

The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 44 Number 3 December 2002-January 2003

WINTER FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, November 23, 8:00 A.M.

Paynes Prairie, La Chua Trail

Meet at DEP District HQ: going east on University Avenue, cross Waldo Road, turn right onto SE 15th Street, and proceed 2.5 miles. When the road turns left, keep going straight across the 3-way intersection, through the gate, and down the road to the parking lot. *Be on time; when the ranger shuts the gate, there's no way in.* Howard Adams will lead this half-day walk onto the Paynes Prairie basin. The water levels have changed so much in the past few years in this area that we never know quite what will appear. Northern Harriers, Sedge Wrens, Palm Warblers, and Swamp, Song, and Savannah Sparrows are likely, but there's no telling what we'll find. The fun is in the looking, and there's nearly always a surprise at La Chua. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, December 8, 6:30 A.M.

Matanzas Inlet

Meet leader Bubba Scales at Powers Park on the north side of Hawthorne Road (SR-20), about 4.4 miles east of Waldo Road at 6:30 A.M. to carpool for this field trip. The jetty-less channels of Matanzas Inlet allow its features to shift and drift under the power of ocean waves and currents. The shores of Matanzas Inlet are dynamic and its sandbars are extensive. On this field trip, careful study of flocks of gulls and terns will expand your understanding of a notoriously difficult group of birds. All the while, you'll be scanning the skies for birds of prey and the nearshore waters for pelagic species such as Pomarine Jaeger, Parasitic Jaeger, and Northern Gannet. The limestone

outcroppings on the south side of the inlet are a fairly reliable location for Purple Sandpiper and the dune vegetation can host a number of wintering passerine birds. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, December 15

Gainesville Christmas Bird Count

Tuesday, December 17

Melrose Christmas Bird Count

Friday, December 27

Cedar Key Christmas Bird Count

Veteran birders are always welcome to participate in our area's three Christmas Bird Counts, and there's sometimes room also for birders with less experience. To join the Gainesville CBC, call the co-compiler, Craig Parenteau, at 472-2729. For Melrose, call Bill Bolte at 475-5804. The Cedar Key co-compiler is Dale Henderson at 453-5166.

Saturday-Sunday, January 11-12, 8:00 A.M.

St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge

Meet leader John Hintermister at the refuge visitor center at 8:00 A.M. on Saturday morning (going west on US-98, turn left onto CR-59 at Newport and continue to the pay station and the visitor center just beyond it). This trip is always one of the highlights of the year. In winter the refuge's impoundments provide food and shelter to a great number of ducks (10-15 species) and other water birds. We'll also look for a variety of sparrows and wrens and whatever else shows up. At the end of the day, you can either return home or stay over for more birding on Sunday. On the second day of this trip we usually focus on tracking down good birds in the Panhandle that have been seen out-

SunDial: R.I.P. Have you had difficulty lately getting through when calling the SunDial birding line for up-dates and changes for field trips? That's because the *Gainesville Sun* has discontinued the service. In addition to birding news, for nearly 10 years SunDial provided stock quotes, health tips, weather forecasts, and a variety of other information.

side the refuge, so we don't know exactly where we will be. If you're staying over, an inexpensive, albeit inelegant motel is the Oaks in Panacea (850-984-5370). Trip difficulty: 1

Saturday, January 18, 8:00 A.M.

Persimmon Point Sparrow Walk

This annual half-day trip is recommended for intermediate level birders, and involves a couple of miles of walking on an easy to moderate trail out to Persimmon Point. Last year we saw a variety of sparrows including Vesper, Savannah, Le Conte's, Grasshopper, and White-throated. Some years we also find Henslow's. This trip is limited to 10 people; you may make a reservation by calling Karen Johnson at 376-9090. The 10 folks on the list will need to meet at the District II Headquarters promptly at 8:00 A.M. as the gates will close when the field trip begins. Trip difficulty: 3

Saturday, January 25, 8:00 A.M.

