, depending on how far we go down Lakeshore Drive. It should be over by lunchtime. Bring insect repellent and something to drink.

North American Migration Count Saturday, September 16

Experienced birders call Mike Manetz at 377-1683.

Saturday, September 23, 8:00 a.m. San Felasco Hammock State Preserve

We'll carpool from the parking lot of the Hunter's Crossing Publix, corner of NW 43rd Street and NW 53rd Avenue. This will save the \$2 fee and prevent crowding in the preserve parking lot. Trip leader Bob Simons was instrumental in the state's acquisition of San Felasco thirty years ago and is the best imaginable guide to it, expert in trees and wildflowers (plenty ought to be in bloom) as well as birds. Expect Ovenbirds, Veeries, Worm-eating and Hooded Warblers, and, if we're lucky, Kentucky and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and Swainson's and Graycheeked Thrushes. This will be another walk of a mile or two. Remember your water and your insect repellent.

Sunday, October 1, 7:30 a.m. Palm Point and Lakeshore Drive

The mix of migrants will have changed a bit since our first outing on September 9th. We'll have a diminished chance of seeing some species, like Yellow and Cerulean Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrushes, and an increased chance of seeing others, such as Scarlet Tanager, Tennessee, Magnolia, and Black-throated Green Warblers, Indigo (and, rarely, Painted) Buntings, and all the thrushes. This is the peak of fall migration, and if there's pleasant fall weather it ought to be an outstanding morning. Meet trip leader Mike Manetz at Powers Park (directions above). Bring something to drink and some insect repellent. If it's raining, bring a poncho and come anyways; rainy weather often forces the migrants down in droves.

The Crane is published monthly throughout the year except the summer months. 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. All checks for subscriptions should be mailed to Membership Chairman; see back page for name and address. Submissions to The Crane are welcomed. Please limit each article to no more than two pages. E-mail to evperry@aol.com. Mail your disk or hard copy to Evelyn Perry, 9419 SW 67th Drive, Gainesville 32608. Telephone 371-2917. The Crane is printed on recycled paper.

Deadline for articles for the October issue of *The Crane* is September 20.



Wednesday, September 13, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be at Buchholz High School. Enter at the front door and proceed to designated meeting room Board meetings are open to all Audubon members and the public.

Native Plant Sale This Month

Friday, Sept. 15 - 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. for members only*
Saturday, Sept. 16 - 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Morningside Nature Center 3540 E. University Avenue

A large selection of Florida native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers will be available from local nurseries.

Sponsored by Friends of Morningside and Paynes Prairie Chapter of Native Plant Society

*can join on the spot if you come Friday

Nature, in her blind search for life, has filled every possible cranny of the earth with some sort of fantastic creature.

- Joseph Wood Krutch American Critic and Naturalist

Around the County. . .

by Mike Manetz

newcomer to our area or are a new member of Alachua Audubon, the purpose of this column is to report and discuss rare, unusual, or otherwise interesting bird observations within our county. I will also try to keep the reader informed about the best bird finding sites and what birds to look for as the seasons change through the year. To become better acquainted with bird life and birdwatching in our area please plan to attend some of the many great field trips and programs offered by our chapter. If you are interested in getting started in birdwatching, try the classes offered through Santa Fe Community College's Community Education Program and taught by expert members of Alachua Audubon. If you are an experienced birder, we invite you to participate in our Spring and Fall Migration Counts and our annual Christmas Count. As a matter of fact, this year's annual Fall Migration Count is scheduled for Saturday, September 16. Skilled and knowedgeable birders are needed, so please give me a call at 377-1683 if you are interested in participating.

Welcome to another year of bird-

ing in Alachua County. If you are a

It may still feel like summer, but as far as the birds are concerned fall migration has been underway for quite some time. Louisiana Waterthrushes, Yellow, Black and White, and Prairie Warblers as well as American Redstarts were all accounted for by the first week of August; at the middle of the month, Kentucky and Cerulean Warblers had also been tallied. By the time you receive this issue of The Crane, Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers will likely have been reported as well. As fall progresses, our assortment of migrants will subtly change. In early September watch for arriving Veerys, Black-throated Blue, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, and Blackburnian Warblers. By that same time the chances of seeing Louisiana Waterthrush and Cerulean Warbler will diminish to about zero. In October you can start looking for Swainson's and Gray-cheeked (rare) Thrushes and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and you will also have a window of opportunity to see Black-throated Green and Bay-breasted Warblers.

