

# **UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS**

Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 A.M. Ocklawaha Prairie and Sunnyhill Farms Eastern Section Great Florida Birding Trail (EGFBT) sites # 31 and 37

Meet at the Kash N' Karry, 2002 SW 34th St. We'll explore the 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 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 "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk that has made the Ocklawaha Prairie its winter home for the last three years. This trip will last all day, but anyone pressed for time could leave after lunch. Bring lunch, water, and insect repellent. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 P.M.
"Birders on Wheels," Chapman's Pond
Western Section Great Florida Birding Trail
(WGFBT) site #16

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).

Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 A.M. "Botanize" your way to Cedar Key with Dana Griffin

Meet in the parking lot of the Target store on Archer Road just east of I-75. We'll take Archer Road down to Cedar Key, stopping along the way to look at wildflowers or anything else we find of interest. Although this trip will focus on plants, Dr. Griffin does permit binoculars as long as they are not too distracting! Any trip that Dana leads is always both fun and educational. Those who wish to will have a group lunch at one of the seafood restaurants on the Gulf. Trip difficulty: 1

#### 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.

# **NOMINATIONS**

It's time once again for nominations for Alachua Audubon board and officers. If you're willing to serve—or know someone who would be—please call one of the nominating committee members before March 1. They are Howard Adams (373-4270), Paul Moler (495-0419), and Grisleda Forbes (371-3124). All suggestions are welcome. Officers serve one-year terms and board members are elected for three years. The election will be at the Annual Meeting and Picnic in April.

# **CBC: 2002**

### Gainesville

We had a record count of 149 species, beating our 1977 record by one, but the playing field changed this year. For the first time, we counted feral Mallards and Muscovy Ducks. Seven Count Week species were reported: Fulvous Whistling Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, Laughing Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Whip-poor-will, Archilochus, sp., and Brown Creeper. These are species which were seen in the three days before or after the count, but not seen Count Day. They were all likely around on December 15, but managed to elude the counters. We would have had a great record 156 if we had found all these birds!

Aside from the two species new to the count, Northern Rough-winged Swallow and White-winged Dove, some unusual species were: Canada Goose, Greater Scaup, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher (2), American Redstart (2), Yellow-breasted Chat (2), Summer Tanager (2), Fox Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, and Brewer's Blackbird. Several of these are birds that breed here but normally don't hang around for winter. Did they linger because of the warm days? We found it interesting that new highs were found for three different species of woodpeckers. Could that have been because of dead trees caused by the pine bark beetles?

At our Count-up supper, we had a real treat aside from the food. John Martin created a program using MS Excel so that we were able to view the results projected on a screen, instead of just listening. As each species was called, the screen showed a photo of the bird and a graph with the history for that species (number of individuals vs. the year). As each of our 11 teams called out its number of individuals for a species, that number appeared on a lower graph, with the running total displayed. The previous high was also shown so we knew immediately when we had a new high. I wish y'all could have been there. Those of us present truly enjoyed the show. And, the data was saved as an Excel file.

Our Count-ups have been held at Civitan, now Life South, on NW 13th Street for years and we do appreciate the use of that facility. I also extend a special thanks to Griselda Forbes for arranging for the food and beverages. And that's my last thank you connected with the Gainesville CBC. Craig Parenteau and I have been cocompilers since 1982 and have now resigned. It was nice to go out on a high count.

The date for the 2003 count was set at December 14.

--Barbara P.Muschlitz

## Cedar Key

For the 2002 Cedar Key Christmas Bird Count, 19 participants in five groups spent a sunny but cool day doing what they like best, birding! New highs were reached for 13 species: American White Pelican, Wood Stork, Bald Eagle, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Red Knot, Sanderling, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Blue headed Vireo, Ovenbird, Northern Cardinal, and Chipping Sparrow. All of the Ovenbirds (7, previous high 1!) were seen on Seahorse Key, where a Western Kingbird was also found, sensibly sunning on the south-facing beach.