Ft. Clinch/Hugenot Park

Meet promptly at 8:00 A.M. at the entrance to Ft. Clinch State Park in Fernandina Beach. We will look for a variety of gulls, shorebirds, raptors, and sea birds. Highlights of recent trips include Purple Sandpiper, Northern Gannet, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and even a Black-legged Kittiwake. Who knows what the winter winds will blow our way? The pier at Ft. Clinch can often be quite cold and windy, so dress accordingly. Bring a lunch and some water, as this trip will extend into late morning to early afternoon. Leader: Lloyd Davis. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, January 26, 8:00 A.M.

Chapman's Pond

We will explore several ponds in the Tower Road area on this half-day trip. We'll get to practice on our ducks, winter warblers, and sparrows. This is also a habitat that is changing as the bird-friendly plants in this area mature and also as GRU expands the shallow ponds that may attract waders and also shorebirds in the proper season. Chapman's Pond has been one of Ron Robinson's special interests, so meet him at the Home Depot on Tower Road about 0.3 miles south of Newberry Road. Trip difficulty: 1

Sunday, February 2, 6:00 A.M.

Ocklawaha Prairie and Sunnyhill Farms

Explore vestigial meanders of the Ocklawaha River in two little-known but resource rich St. Johns River Water Management District restoration projects in Marion County. The Ocklawaha Prairie and Sunnyhill Farms Conservation Areas, both old farms where expansive river marshes were

Monthly Board Meetings

The Alachua Audubon Society Board of Directors meets at 6:30 P.M. on the second Wednesday of each month. All members are welcome to attend. Meetings this year will be at the clubhouse for Mill Pond, 401 NW 48th Boulevard, across from Gainesville Health & Fitness Center on Newberry Road.

once turned into productive vegetable plantations, are slowly being turned back to nature. These properties are "under-birded," partially because so much great habitat is so far from public access points, but with special access privileges we will take a limited number of vehicles deep within. We'll work flocks of sparrows, wrens, and warblers while watching the skies for marauding raptors, including a "Kriider's" Red-tailed Hawk that has made the Ocklawaha Prairie its winter home for the last three years. This trip is a full day with a half-day option. Bring lunch, water, and insect repellent. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, February 9, 2:00 P.M.

"Birders on Wheels," Chapman's Pond

Please note: Volunteers needed on this field trip

Scott Flammand will be leading this trip targeted at physically challenged bird enthusiasts. We will expect to see ducks, waders, and winter warblers. Transportation via golf cart will be available for folks who need assistance getting to the top of the berm at Chapman's Pond. We also would like for Audubon members to volunteer to bring scopes and help provide personal attention to our guests. If you are willing to help, please call Scott Flammand (331-0035) or Karen Johnson (376-9090).

TRIP DIFFICULTY

- 1=Most of trip is within easy access to the car and/or walking on level ground of one mile or less.
- 2=Trip may involve walking on uneven ground over distances of 1-2 miles.
- 3=Trip may involve elevation change, uneven ground, and/or distances of greater than 2 miles.

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 AAS 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.

AROUND THE COUNTY...

by Bubba Scales

If change is a constant among birds, then anticipation is a constant among birders. This fall, however, most birders were left anticipating the changes in bird movements that can bring days of 15 warbler species sharing woods and field with other passerine migrants.

On September 21, most North American Migration Count participants reported a slow day, but the team of Grace and Richard Kiltie and Patty Orr observed an Olive-sided Flycatcher at the Lochloosa Wildlife Management Area. This sighting may, by some accounts, be the best bird of the fall. Other exciting finds during the count include three Barn Owls on Bolen Bluff and two Royal Terns and 14 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Newnans Lake.

