



The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 43 Number 1 ❖ August/September 2001

~ Birding at Palm Point Is Always Special ~

As I write this in early August, all across the eastern U.S. Louisiana Waterthrushes have been packing their bags, checking that the gas is turned off, and heading south for the winter. By the time you read this in early September, most of them will have already been through Gainesville and other Florida stopping places. But following close behind will be a dozen or so of their warbler cousins, including American Redstarts, Black and White Warblers, Yellow Warblers, Blue-winged Warblers, Ovenbirds, Worm-eating Warblers, Prairie Warblers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, and maybe even Cerulean Warblers. With any luck, we'll see some of them on this year's first field trip to Newnan's Lake and Palm Point on September 8.

Sat., Sept. 8
7:30 a.m.
Trip Leader:
John Winn

I've been going on Alachua Audubon field trips to Newnan's Lake for thirty-something years now, and it's interesting to see the changes that have occurred over time. The most dramatic one, of course, is the most recent, as the lake levels have dropped in the past few years. What is also interesting is how our approach to this field trip has changed.

In years past, we'd gather at some spot, such as the end of East University Avenue on the western shore of the lake where we'll meet this year. We'd drive past the settled area and the now-defunct fish camp, park our cars, and walk for a mile or so along Lakeshore Drive. When we'd reach what is now the city park at Palm Point, first-time participants would be amused by the sign posted by the then-owner advising that he was armed, dangerous, and ready to shoot trespassers on sight. The sign indicated that he would be present on the property for only three days of the week, implying that anyone so inclined could get away with any nefarious crimes against the unnamed owner's property on the other four days. But, as the sign also advised, he wasn't giving out which were the three days he'd be patrolling.

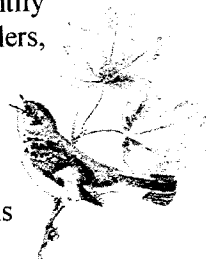
That sign is long-gone, replaced now with signs of other cautionary natures. The good news is, and has been for about ten years, that we have access to Palm Point, arguably one of

the best spots in Florida for seeing fall migrants. So now we don't waste a lot of time in heading straight for the park and walking out the short path under the tall trees. On a good day, it can take an hour or more to go the several hundred yards to the point, with many stops to look up at birds flitting through the high branches or foraging in the tangled thickets. There are always also lots of butterflies and wildflowers, so it's a nice walk. At the end, at the point, things get very different. That used to be where we'd search for both waterthrushes at the lake's edge. Last year, right after the lake had dropped so much during the spring and summer, there were vast mudflats which had attracted shorebirds previously unrecorded in Alachua County. Now those mudflats have all grown up in tall vegetation, and the mix of birds has changed. It'll be interesting to see what we find this year.

Years ago, when we didn't have access to Palm Point itself, one of the best spots along our walk was known as "the willows." We'd reach it just before coming to the threatening signs which, in those days, we pretty much used as the turn around spot for the walk back to the cars. The willows was a low, wet spot with dense vegetation, but few big trees. It always seemed to be alive with birds, and they were right at eye-level. The attraction for the birds must have been lots of insects to eat. It's grown up quite a bit now, and these days must be pretty dry, so that it's probably not producing as many insects, but it's still worth a shot.

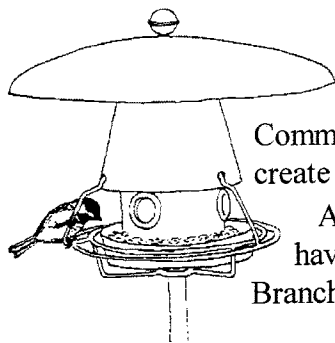
If you've never been on an Alachua Audubon field trip, we always say this is a good one for beginning birders. There are almost always lots of birds, as well as experienced birders willing to help you out in learning to identify them. In early fall, in addition to the warblers, some especially colorful birds we might see are Indigo Bunting and Summer Tanager or an early Scarlet Tanager. Bald Eagles are fairly common around Newnan's Lake, and there are numerous wading birds, so this can be a good trip with lots of variety.

