



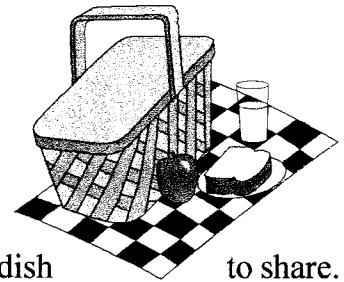
# The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 42 Number 7 ❖ April 2001

## Come to the Picnic

Wednesday, April 25, 6 p.m.  
Kanapaha Park



The park is at the corner of SW 75<sup>th</sup> Street and 41<sup>st</sup> Place. It is also sometimes called Veteran's Memorial Park. Bring your choice of a covered dish to share. AAS provides drinks, plates, and eating utensils. There will be a very brief meeting and election of board members and officers. Most of the time is spent talking about birds and eating good food. We'll have a drawing for two field guides - *Birds of North America* by Kenn Kaufman - from new members joining from a special issue of *The Crane* at the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival last month.

Chapman's Pond, a good birding spot, is located near the park. There may be a field trip to it before the picnic, but at time of printing, details had not been completed. Call SunDial (335-3500, ext. BIRD) for late news on that possibility.

## Field Trips → You're Invited

**Saturday, April 14, 6:30 a.m.**

### Cedar Key

Meet in the parking lot of the Target store on Archer Road just east of I-75. John Winn will lead this trip to North-Central Florida's spring migration hotspot. Warblers, tanagers, thrushes, and swallows should be moving through. We'll also look for three locally-resident birds we don't see in Gainesville, the Florida Scrub-Jay (always iffy), the Gray Kingbird, and the Seaside Sparrow. Bring sunscreen, water, and something to eat - or stay afterwards to lunch at one of Cedar Key's seafood restaurants.

**Saturday, April 21, 6:30 a.m.**

### Hugenot Park and Ft. George Island

If you've never seen a Painted Bunting, this is the trip to go on. Meet trip leader John Hintermister in the parking lot of the Exchange Publix at NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. At Hugenot Park, where the St.



Johns River meets the Atlantic, we'll look for shorebirds, gulls, and terns, all of which should be in splendid breeding plumage. Just down the street is Ft. George Island, an excellent location for spring migrant warblers such as the Cape May and the Blackpoll, and a prime nesting ground for Painted Buntings. Expect to do a fair amount of walking along the bayfront at Hugenot Park, and remember your sunscreen and your water. We should be back in Gainesville by mid- to late afternoon.

**Saturday, April 28, 6:30 a.m.**

### Cedar Key

Meet in the parking lot of the Target store on Archer Road just east of I-75. Since different species migrate at different times, and since migration is heavier some days than others, we may see a different batch of birds from those on the 14<sup>th</sup>. In fact, variety and numbers average slightly higher in late April. Bobolinks are more likely and more of the shorebirds will be in their often-spectacular breeding plumage. Remember your sunscreen.

No Board Meeting in April - picnic instead

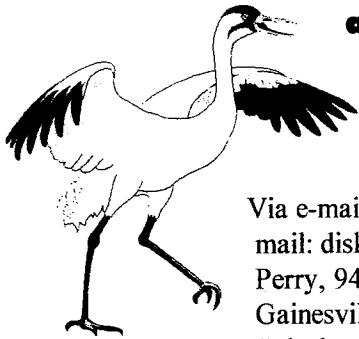
## Last Field Trip 'til August:

Saturday, May 5, 8:00 a.m.

### Bolen Bluff Trail

Meet trip leader Michael Meisenburg at the Bolen Bluff Trail parking lot, on US-441 just south of the Paynes Prairie basin (4.3 miles south of SR-331). There should be a few migrants lingering in the area, but we'll be looking for Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, Orchard Orioles, and Yellow-breasted Chats, all of which nest on the Prairie basin. The walk will be anywhere from two to three miles round-trip. Bring sunscreen and water. Expect to be finished by lunchtime.

Deadline for  
articles for the  
May issue of  
*The Crane* is  
April 30.