Even in the first week of October, which is normally the peak of fall passerine movement, migration was painfully slow in Alachua County. In the conspicuous absence of large flocks of passerine migrants, there are several highlights to report. Rex Rowan and other birders on an Alachua Audubon field trip observed a Swainson's Warbler at Palm Point on October 6, only the tenth record for the county. Chuck Graham and Mike Manetz each observed a Black-billed Cuckoo this fall, the former near Burnetts Lake in Alachua on October 8 and the latter from Bolen Bluff on October 15. While on the subject of cuckoos, the unusually large number of Yellow-billeds bears mentioning. Pat Burns, Mary Landsman, and Michael Meisenburg counted at least 20 at Bolen Bluff on October 16 and Pat and Mary counted at least 16 there on October 27.

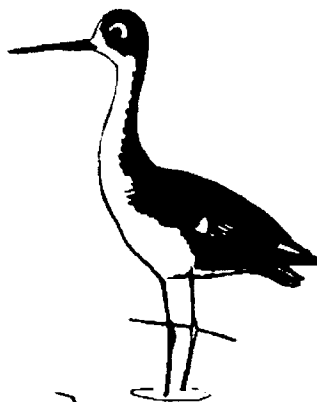
When a cold front pushed through the area in the second week of October, birding in Alachua County picked up for a few days. At Bolen Bluff, Mary Landsman and Pat Burns reported somewhere between 10 and 20 Chestnut-sided Warblers, 15 to 20 Magnolias, eight Bay-breasteds, and at least 20 American Redstarts.

An exceptional migration report comes

from Alachua on September 14, where Bob Wallace was privileged to observe two Philadelphia Vireos at very close range from his bedroom window. Bob reports that the birds were so busy foraging and at such close range that he didn't bother to retrieve his binoculars for a better view.

While surveying bird habitat along a newly marked trail system on St. Johns River Water Management District land on September 19 on the northeast side of Newnans Lake, I saw a juvenile Chipping Sparrow, Alachua County's second earliest fall record. The early record for this species, set just last September by John Hintermister, was also a juvenile bird.

With water levels continuing to creep back up around shoreline vegetation, shorebird sightings were few and far between this fall. Hague Dairy continued to produce modest numbers of the usual suspects but on October 19, Mike Manetz and the Santa Fe Community College birding class were fortunate to observe a Black-necked Stilt, Alachua County's first fall



record of this species. Shorebird conditions may be improving at Chapman's Pond where Scott Flamand reported a Dunlin among several other shorebird species on November 2.

Mixed flocks of wintering birds have settled into the area, bringing with them occasional noteworthy sightings that area birders should watch for as fall continues and winter moves in. Two such recent sightings include a Yellow-breasted Chat observed by Michael Meisenburg on October 31 at the UF Agronomy Station at Bivens Arm. He and Rex Rowan saw a Wilson's Warbler there on November 1.

Thanks to all who shared their sightings through November 2.

FALL MIGRATION COUNT

"Where were all the birds?" was a common refrain as I checked with team leaders after the Fall North American Migration Count on September 21. The week leading up to the count seemed promising, with several scouting parties reporting good numbers of migrants, including Golden-winged and Cerulean Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers. By the day of the count most of these birds had moved on, leaving some teams hard-pressed

to find common migrants such as Black-and-White Warblers and American Redstarts.

	Previous 4 year average	2002
Blue-winged Warbler	15	4
B&W Warbler	49	25
Am. Redstart	89	36
Ovenbird	134	83

Numbers of Thrushes seemed low as well, perhaps due to the drought's effect on favorite food sources such as Virginia Creeper and Mag-

nolia berries. Still, most teams had an enjoyable day in the field, and we had some interesting highlights.

Rex Rowan's team at Newnans Lake found 11 Fulvous Whistling Ducks. This is the highest number ever reported in the county, and a first for the fall count. Two other firsts were the White-winged Doves counted by Michael Meiseberg's team in Farms of Kanapaha, and the Rufous Hummingbird that has been gracing Ruth Palinek's yard. We had a high of four Barn Owls, three from the north rim of the Prairie and another at Bolen Bluff. I was curious to see if the West Nile Virus had any effect on Corvid population in the county, but the count revealed healthy numbers of both Crow species and Blue Jays. Another record high for the fall count was the number of participants, with at least fifty-three birders logging their time and energy. As always, thanks to all of you.