- John Winn



Join us at the first program meeting of the year to learn

How to Create a Backyard Habitat for Birds



On September 22 at 2 p.m. Ron Robinson will speak on various aspects of attracting birds to your backyard. He'll cover topics like landscaping, feeders, water features, and more!

Ron is not only an avid birdwatcher and volunteer teacher for the AAS/SFCC Community Education Birdwatching Classes but also has many years' experience helping people create an ideal habitat for attracting our feathered friends.

At our program meetings, there's *very little* "meeting." We mostly talk about birds we may have recently seen and enjoy listening to the speaker. The program will be at the Tower Road Branch Public Library (3020 SW 75th Street). Light refreshments will be served.

Join us; you don't have to be a member of AAS to attend!

Field Trips: → *You're Invited*

Saturday, September 8, 7:30 a.m.

Palm Point and Lakeshore Drive

Meet trip leader John Winn at the parking lot where E. University Ave. dead ends at Newnan's Lake (5.1 miles east of University and Main). The target of this trip will be early warblers, such as Blue-winged, Yellow, Black-and-white, along with American Redstarts and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Plus, there's always a chance we could get lucky with something like a Cerulean or Golden-winged. In addition to looking around Palm Point Park, we will make an easy walk of a mile or two along Lakeshore Drive. This trip will be done by lunchtime. Bring insect repellent and something to drink.

Saturday, September 22, 8:00 a.m.

San Felasco Hammock

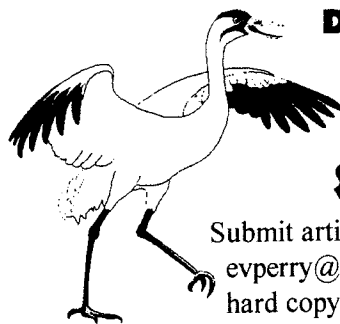
We'll carpool from the parking lot of Talbot Elementary School near NW 43rd Street and NW 53rd Avenue. This will save the \$2 fee and prevent crowding in the preserve parking lot. Ron Robinson will lead us on this trip where we can expect Ovenbirds, Veeries, Worm-eating and Hooded Warblers. Other possibilities include Kentucky and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes. Bring water and insect repellent for this 1-2 mile easy walk.

Saturday, October 6, 6:00 a.m.

Guana River State Park

Meet trip leader John Hintermeister at 6 a.m. at Powers Park on SR-20 (Hawthorne Road) about four-and-a-half miles east of Waldo Road. Our first stop will be the Volano Beach boat ramp where we will look for shore birds and waders, and then we will go on to the hawk platform at Guana river State park. We'll spend some time there with the peregrine falcon

counters who maintain a vigil during a couple of weeks each fall and with any luck see some falcons ourselves as they head down the beach on their migration route. We'll then go into Guana River State Park and look for thrushes, tanagers, migrating warblers, and the like. The officially led part of this trip will end around noon, in time to go to lunch at one of the local beach communities. If it is more convenient for you to meet at the Volano Beach boat ramp at 8 a.m., it is located on A1A before you cross the bridge into Volano Beach on the right hand side of the road. Let John know you'll be meeting us there (462-1109).



**Deadline for articles
for the Oct./Nov.
issue of *The Crane*
September 19**

Submit articles via e-mail to
evperry@aol.com. Via mail: disk or
hard copy to Evelyn Perry, 9419 SW
67th Drive, Gainesville 32608.

The Crane is published bimonthly throughout the year. 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 AA S dues. Non-Audubon members may subscribe to *The Crane* for \$8 annually. All checks for subscriptions or changes of address should be mailed to Paul Moler, Membership Chairman; see back page for address. Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. Please limit each article to no more than two pages.

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

Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 12
6:30 p.m.

Meeting place is Room 2-001 at Buchholz High School. Board meetings are open to all Audubon members and the public.



As environmentalists we often try to solve human/nature problems through the top-down approach of government regulation, but once in a while the situation arises when we can work on a problem from the bottom using our power as consumers.