The three most productive spots for finding some of these migrants are Palm Point Park and adjacent Lakeshore Drive along the west side of Newnan's Lake, Bolen Bluff Trail off Hwy. 441 just south of Payne's Prairie basin, and San Felasco Hammock (fee) along Millhopper Road just before it crosses the Interstate. Another good place in the northwest part of the county that often goes overlooked in the fall is Poe Springs Park. Poe Springs has a nature trail that winds through bottomland and deciduous forest adjacent to the

Santa Fe River. It has consistently been good for Scarlet Tanager, thrushes, and a variety of migrant warblers, especially ground loving birds such as Kentucky Warbler, Ovenbird, and both species of waterthrushes. The park has an admission fee, but that entitles you to a swim in the spring after a morning of birding if you so desire. To reach Poe Springs drive north on Hwy 441 to High Springs, go left on U.S. 41 through town, then right on CR 340 (Poe Springs Road).

Newnan's Lake, which has provided some of the most exciting local birding in memory, continues to attract migrating shorebirds. By the first week of August twelve species had been seen, including Short-billed Dowitcher, Western, Semipalmated, and Stilt Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalaropes, and Semipalmated Plovers, all locally rare birds, as well as Roseate Spoonbills and large numbers of our more common waders. While most of the lake shore has become impossibly overgrown with vegetation, the route through Gumroot Swamp has remained both open and productive. It's not a walk for the casual birder, but if you want to see shorebirds in quantity, it's the only game in town. And as fall migration continues, just about anything could show up. Recall that over the last year something in the neighborhood of twenty-five species of shorebirds were recorded, including several never seen previously in the county. To reach this magic spot drive east on NW 39th Avenue (SR 222) to SR 26 and turn right. Then turn left again almost immediately into the parking lot for Gumroot Swamp. From there walk into the park past the picnic tables and shelter, looking for "Otter Trail." This trail will take you along the right bank of Little Hatchet Creek (watch for waterthrush and other warblers along the way). Don't cross the Arch bridges; stay to the right bank. When you emerge from the swamp, follow the creek bed left through head-high dog-fennel and make your way toward the lake. Continue following the lakeshore left for about a half-mile, looking for gulls, terns, and shorebirds along the way. Eventually you will reach the pilings of an old dock. From there continue another quarter-mile where you will find mud-flats and, hopefully, lots of shorebirds. Two cautions: first, realize that if we get a lot of rain in middle to late August, mud flats will cease to exist and shorebirds will leave; second: this walk is through dense vegetation with lots of heat, mosquitos, midges etc. and is not for the faint-hearted. You may want to bring water; and mark your trail as it might be easy to miss the entrance to Little Hatchet Creek on your return. Good luck, and maybe I'll see you out there.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through August 15, 2000.

Birding in Southeast Arizona

by Rebecca Odom

I could hear the sleepy twittering of birds as I headed up the canyon trail in the chilly dawn of this mid-May morning. I had left the Bed and Breakfast Inn at Ramsey Canyon at 5:30 in hopes of seeing my first Elegant Trogon.

A female trogon was reportedly nesting in a woodpecker's abandoned cavity in one of several huge sycamore trees growing beside Ramsey Creek. I sat quietly on a bench placed beside the Leopard Frog pond beneath the sycamores, scanning each tree with my binoculars, when around 6:30 I heard, several yards down the trail, an unusual bird-call that sounded a bit like a turkey poults.

Walking slowly back down the trail I spotted, barely 30-feet from where I was standing, a beautiful male trogon

perched in a tree just below the trail. I held my breath; I was mesmerized by this gorgeous emerald-green, large (12.6 inches) bird. Its watchful black eyes were circled by a red ring, and a narrow white band separated its emerald-green throat from its rose-red breast. Its long, squared-off tail was intricately patterned on the underside and looked as if the tip had been dipped in black paint. Elegant eloquently defined the beauty of this exotic-looking, tropical *Trogonidae* Family member.

It was a visiting birder's dream come true to be able to briefly encounter this rare, solitary, colorful migrant from Mexico and Central America, and the seconds ticked away too quickly as the trogon flew up into the rugged hills above the trail, still calling to its mate.

Later that same morning, I saw Acorn and Strickland's Woodpeckers, Gray-breasted Jays, a Hammond's Flycatcher, Bridled Titmice that were nesting in a hole in one of the sycamores, and a White-breasted Nuthatch that crept up-and-down the bark of a small oak tree beside the trail. Goulds Wild Turkeys were gobbling all over the place.