--Mike Manetz

Pied-billed Grebe 10	Mourning Dove 223	Eastern Bluebird 46
Dbl. Cr. Cormorant 39	White-winged Dove 30	Veery 23
Anhinga 12	Common Ground Dove 6	Swainson's Thrush 1
American Bittern 1	Yellow-billed Cuckoo 31	Gray Catbird 1
Great Blue Heron 37	Barn Owl 4	N. Mockingbird 243
Great Egret 43	Eastern Screech Owl 13	Brown Thrasher 36
Snowy Egret 65	Great Horned Owl 9	European Starling 187
Little Blue Heron 72	Barred Owl 24	Blue-winged Warbler 4
Tricolored Heron 20	Common Nighthawk 9	Tennessee Warbler 3
Cattle Egret 1116	Whip-poor-will 1	Northern Parula 143
Green Heron 10	Chuck-wills widow 2	Yellow Warbler 19
Blk-cr. Night Heron 8	Chimney Swift 841	Chestnut-sided Warbler 19
White Ibis 425	Ruby-throated Hummingbird 10	Magnolia Warbler 1
Glossy Ibis 40	Rufous Hummingbird 1	Black-thd. Blue Warbler 4
Wood Stork 34	Belted Kingfisher 4	Black-thd. Green Warbler 1
Fulvous Whistling Duck 11	Red-headed Woodpecker 46	Blackburnian Warbler 2
Black Bell Whistling Duck 31	Red-bellied Woodpecker 244	Yellow-throated Warbler 47
Wood Duck 23	Downy Woodpecker 186	Pine Warbler 35
Mottled Duck 21	Northern Flicker 12	Prairie Warbler 22
Blue-winged Teal 53	Pileated Woodpecker 88	Palm Warbler 4
Black Vulture 77	Olive-sided Flycatcher 1	B&W Warbler 25
Turkey Vulture 168	Eastern Wood-Pewee 9	American Redstart 36
Osprey 11	Acadian Flycatcher 41	Prothonotary Warbler 12
Northern Harrier 2	Empidonax sp. 8	Ovenbird 88
Bald Eagle 19	Eastern Phoebe 1	Northern Waterthrush 35
Cooper's Hawk 2	Great cr. Flycatcher 1	Louisiana Waterthrush 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 82	Loggerhead Shrike 23	Kentucky Warbler 3
Red-tailed Hawk 12	White-eyed Vireo 317	Common Yellowthroat 113
American Kestrel 11	Blue-headed Vireo 1	Hooded Warbler 6
Merlin 2	Yellow-throated Vireo 9	Summer Tanager 28
Wild Turkey 17	Red-eyed Vireo 141	Northern Cardinal 531
Northern Bobwhite 17	N. Rough-wd. Swallow 3	Blue Grosbeak 1
King Rail 3	Tree Swallow 1	Indigo Bunting 27
Sora 6	Barn Swallow 53	Eastern Towhee 79
Purple Gallinule 1	Blue Jay 296	Red-winged Blackbird 2365
Common Moorhen 35	Am. Crow 329	Bobolink 4
Sandhill Crane 12	Fish Crow 76	Boat-tailed Grackle 184
Killdeer 5	Crow sp. 35	Common Grackle 96
Pectoral Sandpiper 4	Carolina Chickadee 80	Brown-headed Cowbird 151
Common Snipe 2	Tufted Titmouse 314	Baltimore Oriole 10
Royal Tern 2	Br. headed Nuthatch 5	House Finch 33
Rock Dove 84	Carolina Wren 348	House Sparrow 46
Eurasian Collared Dove 32	Blue gray Gnatcatcher 191	