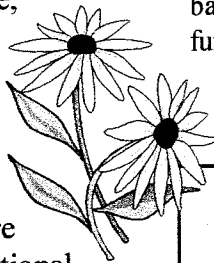
Via e-mail: [evperry@aol.com](mailto:evperry@aol.com). Via mail: disk or hard copy to Evelyn Perry, 9419 SW 67th Drive, Gainesville 32608. Telephone 371-2917.

*The Crane* is published monthly throughout the year except during 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.

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

## Plant Sale - April 21

The annual spring Native Plant Sale, co-sponsored by Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and Friends of Morningside will be held, one day only, April 21. Location is Morningside Nature Center. Hours are 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. There will be nature walks, children's activities and educational exhibits.



## A River Runs Through It

by Michael Meisenburg

An environmental issue that has come up in recent times is that of dam removal. Around the country, environmentalists have been working to get dams removed from waterways after the structures have exceeded their useful lifespan. These defunct dams alter waters in many ways and often change what usually are low nutrient, high oxygen flowing waters into higher nutrient and lower oxygen reservoirs. The resulting fish and invertebrate community can be very different, but one group that is often affected the most are anadromous fishes. These fish, such as salmon, spend their lives in salt water and migrate up streams and rivers to spawn. Fish ladders around the dams may look good, but many fish cannot use them and suffer population declines. While we in north Florida do not have any spawning salmon to worry about, we do have a defunct dam that has taken its toll on manatees.

Kirkpatrick Dam is located on the Ocklawaha River and was built in the late 1960's for the Cross Florida Barge Canal, which never materialized. What did materialize is the semi-bass fishing mecca known as Rodman Reservoir in a relatively poor section of the state. A fight to remove the dam has been going on for many years now, and for years was led by the late Marjorie Carr, the widow of UF's famous herpetologist Archie Carr. Despite the fact that the cost of upkeep outweighs the cost of removal, former Senator George Kirkpatrick worked hard to ensure that the dam remained in place. At present, the line has been drawn, and our politicians have stated which side they stand on. Governor Bush wants the dam removed, but local Representative Rod Smith favors keeping it. Representative Smith's beliefs, however, go beyond merely keeping the dam in place. He and Senate Majority leader Jim King added into this year's budget a park, boat ramp, and fish hatchery for Rodman Reservoir, all for the tidy sum of \$1.6 million. If they are successful, they will ensure the dam's future for a long time. But alas, it doesn't stop there.

A large part of Rodman Reservoir and Kirkpatrick Dam are on Ocala National Forest property, and the U.S. Forest Service wants the dam removed. In a report released March 30, they stated that it is the best option. The public has until June 29 to make comments on the report, and I am sure many bass fishermen from Putnam County will be doing so. For further information, contact George Hemingway with the U.S. Forest Service at (850) 942-9364. You can also contact Representative Rod Smith's local office at 955-2081 or in Tallahassee at (850) 487-5020.

**It's Up to You - Get Involved!**

# Watch the Birdie

by Rex Rowan

In the crown of a tree somewhere in the Amazon basin is a little bird, and a few seconds ago a switch was



flipped in his little brain. Yesterday he thought only of his next meal. But now he feels something new. Now he needs to be elsewhere. He has remained contentedly in this patch of forest since he arrived here in October. Now, fluttering from tree to tree, he crosses its boundary and begins

moving north. It is a long journey ahead of him, and by the strangest of coincidences its goal is a tree in your very own back yard. There will come a morning in the middle of April when you'll walk out the front door on your way to work, and if you take a moment to listen, you will hear that same little bird singing.

But that will be weeks from now. Today he is still in the rainforest. He will work his way north, one of a million birds swarming up the continent like a rising tide. He will fly at night – because hawks do not – a hundred miles at a stretch. He will eat ravenously during the day to fuel the wings that must carry him three thousand miles. Along the foot of the Andes he'll go, up through Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica ... to Yucatan, that massive peninsula on Mexico's southeastern shore. Here he will spend a few days in the jungle, storing up energy for the most dramatic and daring event of his odyssey. He will make his leisurely way to the coast, and then, one evening, just after the sun goes down, he will point his beak at Florida, six hundred miles away across the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico ... and he will start flying.