In an example of this, I have been seeing ads for shade coffee, the environmentally correct version of that tannin-rich lifeblood of graduate students everywhere. While newer varieties are not shade tolerant and grow in vast fields of a coffee monoculture, shade coffee gets its name from the way that it is grown--in a traditional setting as a forest understory plant, and because this treed overstory in combination with the dense coffee bushes provides a decent habitat for wintering birds, conscientious birders can choose shade-grown coffee.

For many species, habitat disturbances are tolerated more on wintering than on breeding grounds, and the northern Latin America coffee growing region stretching from Columbia to Mexico, including several Caribbean islands, is where most neotropical migrants spend the winter. Ten years ago, there were approximately 6.6 million acres in this region devoted to coffee production, and this is unfortunate because coffee has no nutritional value--a lot of land was devoted to growing a crop that we do not need. Presumably, with the 90's boom of Starbucks and other coffeehouses, that figure is much larger today.

We can use the power of our pocketbooks to buy coffee that is grown in a way that does not compromise our beliefs. After all, what is the point of sitting out on our decks--watching some fall migrant foraging in a tree that we planted and getting the satisfaction of seeing how a bird is benefitting because of us--while drinking the morning's coffee, if having that coffee is responsible for the destruction of the habitat where that little creature is expecting to spend its winter? It is better to buy shade grown coffee, right? Maybe, maybe not. The world is rarely so black and white, and neither is this issue. Yields from full-sun plantations run about four times as much as those from shade plantations. So what's better?

Coffee's Effect on Birds

by Michael Meisenburg

As long as demand remains constant, is 20,000,000 acres of habitat semi-destroyed better than 5,000,000 acres more destroyed? While few birds forage in full-sun plantations, shaded plantations are utilized by North American migrants; unfortunately, however, many of the locally breeding species do not. So what about these nonmigratory species? For Central American and Caribbean birds, 5,000,000 acres is certainly preferable to 20,000,000 acres destroyed. Perhaps we're just biased to protecting "our" species; it is, after all, much easier for us to bond with the great-crested flycatcher that nests in our yards than some antpitta that most of us will never add to our lifelist. Which group is under more pressure--tropical or temperate breeders? I don't know. There is more, as well. Full-sun coffee requires more pesticide and fertilizer applications, and depletes the soil sooner.

Being an educated consumer and making responsible decisions is not easy, and knowing the full ramifications of each of our decisions is impossible, though we wish it were so. We Americans have an addiction to caffeine, and it is not an innocuous one, because while medical researchers cannot find any long-term negative health effects from it, there are ecological ones.

New AAS Members

Misty Alderman; Dixie Bates; Carolyn Baum; Rachel Bays; George & Inez Bickerstaff; Janell Brush; Jessie Caldwell; O.P. Cecil; Njeri Cleaveland; April Cliche; Chris Clore; Allison Cunningham; Stanley Dermott; Terhune Dickel; J.C. Dickinson; Douglas Dyer; Erin Easterling; Gail Edwards; Claude Fouse; Leslie Gaines; Robert Goad; Jacquelin Goldman; Elizabeth Harrer; Joseph Henderson, Jr.; Kathy Jensen; Ronald Klein; Pam Krause; Tyson Lee; Beverly Magee; C. Maldonado; J.E. Metcalfe; Martha Monroe; Edna Mulhearn; Dean Murphy; Loretta Patterson; Stacy Porvasnik; Paul Psychas; Shirley Roecker; Suzanne Rucker; Harriett Shea; Susan Silberman; Chaunette Small; Bernice Verne; Nancy L. Williams; David A. Wilson; Paul A. Wood.

Around the County...

by Mike Manetz

Welcome to another year of birding in Alachua County. Before we get into fall migration (which is well under way), let's catch up some of the more interesting local sightings from this past summer.