Long-billed Curlews were seen for the fourth year in a row, and the number of Avocets and Oystercatchers continued at good levels. A Yellow breasted Chat found an overgrown yard to his liking, and Eastern Bluebirds and House Finches were added to the list for Way Key for the first time. In all, 137 species were tallied, the highest total since 1997. Species seen Count Week (three days before and after Count Day) were Green Heron and White-winged Dove.

After much discussion, Friday, January 2, 2004 was chosen as the date of the 2003 count.

--Dale C. Henderson

#### Melrose

A total of 112 species, numbering 6,484 individuals, were talllied by 14 observers on the thirteenth annual Melrose Christmas Bird Count on December 17.

While there were no new high counts for any species, two new species were added this year. A Black-chinned Hummingbird was sighted at a feeder at the home of Peggy and Ralph Renzelman. This same feeder has, over the span of several years, attracted other wintering hummingbirds. These have been Selasphorus species or Rufous Hummingbirds which, like the Black-chinned, usually occur farther west.

The date for the 2003 count was set at December 18.

--Bill and Jan Bolte

The Crane is published bimonthly throughout the year. Content of The Crane is the sole responsibility of the editor and fulfils 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.

Species in bold-faced type are new to the Count indicated. Numbers in bold-faced type represent a new high for the count. A **T** by the number indicates tie for high.