Flitting among the leafy canopy of the sycamore, oak, and hackberry trees were Painted Redstarts, Wilson's, Townsend's and Yellow Warblers, a Scott's Oriole and Hepatic, Summer and Western Tanagers. Black-headed Grosbeaks were also observed.

As the morning began to grow hot, I headed back down the canyon to the Ramsey Canyon Inn, which is managed by the Nature Conservancy, where I had reservations for two nights.

My afternoon was spent watching the territorial antics of Broad-billed, Blue-throated, Magnificent, Black-chinned, Anna's, Costa's and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds as they darted to-and-fro, sipping nectar from conveniently placed feeders near the gift shop patio. These little hummers also made frequent forays to the Mexican locust trees that were laden with pink blossoms and are abundant here.

The next morning I drove to the San Pedro River located about twenty-miles east of Ramsey Canyon. The very essence of this landscape, its watercourse flowing between green cottonwoods and willows snakes along in sharp contrast to the starkness of the surrounding desert.

Choosing as my vantage point an old unused span of bridge above the river, I watched a Common Yellowthroat dart through underbrush at the river's edge. The flight of a Black Phoebe attracted my attention as it dipped down to skim the surface of the water, then flew to a nearby

willow. A flash of bright red alerted me to the presence of the bird I anticipated seeing in this area. A Vermilion Flycatcher had just landed on a strand of barbed-wire that was strung across the narrow river, which in most places is a dry riverbed.

I lingered in the solitude of a beautiful desert morning watching this striking little red and brown bird--so intent on fly-catching I heard no song--snatch an insect from the air and fly to a small mesquite tree...a dip in the river, then back to the wire appeared to be its foraging strategy.

Reluctantly, I had to leave this peaceful scene behind, and traveling over to Fort Huachuca near Sierra Vista, I was again rewarded with the sighting of a male trogon observing me from the limb of a large sycamore tree. Under his watchful gaze I felt I was an intruder; I left him. A Black-throated Gray and a Grace's Warbler made this short trip

worthwhile. As I departed this location a Greater Roadrunner skittered across the road in front of my car.

While visiting with friends in the Saddlebrook area in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains northwest of Tucson, I saw Lesser Goldfinches and House Finches at their feeders.

Curved-billed Thrashers, Northern Mockingbirds, Cactus and Rock Wrens are common to this area as are Gambel's Quail, White-winged Doves and Red-tailed Hawks. We were delighted one morning to discover a Long-eared Owl resting in a palo verde tree in their backyard.

As I seated myself in that "big bird" to fly back to Gainesville, I felt privileged to have seen, while on a week's visit, so many unusual and beautiful bird species that inhabit and migrate into these unique Southeastern Arizona regions.

The Dry Tortugas: a Safe Harbor in Need of Protection

by Alan Keitt

In late April of this year I sailed down to the Dry Tortugas with Ruth and our Yankeetown neighbor Tom for some serious birding. My boat, a 20 year old, 28

foot cat ketch, Diomedea, is named after the family of albatrosses, my totem bird. When I bought her 10 years ago, I had never seen an albatross, but they have always fascinated me as nonpareils of flight and masters of the wind.

The Dry Tortugas National Park is about 75 miles west southwest of Key West and 110 miles south southwest of Naples. We leave from Naples ahead of an oncoming cold front with thunder storms predicted for the next night. We have to motor most of the way in the light air to get across in good time. We dine on fresh-caught blue fish on the way. Af-ter a long night of powering, daylight reveals the wonderful turquoise waters of the open gulf. We know we are near the end of our journey when several foraging Sooty Terns stroke by.

We slide over the 3 foot bar into the anchorage beside giant Fort Jefferson, a wonderful 19th century relic that dominates the entire area. Frigate birds hang motionless over the fort like long tailed kites. That night, true to prediction, we are awakened by a fusillade of brilliant lightning followed close on by a monstrous thud of thunder as though we are under bombardment by some ancient Man o'War testing the fort's defenses. We are in the midst of a wicked bunch of thunder squalls which considerably rearrange the 25 or so boats in the anchorage. At 28 feet we are perhaps the smallest boat there, but our shallow draft allows us to dodge drifting boats and sneak right up to shore for some breathing room. After a night at anchor watch in horizontal rain and a huge pot of coffee, we stumble into our dinghy and set out toward the fort before the morning tour boats arrive. The Sooty Terns seem energized by the bad weather and are shrieking into our ears. We are only dimly aware of the bounty that awaits us.