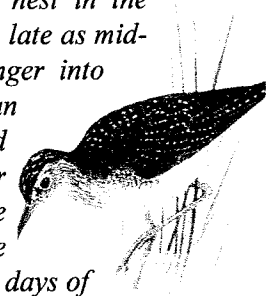
One of the most mind-boggling things you will ever see, if you are of a certain turn of mind, is a radar readout of this event. At first there are a few dots off the coast. Then there are more dots, and more, and within an hour after

sunset you find yourself gaping at an enormous bright patch – a cloud of birds, millions of birds, all attempting one long jump across the Gulf of Mexico.

Those that survive make the Florida coast any time between mid-morning and mid-afternoon of the following day, and if the weather is fair, most will fly another fifty miles inland. But not all survive. Some haven't stored enough fuel, and as exhaustion sets in they sink closer and closer to the waves, and finally they dip too low and don't come up again. If the weather is bad even healthy birds may die by the thousands, struggling against strong headwinds, pelted by rain.

Your bird will be lucky this year. He'll have a tailwind, he'll have enough to eat – or if not, he'll find a fishing boat to land on, where he can rest for a little while before continuing on his way. In the end, he'll make it. From two hundred feet overhead he'll see your yard, and he'll circle down and land in his particular tree. When you walk out the front door the next morning he'll be singing. Stop and listen. Grant him a few moments of wonder.

*As a rule, most species that nest in Florida migrate earlier, arriving here between mid-March and early April, while those nesting farther north pass through later, between mid-April and early May. Latest of all are the sandpipers, many of which nest in the Arctic; they are often common as late as mid-May and a few occasionally linger into June. Thus spring migration is an extended affair; when all is said and done it can stretch across four months. However at this latitude there is a definite peak during the last half of April and the first few days of May, and were you to spend a single day in looking for spring migrants, that would be the best time to do it.*



**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>***

## Please Note:

Occasionally when the SunDial system is backed up, you may not be able to get an answer. Please try again; don't give up on it. Eventually you'll be able to get through and hear John Winn's voice with all the latest AAS happenings.

*"It is always sunrise somewhere;  
the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is  
forever falling; vapor is forever rising."*

- John Muir (1838-1914)

# Around the County. . .

by Mike Manetz



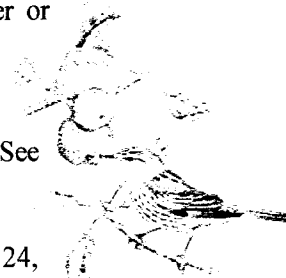
As early spring rolled along, most of our neotropical breeding birds were filtering back to our area after their long winter stay with our Latin neighbors to the south; new arrivals were recorded almost daily through March. By the middle of the month Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were showing up at feeders, and by the following week Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, Barn and Rough-winged Swallows, Chimney Swifts, Solitary Sandpipers, Hooded Warblers, and the true migrant Louisiana Waterthrush had all been tallied more or less right on time. Extra early was the Prairie Warbler reported near Alachua March 9 by Chuck Graham, and the Prothonotary Warbler heard singing the same day at Camp Canal by Howard Adams, which represented a new early record in the County for that species.

All the above mentioned birds are expected here in the spring. Very unexpected was the appearance of a light-morph Short-tailed Hawk in the J.J. Finley neighborhood. Short-tails are rarely seen here, and there is no breeding record for the species in the county. Ornithologist David Steadman first spotted the Finley bird February 23, and saw it several more times through the middle of March. Whether or not this bird was intent on establishing a breeding territory in the heart of Gainesville remains to be seen. If you live in the area please keep an eye out, as it should be relatively easy to locate a nest in an urban area. Recall that we had our first suspected breeding attempt only a year ago, as a radio-tagged dark-morph Short-tailed Hawk spent the summer north of town along NW 156th Ave. That bird has apparently not returned.