	GV	CK	MR	Semipalmated Plover	0	142	0	Carolina Wren	349	49	65
Common Loon	0	37	24	Killdeer	422	15	113	House Wren	118	38	12
Pied billed Grebe	7	3	26	American Ovstercatcher	0	554	0	Sedge Wren	16	4	2
Horned Grebe	2	40	6	American Avocet	0	54	0	Marsh Wren	8	9	2
Am White Pelican	2	442	0	Greater Yellowlegs	4	33	4	Golden-crowned Kinglet	12	2	0
BrownPelican	0	178	0	Lesser Yellowlegs	0	0	2	Ruby crowned Kinglet	620	68	95
Dbl-cr Cormorant	559	2201	121	Willet	0	1104	0	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	299	14	39
Anhinga	95	1	21	Spotted Sandpiper	0	8	1	Eastern Bluebird	276	25	60
American Bittern	2	0	1	Whimbrel	0	5	0	Hermit Thrush	96	43	23
Great Blue Heron	113	105	28	Long billed Curlew	0	2	0	American Robin	1007	547	170
Great Egret	127	107	32	Marbled Godwit	0	95	0	Grav Catbird	234	129	23
Snowy Egret	55	75	4	Ruddy Turnstone	0	67	0	Northern Mockingbird	271	84	74
Little Blue Heron	55	19	7	Red Knot	0	123	0	Brown Thrasher	49T	12	15
Tricolored Heron	8	17	ĺ	Sanderling	0	503	0	European Starling	81	88	43
	46	0	4	Western Sandpiper	0	1837	7	American Pipit	51	0	17
Cattle Egret		0	2	Least Sandpiper	25	4	18	Cedar Waxwing	380	35	28
Green Heron	6 27	32	0	Peep, sp.	0	2030	0	Orange crnd Warbler	77	3	3
Black-crd Night-Heron	0	2	0	Dunlin	0	1756	0	Northern Parula	i	0	0
Yellow-crd Night-Heron	395	3	9	Short-billed Dowitcher	0	790	0	Yellow-rumped Warbier	1848	774	271
White Ibis		0	3	Long-billed Dowitcher	0	0	0	Yellow-throated Warbler	29	1	0
Glossy Ibis	46	.20	0		0	0	1	Pine Warbler	122	69	20
Wood Stork	6			Dowitcher, sp.	89	0		Prairie Warble	3	2	0
Black Vulture	143	5	25	Wilson's Snipe		2	1	Palm Warbler	791	84	46
Turkey Vulture	869	116	4	American Woodcock	4			Black&Whire Warbler	791	12	6
Blk-bell Whistling-Duck	8	0	0	Laughing Gull	0	262	0		2	0	0
Canada Goose	1	0	0	Bonaparte's Gull	0	0	18	American Redstart	12	7	1
Muscovy Duck	151	0	1	Ring-billed Gull	1158	989	93	Ovenbird			-
Wood Duck	520	0	7	Herring Gull	2	61	2	Waterthrush sp.	1	1	0
Gadwall	4	0	0	Caspian Tern	0	3	0	Common Yellowthroat	210	26	8
Amrican Wigeon	10	0	0	Royal Tern	0	44	0	Wilson's Warbler	1	0	0
Mallard	0	0	0	Forster's Tern	46	176	11	Ylw-breasted Chat	2	1	0
Mailard, feral	5	23	4	Black Skimmer	0	485	0	Summer Tanager	2	0	0
Mottled Duck	24	0	0	Rock Dove	214	0	5	Eastern Towhee	165	148	7
Blue-winged Teal	255	0	12	Eur. Collared Dove	77	44	2	Chipping Sparrow	426	184	102
Northern Shoveler	3	0	0	White Winged Dove	7(new)	0	0	Field Sparrow	9	8	0
Northern Pintail	8	0	0	Mourning Dove	584	10	168	Vesper Sparrow	141	1	8
Green winged Teal	481	52	75	Common Ground-Dove	2	57 <b>T</b>	4	Savannah Sparrow	170	8	12
Ring-necked Duck	6	0	13	Eastern Screech-Owl	15	8	1	Grasshopper Sparrow	9	0	3
Greater Scaup	1	1	0	Great Horned Owl	13	3	0	Henslow's Sparrow	3	0	0
Lesser Scaup	7	2499	1	Barred Owl	21	3	7	Nelson's Sp tld Sparrow	0	4	0
Bufflehead	1	105	35	Black-chd Hummingbird	()	0	l(new)	Saltmarsh Sp tld Sparrow	0	1	0
Common Goldeneye	0	1	0	Selasphorus sp.	0	1	0	Seaside Sparrow	0	2	0
Hooded Merganser	116	35	4	Belted Kingfisher	16	41	23	Ammodramus, so.	4	0	0
Red-breasted Merganser	0	79	0	Red-headed Woodp.	47	0	4	Fox Sparrow	1	0	0
Ruddy Duck	0	1	0	Red-bellied Woodp.	330	48	104	Song Sparrow	102	33	2
Osprey	6	26	7	Ylw-bellied Sapsucker	73	11	10	Swamp Sparrow	230	26	8
Bald Eagle	45	32	5	Downy Woodpecker	153	17	13	White throated Sparrow	145	16	15
Northern Harrier	42	2	ì	Northern Flicker	89	5	20	White-crowned Sparrow	10	0	0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10	0	0	Pileated Woodpecker	101	8	22	Northern Cardinal	595	146	98
Cooper's Hawk	7	ï	0	Eastern Phoebe	349	48	38	Blue Grosbeak	1	0	0
Accipiter, sp.	1	0	0	Vermilion Flycatcher	2	0	0	Indigo Bunting	1	0	0
Red-shouldered Hawk	99	10	47	Ash-throated Flycatcher	l	0	0	Red-winged Blackbird	7445	94	1356
Red tailed Hawk	51	7	2	Western Kingbird	i	ì	ő	Eastern Meadowlark	241	3	10
American Kestrel	60	3	16	Loggerhead Shrike	80	0	10	Rusty Blackbird	1	0	0
Merlin	1	0	0	White-eved Vireo	100	19	13	Brewer's Blackbird	i	0	0
Peregrine	0	2	0	Blue headed Vireo	80 <b>T</b>	13	7	Common Grackle	1131	4	134
Wild Turkey	41	0	46	Blue Jay	310	37	92	Boat-tailed Grackle	2638	120	8
	12	0	0	Florida Scrub-Jav	0	6	0	Brown-headed Cowbird	38	29	12
Northern Bobwhite	0	14	0	American Crow	184	5	86	Baltimore Oriole	34	0	2
Clapper Rail		0	0		20	81	0	House Finch	105	3(new)	õ
King Rail	5		0	Fish Crow	143	0	0	American Goldfinch	243	147	55
Virginia Rail	6	0	-	Crow, sp.		7		House Sparrow	243 88	30	7
Sora	59	5	1	Tree Swallow	143		23	raouse sparrow	00	30	/
Common Moorhen	203	l	3	N. Rough Wged Swallow		0	7 (new)	Number of species	149	137	112
American Coot	919	1	45	Carolina Chickadee	71	21	19	Number of species Number of individuals	33777	22074	6491
Sandhill Crane	1761	0	1994	Tufted Titmouse	336	14	42	number of individuals	33///	2207 T	0491
Black-bellied Plover	0	110	0	Brown-headed Nuthatch	10	0	0				