Our discomfort last night was shared by the birds which hit the ground in profusion. I know we are in luck from the dozen or so Yellow-billed Cuckoos that are in the first tree at the entrance to the fort. We get an ovenbird and both waterthrushes in minutes. Warblers are everywhere including a Worm-eating Warbler held fast in the bill of a Warblereating Cattle Egret. This one did not live to see the home range. Cape May Warblers are all about; one, in spectacular breeding plumage is cupped in the large leaf of a Sea Grape, worthy of an Audubon painting and too close for binocs. All five swallows and Purple Martins are zooming in at eye level atop the ramparts of the fort. Chuck-will's-widows, like lumpy growths, are resting in the forks of the large Geiger tree. Orchard Orioles, Summer Tanagers and Blue Grosbeaks are in abundance. Hooded and Blue-winged Warblers are outside the fort in the little bit of the island that is not included in its perimeter. Bobolinks, Eastern Kingbirds, Redstarts,

Yellow and Palm Warblers add to the toll. On the green grass along with the Cattle Egrets, a Whimbrel seems to be watching the Merlin in the tree above. This is a moderate "fall out" of birds occasioned by the low pressure storm system.

Later we take the dinghy down both sides of Bush Key where some 100,000 Sooty Terns nest along with many Brown Noddys. A Peregrine stands watch over the hullabaloo. On the south side of the Key, a large raucous rookery of various egrets, Great Blues, White Ibis, Frigate Birds, Brown Pelicans and Cormorants clutter the mangroves. We miss the Brown Booby, and the Black Noddy on this trip, but find the Masked Boobies nesting on Hospital Key on our way home. They remind me of the many gannets that we saw on the way down from Yankeetown.

We spend two splendid clear days snorkeling on the clean reefs north of Loggerhead Key a couple of miles west of the fort. The reefs appear pristine, and we see none of the whitening that is so prevalent in the reefs along the inner Keys. We have to be extremely careful to place our small anchors by hand and to avoid damaging these reefs. We are awarded with good views of many reef dwellers.

The Dry Tortugas National Park is a priceless gem. There is now under consideration the establishment of a 185 square mile "no-take zone" within the boundaries of the Park. This proposal was developed by a Tortugas Working Group comprised of local commercial and sport fishermen, conservationists, divers, resource managers, scientists etc. It was unanimously endorsed by all parties and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. It would essentially create a Tortugas Ecological Reserve within the Park. At the same time the National Park managers are preparing plans to deal with the explosion of visitors which has doubled to 60,000 per year in the past three years. Most of these come via the Key West Ferries, but the anchorage is a mecca for private craft (like mine) and discharges from these are also an increasing problem.

"No take" zones, i.e. absolute sanctuaries with no fishing of any kind, have tremendous potential to restore species to the entire Keys. The currents are such that larvae from the Tortugas can end up all the way to Biscayne Bay. There is good scientific verification for the rapid recovery of threatened

species in many areas of the world by setting aside such reserves. This proposal merits the careful attention and support of all Alachua Audubon members. I will be keeping track of ways to register support when state and federal agencies become involved. In the meantime I say go if (while) you can. If you see it you will treasure it.





It's time to send in your check to sponsor Audubon Adventures in Alachua County classrooms. If you've been a sponsor in past years, you know how rewarding sponsorship is (to you) and important this program is to students. For some, it's the first exposure they have to learning about the environment and wild birds and animals. Who knows? In one of the classrooms you sponsor, there may be a future ornithologist who one day can say, "I became interested in birds back in elementary school from a publication we got called Audubon Adventures."

Teachers who have used the materials request it year after year, and students really seem to like every issue, judging from the letters of appreciation they send to their sponsors.

The Audubon Adventures program is aimed at Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade classrooms. Each sponsored class receives 4 sets of newsletters, one for each student, crammed with information and activities. Also, there is a video and a teacher manual with additional information and activities on the topics.

Audubon members sponsored 52 classrooms last year—that's about 1,400 kids who received high-quality environmental education! We hope to at least reach that number or surpass it this year with your help! This is a tax-deductible contribution on your part.

If you need additional information, call Susan Sommerville at 378-2808.

Fill out the form below (or reproduce it) and mail it with your check for \$41 for each classroom you wish to sponsor. Do it now, as the order needs to go in to National Audubon Society by October 1. Thanks for your support!

Please make checks payable Alachua Audubon Society and mail to Susan Sommerville at 3756 NW 28th Place, Gainesville, FL 32605.