There were some interesting winter birds still hanging around. The Ash-throated Flycatcher seen at the head of LaChua trail back in December was relocated by Bryant Roberts on February 13. The Pine Siskins in Linda Hensley's yard were still present on March 12, and one individual Siskin visited Barbara Muschlit's feeders March 2. Andy Kratter found a very late Fox Sparrow March 10, while leading an Audubon field trip along Cone's Dike. At least one Lincoln's Sparrow had been present at the Dairy since early fall. I encountered it there again on March 11. A curious pair of Painted Bunting sightings occurred February 24, one reported at Lake Alice by Rex Rowan, and the other at the Dairy by Scott Duncan. Painted Buntings are considered very rare here in winter, so to have two here on the same day is a noteworthy coincidence. Small numbers of Painted Buntings pass through our area as migrants in the spring, but usually not until after the beginning of April.

By the time you get your hands on this issue of *The Crane* several more of our neotropicals will have arrived. For instance, keep your eyes and ears open for the likes of Great-crested Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, and Mississippi Kite. As we move toward the middle of April start looking for the true transients: birds that merely pass through the county on their way to their northern breeding grounds. Relatively easy to find will be Cape May, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Blue Warblers, and Bobolink. Lake Alice is a spot where you could see all of these on a good day. Perhaps you will be lucky enough to see one of our rarer spring migrants, such as Black-throated Green Warbler or Rose-breasted Grosbeak, or the rarest of the rare: a Connecticut Warbler. One shows up here almost every spring in early May. See you out there.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through March 24, 2001.



## NEW AAS MEMBERS

Claudia Barrett	Gene Beardsley
Heidi Bissell	Audrey Blanton
Kristen Brauer	M/M Christopher Braun
Brant Bushnell	Pam Censer
Charlotte Chadik	Patrick Colahan
Diane Forkel	Juanita Frazier
Helen Gastiger	Elaine Tabone Hanna
Hazel Hardy	Erin Holder
Jessica Hovanec	Dr/Mrs Roy Lambert
Chuck Lane	Stephany Mahaffey
Glenn Mans	John D. Martin
Elizabeth L. McCoy	Clara McGregor
Lisa Modola	Dollie Newton
O.C. Olson	David Reed
James Rester	Lori Rice
Amanda Schwab	Polly Smith
Benjamin Tench	Rick/Gina Thames
John Townsend	Roselie Tucker
Adrienne Turner	Peter J. Urruela
Kaye Walker	C.E. Whitney
Richard H. Wright	

## Migration from Your Computer

Noel Wamer in Jacksonville has found a terrific web site from which you can see migrating birds.

If it's a clear night in South Florida, check out this address shortly after dark:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/radar/latest/DS.p19r0/si.kbyx.shtml>

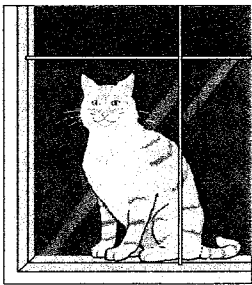
and click on the Reflectivity Loop for ten consecutive images.

What you will see are the Doppler radar reflections caused by migrants taking off from Cuba and crossing the Florida Straights.

It's very impressive.

## Cats, Wildlife, and You

by David Wahl



Over the past several years, Alachua Audubon has been particularly concerned with the issue of cats and wildlife. Ecologists and wildlife specialists have been surprised by recent studies documenting the impact of domestic and free-roaming cats upon native small wildlife (birds, mam-

mals, reptiles). Nationwide, cats are estimated to kill hundreds of millions of birds and more than a billion small mammals, such as rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, and shrews each year. Cats kill not only plentiful animals, but also rare and endangered species for which the loss of even one animal is significant.

There are over 66 million pet cats in the United States. A recent poll shows approximately 35% are kept exclusively indoors, leaving more than 40 million owned cats free to kill birds and other wildlife, all or part of the time. In addition, millions of stray and feral cats roam our cities, suburbs, farmlands, and natural areas. These cats are victims of human irresponsibility through owner abandonment and the failure to neuter pets. No one knows how many homeless cats there are in the United States, but estimates range from 40 to 60 million. These creatures lead short, miserable lives.

Cats are *not* a natural part of ecosystems. Cats were first domesticated in Egypt over 4,000 years ago and were introduced to North America when Europeans arrived on this continent. Some people presume that a cat killing certain animals, such as field mice, is beneficial, but native small mammals are important to maintaining biologically diverse ecosystems. For example, mice and shrews are an important food source for birds such as the Great Horned Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel.