Count Participants 2002

Howard Adams, Dave Beatty, Ed Bonahue, Judy Bryan, Tom Contreas, Lloyd Davis, Ivan Diaz, Michelle Eckman, Elizabeth Farley, Linda Fitzgerald, Lee Gordon, Linda Hensley, Susie Hetrick, Mike Jenkins, John Hintermister, Karen Johnson, Marci Jones, Grace Kiltie, Richard Kiltie, Martha King, Stephanie Krantz, Ashley Manetz, Mike Manetz, John Martin, Michael Meisenberg, Amy Miller, Karl Miller, Barbara Mollison, Barbara Muschlitz, Patty Orr, David Pais, Ruth Palinek, Craig Parenteau, Heidi Richter, Dotty Robbins, Rex Rowan, Maralee Rumfh, Ivan Samuels, Lenny Santisteban, Bubba Scales, Katie Sieving, Bob Simons, Paul Sindelar, Noa Sporks, Michaela Speirs, Linda Terry, Don Thornton, Erin Thornton, Alice Tyler, David Wahl, Helen Warren, Tom Webber, John Winn

The Crane 4

Ocala National Forest

ELDERHOSTEL

Seven one-week Elderhostel sessions will be offered in the Ocala National Forest this winter at the Deerhaven Conference Center near Deland. The programs include canoeing, birding, photography, ancient Indian cultures, ecosystems of the big scrub and the St. Johns River, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and history of the St. Johns River. The first session starts January 12-17 and subsequent sessions continue until the first week of March.

The fee for each session is \$462 double occupancy (\$75 single supplement) and includes all program materials, instruction, lodging and meals. Accommodations at Deerhaven are in the residence hall or cabins; linens are provided, but participants must bring their own personal items, such as soap. There is a \$25 discount for those who stay in their own RV. Elderhostel is a non-profit organization which has provided affordable educational adventures for adults 55 and older for 25 years.

Descriptions of the programs and Deerhaven facilities are available on their web site, www.deerhavenonline.com or by phone at (352) 742-8202. A Rawlings-related session will be held in February. That program explores the Florida of the late 1800's through illustrated lectures and a river trip. An emphasis on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, the person and the writer through her letters and published works, will show how the tales of the Florida frontier influenced her writing. There will be a hike to the area in which *The*

Yearling is set. In addition, features of the Ocala National Forest ecosystems including its ponds, woodlands, hammocks, marshes, rivers and



streams will be visited with a naturalist to see the birds, plants and other wildlife Rawlings' wrote about. The schedule for all of the 2003 Deerhaven Elderhostel programs follows:

January 12 - January 17, 2003

Exploring Alexander Spring and Stream by Canoe
Ecosystems of the Big Scrub

January 19 – January 24, 2003

A Close-Up View of Beautiful Birds of Florida

February 2 – February 7, 2003

Exploring Alexander Springs and Stream by Canoe
From Dugout Canoes to Wooden Ships

February 9 – February 14, 2003

Florida's Beautiful Wading Birds
Ecosystems of the St. Johns River
Putting Things in A New Light: Nature Photography

February 16 – February 21, 2003

Exploring Alexander Springs and Stream by Canoe
Ocala National Forest Exploration

February 23 – February 28, 2003

Exploring the Big Scrub
Experience the Environment in which *The Yearling* Is
Set

Rawlings' Interpretation of River Life

March 2 – March 7, 2003

Paddle a Canoe Through a Strand of Cypress Trees
From Dugout Canoes to Wooden Ships
Tracing the Pioneers of the St. Johns River

To contact Elderhostel to register or to receive a catalog, visit the web page at www.elderhostel.com or call toll free (877) 426-8056.

--Anne Pierce

BANDING:

OLD ISSUE KEEPS RETURNING

The Tufted Titmouse at our backyard feeder looked different somehow, but it took a second for to see what birds had made it across the Gulf the night before. The banders arrived not 15 minutes later—three equipment loaded vans plus a score of volunteers stuffed into a dozen cars. Bird banding at this level is a major undertaking. Squadrons of workers spread out over the coastal oak-pine hammock unfurling 60 mist nets. A headquarters tent was erected. Here the captured birds would be brought for various measurements. A laptop operator would enter the data into a special program.