I am happy to report that we have resolved the status of Gray Catbird in the county. It is not unusual for Catbirds to be reported here during the summer; sometimes these reports involve nest-building and other breeding behaviors, but no evidence of successful nesting has ever been observed. This spring Dave Leonard noticed a pair of Catbirds lingering in his yard through late May, and on June 2 was able to report a nest containing eggs. Unfortunately that nest was cleaned out by predators, but the birds made a second attempt that produced the county's first confirmed Catbird fledglings.

Another first for the county was the summer appearance of a White-winged Dove in Rex Rowan's yard. White-wingeds have been observed here only a few times previous, with all sightings being outside of breeding season. Rex's bird, which exhibited no nesting behavior, could have been a stray from invasive White-winged Dove colonies that have recently established themselves in south Florida, or may have originated from out west where the bird is native. Either way, the species seems likely to be seen more frequently in Alachua County over the next several years.

As Newnans Lake finally began recharging itself with summer rains, most of the good shorebird habitat began to disappear; however, in late June and early July several Black-necked Stilts and two pair of American Avocets in breeding plumage were seen repeatedly along the lakeshore. No nesting activity was observed with either species, and when water levels began to rise, the birds disappeared. Tom Webber reported a fly-by Willet July 8 from Palm Point. The same day a Dowitcher was seen flying over the Windsor side of the lake. It's likely neither bird could find any kind of suitable shoreline and, like the Avocets and Stilts, had to move on.

Black-bellied Whistling Ducks seem to be doing quite well in our county after making their debut appearance here only a few years ago. Since the first confirmed nesting at Chapman's Pond only one year ago, they seem to be everywhere. Marcy Jones reported a remarkable high of twenty-eight of them July 6 at the Horse Unit on SW 56 Ave. They have also been seen on the Prairie Basin along La Chua trail, Newnans Lake, the Hague Dairy, and at Bob Wallace's property near Alachua. By the middle of August there were two confirmed breeding reports, each producing 14 chicks. One brood was spotted near Jonesville investigating a new swimming pool, and the other was in the vicinity of a nursery pond on Millhopper Road west of the interstate. Fulvous Whistling Ducks are closely

related to Black-bellies but are much rarer in our county. Michael Meisenburg found a pair of them in July at Newnans, but unfortunately they were not relocated.

Yellow-breasted Chats maintained their tenuous hold on the Prairie Basin. They were reported on the Spring Migration Count in a restricted portion of the north rim, and later in the summer there was a report of two along Cones Dike as well. John Hintermister and Craig Parenteau were happy to report Chats in the River Rise section at O'Leno State Park. This was a first record for that species at O'Leno. Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks seemed to have a good year with so much new habitat on Newnans exposed lake bed. I never did anything like a careful survey, but would not be surprised if as many as twenty pair of each nested around the lake this year.

Finally, Dave Beatty noted the presence of at least eight Monk Parakeets June 10 in the vicinity of Citizen's Field near Waldo Road and NE 8th Avenue. This was not the first report of Monks from that general area, though their appearances have been extremely fleeting and unpredictable. In light of the fact that breeding colonies of Monk Parakeets exist coastally as far north as St. Augustine, it seems remotely possible they could establish themselves in Gainesville if given a string of mild winters.

The first half of July always seems incredibly early for fall migration to be occurring, but apparently the birds don't agree. John Hintermister found a new early record Black-and-White Warbler July 7 during his regular census of River Rise. The following day I saw the first Louisiana Waterthrush of the fall through a veil of mosquitoes at Gum Root Swamp. The Dowitcher mentioned above was very early for that species, as was a Spotted Sandpiper reported July 14 from the Dairy.

Other migrants that made their first appearances by early August included American Redstart, Yellow, and Prairie Warblers. By the time you receive this issue of *The Crane*, Northern Waterthrushes, Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Kentucky, Cerulean, and Chestnut-sided Warblers will be passing through as well. Lakeshore Drive/Palm Point and the uplands at Bolen Bluff have, until last year, been the two best places in the county for fall migration, but with the drought and subsequent death of many water oaks and cypress, coupled with extensive logging along Lakeshore Drive, these spots may be temporarily played out. That does not mean they should be avoided. Many of the faithful will continue to lavish their attentions on these hallowed places where so many spectacular and even legendary fall warbler days have unfolded, and may yet again unfold. Two other spots that are



consistently rich during migration, yet are often overlooked, are River Rise State Park and Poe Springs Park. They are a little farther drive than other local spots, and Poe Springs charges a hefty entrance fee, but they can be worth it. Maybe see you out there.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through August 16, 2001.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

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 how 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. The titles for this year are: So Different, So Alike: The Diverse World of Mammals; They Call Us Cold-Blooded...about snakes, turtles and other reptiles; Who Needs a Backbone? about invertebrates; The Feather Factor, about birds, and all their variations.