What can *YOU* do as a responsible pet owner?

- ▶ For the sake of your cat and local wildlife, keep your cat indoors. Confinement will eliminate unwanted repro-

duction, predation on wild animals, and the spread of disease. Cats who roam free often lead short and painful lives, living on average less than five years, whereas indoor cats often live to more than 17 years of age.

- ▶ Keep only as many cats as you can feed or care for.
- ▶ Neuter your cats or prevent them from breeding, and encourage others to do so.
- ▶ Locate bird feeders in sites that do not provide cover for cats to wait in ambush for birds.
- ▶ Don't feed stray cats. Feeding strays maintains high densities of cats that kill and compete with native wildlife populations. Maintenance of colonies of free ranging cats benefits no one. The cats suffer from disease and physical injury; native wildlife suffers from predation and competition, and colonies can be a source of disease for animals and humans. Some well-meaning but misinformed people advocate "managing" colonies of stray cats as a way to reduce or eliminate the problem. There are few data to substantiate such claims.

For further information on cats and wildlife, check out the American Bird Conservancy's "Cats Indoors!" web site and [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org), or write them at 1250 24<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20037

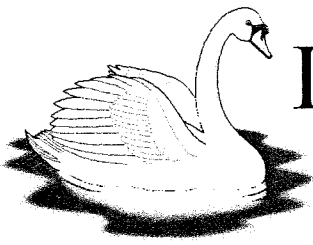
## Survey Volunteers Needed

A new group called FAVOR, Friends and Volunteers of Refuges, Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys, is helping the refuge with bird surveys this spring and invites any Alachua Audubon Society members who would like to help to join them. They will be start the week of April 15 and go through June 9.

The surveying can be done weekdays or weekends. Volunteers should know bird calls since the birds will be difficult to see. Since there are a lot of spots to cover, plenty of people are needed! If interested, contact Joan Stephens or Lyne Askins at the Refuge (352) 493-0238 or e-mail [jstep624@cs.com](mailto:jstep624@cs.com).

# The Business Birder: Blown Ashore at Cape Cod

by John Ennis



It was an ill wind of commerce that blew the Business Birder ashore at Cape Cod (maybe I should say 'trade wind' or, in the current parlance, 'e-trade wind'. Yuk, Yuk, Yuk!). The

last weekend in April was too early for many returning migrants; however, when you are a business birder, you have to take advantage of every opportunity you can, regardless of season and conditions. Besides, it was a chance to stay in a wonderful inn on Cape Cod, which has a great restaurant. Even their room service is superb.

My firm is headquartered in Norwell, twenty or so miles south of Boston, on the way to Cape Cod. I flew into Boston (<http://www.the.big.dig.is.two.thirds.complete.com>), drove out to the Cape, and began birding in the Sandwich area.

I started my trip at Brady's Island Sandwich Conservation Commission Sanctuary. About all I found there was the Marshland Restaurant across 6A, where I had a good breakfast.

I then proceeded to the old fish hatchery, about 5 miles east of the new fish hatchery which is just outside Sandwich on Route 6A. The entrance is to the right, across from the Jeep dealership and before you cross the bridge. There are no signs. This spot also includes an abandoned state game farm. A great birding site.

Everywhere I saw signs that I thought were promoting civic organizations in different towns. I finally realized that these rotaries were not about promoting their civic clubs. A rotary is (ta da!) a traffic circle.

A little strange, however, you have to expect that sometimes from people of the Northern persuasion. After all, people of the Northern persuasion have provided the South with our scariest ride. No, not in Orlando! I am talking about Miami cab rides. Cab drivers who have retired from New York City move to Miami, and if they have the slightest bit of eyesight left, they are automatically approved for their license.