The banding was scheduled to continue every day for two weeks. Our role, the only one the leader thought we could be trusted with, was to release the netted specimens once headquarters was through with them. Quite a few birders dropped by to help with the releases. The "haul" from this effort was slightly overwhelming. In the two days we allotted to helping out, over 250 white-eyed vireos came to net, 63 Red-eyed Vireos, 35 Hooded Warblers, six Wood Thrushes, three Painted Buntings, three Swainson's Warblers, three Tennessee Warblers and many more. One resident Northern Cardinal managed to get himself netted three times.

Being trained as scientists, we tried to put this data collecting into a familiar context. Another side of us; however, couldn't help question-

ing whether this particular approach didn't heap additional stress on birds already exhausted from flying nonstop over several hundred miles of open ocean. It's an old issue. Banders, a dedicated lot if ever there were one, say there is no other way to track a bird's migration, provide critical information on habitat and resource needs. Banding opponents insist that much of this information is already known, that the stress to the birds doesn't justifying replicating information that may already be recorded.

We left the banders without resolving this issue. Likely, it cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Perhaps, the best that can be said is that whatever the stress level resulting from banding, it falls short of that common in Frank Chapman's day when much of the data collected came from the pellet riddled body of the bird.

--Dana and Nancy Griffin

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

This year 39 Alachua County classrooms will be receiving *Audubon Adventures*, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors. An additional three teachers have requested the popular materials, so it is not too late to become a sponsor. If you would like to be a sponsor, please mail a check for \$42 payable to Alachua Audubon to Sue Hartman at 2107 SW 43rd Place, Gainesville, FL 32608. Thanks for your support and to these sponsors:

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Mary Landsman	Alice Tyler
Elynor Lee	John Winn

The *Audubon Adventures* program is aimed at third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms. Each sponsored class receives four sets of newsletters, one for each student, crammed with information and activities. There is also a video and a teacher manual with additional information and activities on the topics. The subjects this year will be biomes, with a different focus each time: wetlands, temperate deciduous forests, coastal environments, and deserts.

Jr. Birder

Jr. Birder is for children 8-13 years old who want to do bird walks to learn more about birds. The next class will be on Saturday, January 25, at Lake Alice from 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. Parents should bring children to the parking lot by the lake and may participate in the walk if they like, but that is not necessary. Children should bring binoculars. A following walk is tentatively scheduled for February 15 from 9:00 to 11:00 A.M. on the LaChua Trail.

At the opening of the western portion of the Great Florida Birding Trail on Saturday, November 2, more than 20 people took part in a Jr. Birder class. The class introduced six bird identification clues: size and shape, field marks, bill

types, behavior, habitat, and voice. The first part of the class reviewed the clues and did activities in the Bird Detective booklet. Children discussed bird appearances and functions of different types of bills. In answer to one question, "Why do you think herons have long, sharp bills?" a child suggested, "To catch their food." Another young participant responded, "So they don't drop their cheese."

During the second half-hour the class went outside to test their new field skills. They practiced on a plastic model Tufted Titmouse and then went for a walk. The small songbirds in the canopy were difficult to see, but everyone was excited to hear six species of birds, including cranes. For more information about Jr. Birder, please contact Joni Ellis at: Joni.Ellis@fwc.state.fl.us or Adam Kent at kestrelkent@yahoo.com.

"OLD" MEMBERS

As we have done for many years, in this issue of *The Crane* we salute our many long-term members. The following is a list of all members of Alachua Audubon Society who have been members of National Audubon Society for 15 or more continuous years. The list is compiled from information supplied by NAS, and if there are errors or omissions, please contact Paul Moler, who maintains our membership records, at 495-9419.

40 YEARS PLUS

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ERNEST R. CASEY

35-40 YEARS

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