Audubon members sponsored 38 classrooms last year—over 1,000 students 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.

Please complete the form at the top of the next column (or reproduce it) and mail it with your check for \$42 for each classroom you wish to sponsor. We'd like to receive it by September 29, as our order needs to go in to National Audubon Society so that there is no delay in getting the materials into the classrooms. Thanks for your support!

**Please make checks payable Alachua Audubon Society
and mail to Sue Hartman at 2107 SW 43rd Place,
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Telephone _____

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Amount enclosed _____

You may list my name as a sponsor in *The Crane*.

Yes _____ No _____

Spring North American Migration Count: Florida, Alachua Co. – 12 May 2001

Alachua County participated in the Spring NAMC for the 10th year that it has been held on the 2nd Saturday in May. That date is towards the tail end of Florida's migration, at least for passerines. However, migrating shore birds can be found later than passerines. With the continued shrinking of Newnans Lake, Alachua County has had a fair number of shore birds. Our only species new to the count was found by Judy Bryan, who had stopped when it rained in the late afternoon but then returned to Newnans and found a single Stilt Sandpiper. Shorebirds with new highs were Semipalmated Plover, and Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers. Most of the Semipalmated Plovers except 2 were found at Newnans, but Mike Manetz's team found one in a puddle as they walked the dry bed of the River Styx. The extended dry spell was undoubtedly responsible for the relatively low counts of egrets and herons; especially low were counts of Snowy Egrets and Green Herons.

I was pessimistic about finding many warblers Count Day, but 13 species of warblers were counted and record highs were set for Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, and Northern Waterthrush. For the former two, the new record was only slightly higher than the previous high, but the new high for the waterthrush was 10 more than previously. Most of those were found by Craig Parenteau and John Hintermister at Vinzant's Landing on the partially dried up Santa Fe River in O'Leno State Park. They also found 2 of the 4 Yellow-breasted Chats in the park; the other 2 were found on the basin of Paynes Prairie along Sweetwater Branch by Howard Adams and Linda Hensley. The basin team also counted 37 of the record number of Indigo Buntings. All 4 of the Limpkins were found at Lake Alice by Grace and Richard Kiltie. Construction had displaced the

Limpkins at Lake Alice for awhile, so it's good they are back. The Kilties also counted 11 Black-bellied Whistling Ducks as the ducks flew over Lake Alice. Although these ducks had been regular in the county through December, they had been in hiding since the first of this year.

We had a pleasant day to be out in the field. Temperature at dawn was 56°F, and by the time it warmed up some, we had a gentle breeze and increasing cloud cover. About 4 p.m.

some parts of the county had a trace of rain, and I actually drove through a downpour about that time.

In closing, I have organized and compiled this count for the 10 years of its existence. I don't plan to do that next year, and I hope someone else will want to take on the job. I will be glad to help anyone who is willing to do it. Please let me know if you are interested.

- Barbara P. Muschlitz, 352-372-4638 bmusch@aol.com

Observers: Team leaders in bold face:

Craig Parenteau, John Hintermister, **Barbara Muschlitz**, Alice Farkash, Dale Henderson, **John Winn**, Mary Lou Winn, **Katie Sieving**, Dave Wahl, Mary Landsman, John Davis, Tracy Feldman, **Judy Bryan**, Lloyd Davis, **Terry Taylor**, Linda Terry, Patti Orr, **Grace Kiltie**, Richard Kiltie, **Jim Weimer**, Bob Simons, John Martin, **Howard Adams**, Linda Hensley, **Michael Meisenburg**, Paul Sindelar, Maralee Romph, **Rex Rowan**, **Mike Manetz**, Ed Bonahue, Dotty Robbins

Bold-faced species is new to the count. Bold-faced numbers are new maxima. A **T** indicates tie with previous maximum.