Name
Address
Telephone
No. of classes at \$41 each
Preference, if any, of school or teacher
Amount enclosed
You may list my name as a sponsor in The Crane.
Yes No

Our Annual Listing of Audubon Society "Vintage" Members

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30-35 years

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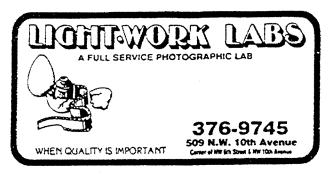
15-20 years

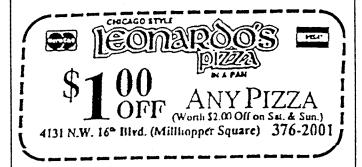
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	•	•
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Be a Sponsor of *The Crane*.

Call Evelyn Perry at 371-2917.

ALACHUA AUDUBON SOCIETY Please save this insert for future reference.

Fall 2000 Field Trips

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	MEETING PLACE	<u>LEADER</u>
Sat.	10/7	6:00	Guana River State Park falcons, migrants - D	Powers Park	John Hintermeister
Sun.	10/8	7:00	Ichetucknee Springs State Park - D	Talbot's	Craig Parenteau
Sat	10/14	8:00	Bolen Bluff Trail - B	Bolen Bluff Trail	Andy Kratter
Sat	10/28	7:30	Hague Dairy - blackbirds, pipits, sparrows - B	Tag agency	Mike Meisenburg
Sat.	11/4	6:30	Cedar Key - shorebirds, seabirds, migrants - D	Target	Bryant Roberts
Sat	11/11	8:00	La Chua Trail - B	District II Headquarters	Howard Adams
Sat	12/2	TBA	Zellwood - shorebirds, sparrows, flycatchers - D	Target	Mike Manetz
Sat.	12/9	6:30	Hamilton County mines:waterbirds - D	Tag agency	Jerry Krummrich
Sun.	12/17	All day	Christmas Bird Count		

ESTIMATED DURATION (from meeting place to destination and return)

A = 2-3 hours

B = 3-4 hours

C = 4-6 hours

D = 6 or more hours

MEETING PLACES

Bolen Bluff Trail: on US-441 4.3 miles south of SR-331 (Williston Road)

District II HQ: from University Avenue south on SE 15th Street; when the road curves left, go

straight down Camp Ranch Road

The Exchange Publix: NW 13th Street & NW 39th Avenue

Hunters Crossing Publix: NW 43rd Street & NW 53rd Street

Millhopper Branch Library: 3145 NW 43rd Street (south of NW 39th Avenue)

Palm Point: from SR-20 (Hawthorne Road), north on Lakeshore Drive (CR-329B) 1.5 mile

Powers Park: on Hawthorne Road (SR-20) 4.4 miles east of Waldo Road

St. Marks visitor center: from US-98 in Newport (Wakulla County), south on CR-59 to the visitor center

Tag agency: NW 34th Street (SR-121) just south of US-441

Talbot's: south side of West Newberry Road (SR 26)on top of the hill just east of I-75

Target: shopping center on Archer Road (SR-24) just east of I-75

Call SunDial birding line 335-3500 ext 2473 for last minute changes of meeting times and places.

2000-2001 Scheduled Program Meetings

DATE	PROGRAM	<u>SPEAKER</u>
October 21	"Grasshopper Sparrows in Florida"	Mike Delaney
November 18	"Black Bears in Florida"	Christine Small
January 20	"William Bartram Reenactment"	Greg Cunningham
February	TBA	
March 24	"Common Butterflies in Alachua County"	Mark Minno

March 24 "Common Butterflies in Alachua County" Mark Minno

Generally Program Meetings begin at 2 p.m. and are held at Millhopper or Tower Road Branch Library. Notice of any time or location change will be in *The Crane* or you can call SunDial.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR FIELD TRIPS AND PROGRAM MEETINGS! NON-MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

For year-round 24/7 AAS information on programs and field trips:

Call SunDial Bird Line: 335-3500, ext. BIRD (2473).

Visit AAS Web Site: http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud

Alachua Audubon Society P. O. Box 140464 Gainesville, FL 32614-0464 Nonprofit Organization U. S. Postage Paid Gainesville, FL 32601 Permit No. 18

The Crane	
September 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.

NEW MEMBERS ONLY

NOT FOR RENEWALS

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please print.

Name			Telephone		
Address				Apt	
City		State	ZIP		
	Please check l	evel of membership.			
Ba	sic \$35S	enior \$15	Student \$15		
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	TW	O YEARS \$30			