My research for the trip focused mainly on *Birding Cape Cod*, compiled by the Cape Cod Bird Club and the Massachusetts Audubon Society (1990), with illustrations by Barry Van Dusen and great maps by Janet Heywood and a pamphlet, *The Birds of Sandwich and Barnstable on Cape Cod Bay*, by R. Pease (1984), which is probably out of print. Also, I have found the Cape Cod National Seashore map published by The National Geographic Society to be of great help in locating good birding spots. It can be purchased at the Salt Pond Visitor Center, which is just outside of Eastham on Route 6, three miles before you get to the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.

The area around Salt pond offers, in addition to the library and book store, bicycle trails, the Nauset marsh Trail, Nauset Light beach, and the Coast Guard station. The scrubs around trails leading away from the beach parking lot looked like promising sites for birding during migrations. I shall return.

I found 37 species at various sites on this day including: Mute Swan, Osprey, White-throated Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, American Black Duck, Snowy Egret, Barn Swallow, Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Merganser, White-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, Kestrel, Common Loon, Red-tailed Hawk, Kingfisher, Phoebe, and Brant.

My adventure extended to the Wellfleet Sanctuary, and I returned through Chatham down to Dennis and West Yarmouth via Rt. 28. One stop I highly recommend is at the Bird Watcher's General Store (<http://www.birdwatchersgeneralstore.com>), 36 Rt. 6A, Orleans.

If you go to the Cape, the place to stay is the Dan'l Webster Inn ([www.danlwebsterinn.com](http://www.danlwebsterinn.com)) at Sandwich, MA, (508) 888-3622. It is a bed-and-breakfast and a little expensive but worth it because of the quaintness. It is about one hour from Logan airport on a Sunday afternoon. And did I mention the food?

Somehow I never saw Common Eiders. I forgot to visit the Cape Cod Canal. But as the plane took off, I looked down and could swear that I saw a raft of Eiders. Or maybe it was just some flotsam or jetsam from the Big Dig.

\*\*\*

*The author, John Ennis, is a full time healthcare consultant and a part time birder, who wishes that it were the other way around. He lives in the Wilmington, NC area. An average birder by any measurement, he has been known to count plastic pink Flamingos and Gray Squirrel Warblers when desperate.*

## Slate of Officers and Board Members

The following AAS members have been nominated and will be voted on at the annual picnic April 25. Nominations from the floor are also accepted.

### Slate of board members for terms ending in 2004:

- Karen Johnson   ■ Marcy Jones   ■ Maralee Romfh
- Susan Sommerville   ■ Alice Tyler

### Slate of officers for next year:

- President - Scott Flamand   ■ Vice-President - TBA
- Secretary - David Wahl   ■ Treasurer - Alice Tyler

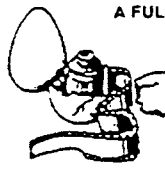
## Alachua Audubon Society Officers and Chairpersons of Standing Committees - 2000-2001

President.....Alan Keitt 495-9938	Programs.....John Winn 468-1669	Publicity.....TBA
President Ex Officio.....Rex Rowan 371-9296	Field Trips.....Karen Johnson 376-9090	<i>The Crane</i> Editor.....Evelyn Perry 371-2917
Vice-President.....Scott Flamand 331-0035	Education.....Susan Sommerville 378-2808	<i>Crane</i> Circulation.....Margaret Green 378-3314
Secretary.....David Wahl 336-6206	Conservation.....Michael Meisenburg 495-1791	Assisting in <i>The Crane</i> circulation duties:
Treasurer.....John Winn 468-1669	Birding Classes.....Kathy Haines 372-8942	Alice Tyler, Pat Burns, Nancy Oaks.
Membership.....Paul Moler 495-9419	Festivals.....Scott Flamand 331-0035	

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(352) 546-3560 nights

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Tours leave from Shell Mound near Cedar Key  
Tel: 352-373-6047 or toll free 877-wildway

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Gainesville, Florida 32614-0464

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Permit No. 18

# The Crane

April 2001



## Join Audubon

To join Audubon on 3 levels (National, Florida, and Alachua County), fill in this application and mail to:  
Paul Moler, 7818 Highway 346, Archer, Florida 32618.

Check the type 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 type of membership:

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic \$35      \_\_\_\_\_ Senior \$15      \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$15

\_\_\_\_\_ **INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP \$20**

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