Am. White Pelican	15	Least Sandpiper	170	Wood Thrush	4
Dbl-cr Cormorant	50	White-rumped Sandp.	2	Gray Catbird	4
Anhinga	8	Stilt Sandpiper	1	Northern Mockingbird	315
Great Blue Heron	40	Ring-billed Gull	14	Brown Thrasher	56
Great Egret	34	Gull sp.	1	Cedar Waxwing	314
Snowy Egret	9	Rock Dove	108	Loggerhead Shrike	41
Little Blue Heron	44	Eur. Collared Dove	34	European Starling	106
Tricolored Heron	2	Mourning Dove	289	White-eyed Vireo	173
Cattle Egret	909	Common Ground Dove	15	Ylw-throated Vireo	29
Green Heron	27	Ylw-billed Cuckoo	27	Red-eyed Vireo	79
Blk-cr Night-Heron	2	Barn Owl	1	Northern Parula	253
White Ibis	107	Eastern Screech Owl	3	Blk-thr Blue Warbler	21
Glossy Ibis	20	Great Horned Owl	5	Ylw-throated Warbler	31
Blk-bell Whist Duck	11	Burrowing Owl	2	Pine Warbler	57
Wood Duck	41	Barred Owl	17	Blackpoll Warbler	9
Mottled Duck	104	Common Nighthawk	8	Black&White Warbler	8
Black Vulture	38	Chuck-Will's-widow	25	American Redstart	108
Turkey Vulture	91	Chimney Swift	99	Prothonotary Warbler	11
Osprey	55	Ruby-throated H'bird	19	Ovenbird	3
Swallow-tailed Kite	3	Red-headed Woodp.	51	No. Waterthrush	17
Mississippi Kite	12	Red-bellied Woodp.	138	Common Yellowthroat	81
Bald Eagle	13	Downy Woodpecker	76	Hooded Warbler	14
Cooper's Hawk	2	Northern Flicker	6	Ylw-breasted Chat	4T
Red-shouldered Hawk	60	Pileated Woodpecker	49	Summer Tanager	122
Red-tailed Hawk	16	Eastern Wood Pewee	5	Northern Cardinal	450
American Kestrel	3	Acadian Flycatcher	28	Blue Grosbeak	18
Wild Turkey	28	Gt Crested Flycatcher	205	Indigo Bunting	57
Northern Bobwhite	30	Eastern Kingbird	7	Eastern Towhee	157
Purple Gallinule	6	Purple Martin	54	Bachman's Sparrow	1
Common Moorhen	74	Tree Swallow	4	Bobolink	1
American Coot	4	N Rough-wngd Swallow	17	Red-winged Blackbird	670
Limpkin	4	Barn Swallow	24	Eastern Meadowlark	41
Sandhill Crane	13	Blue Jay	145	Boat-tailed Grackle	400
Semipalmated Plover	152	American Crow	217	Common Grackle	172
Killdeer	11	Fish Crow	50	Brown-headed Cowbird	71
Black-necked Stilt	4	Crow sp.	101	Orchard Oriole	28
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	Carolina Chickadee	94	House Finch	54
Solitary Sandpiper	4	Tufted Titmouse	336	American Goldfinch	2
Spotted Sandpiper	2	Brwn-headed Nuthatch	2	House Sparrow	147
Sanderling	2	Carolina Wren	316		
Semipalmated Sandp.	258	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	105	Number of Species	121
Western Sandpiper	3	Eastern Bluebird	58	Number of Individuals	9359

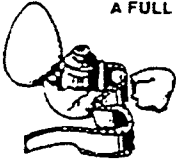
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The Crane

August/September 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.

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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**

_____ **TWO YEARS \$30**