GAINESVILLE: Compilers: Barbara Muschlitz and Craig Parenteau. Observers (Team leaders in bold face): Howard Adams, John Hintermister, Adam Knight, Bob Knight, Scott Knight, Barbara Mollison, Don Morrow, Brad Williams, Craig Parenteau, Susie Hetrick, Mike Jenkins, Stefanie Krantz, Ria Leonard, Amy Miller, Ivan Samuels, Bubba Scales, Mike Manetz, Robin Beckett, Ed Bonahue, Linda Fitzgerald, Ashley Manetz, Mike Paczolt, Paul Stodola, Barbara Muschlitz, Karen Johnson, Mary Landsman, Greg McDermottt, Alice Reakes, Helen Warren, Brian McNab, Grace Kiltie, Richard Kiltie, Patti Orr, Marta L. Wayne, Bill Whitehurst, Dan Pearson, Dan Evans, Scott Flamand, Pete Colverson, Rex Rowan, Bob Carroll, Lloyd Davis, Lee Gordon, John Martin, David Wahl, Tom Webber, Peter Ames, John Arnett, Karl Miller, Lenny Santisteban, Michelle Santisteban, Jim Throne, Martha King, Pat Burns, Lyla Lundeen, Alice Tyler, Dave Beatty, Michael Meisenberg, Dottie Robbins, Andy Kratter, Mary Hart, Judy Bryan, Jeremy Kirchman, Bob Simons, John Winn

**CEDAR KEY:** Compilers: Ron Christen and Dale Henderson. Observers: Howard Adams, John Hintermister, Grace Kiltie, Andy Kratter, Mary Landsman, Ken Litzenburger, Brian McNab, Roan McNab, Barbara Mollison, Don Morrow, Barbara Muschlitz, Alice Reakes, Steve Schaff, Paul Sindelar, David Steadman, Joan Stephens, Nancy Taylor, Larry Thompson

**MELROSE:** Compilers: Bill and Jan Bolte. Observers: Benson and Coline Cain, Rosemary Daurer, Jean and Ted Giesel, Grace and Richard Kiltie, Phyllis Meeks, Tom Prevost, Peggy Renzelman, Michael Selover, Felicity Trueblood, John Winn

#### AROUND THE COUNTY...

by Bubba Scales

With the exception of a late pulse of migratory activity, the previous issue of Around the County summarized a fall that was decidedly bland for most area birders. But while the colder mornings of winter stiffen fingers and fog lenses, birders loosen and warm with the energy and anticipation that winter birding brings. And so this issue of Around the County summarizes a season that went beyond most expectations. On December 15, Christmas Bird Count (CBC) participants set a new record of 149 species counted, breaking the old record of 148 set in 1977. Included in that count were such rarities as Greater Scaup (5th county record) and Brewer's Blackbird.

In addition to our customary wintering warblers, birders frequently found uncommon and rare birds such as a Northern Waterthrush observed at Newnan's Lake on November 17 by Rex Rowan. Adam Kent found a Wilson's Warbler at the Hague dairy on November 30. The same bird, presumably, was seen by Martha King and others on January 4. The CBC count included two American Redstarts, a Northern Waterthrush, a Wilson's Warbler, and two Yellow-breasted Chats. On January 3, Chuck Graham observed a bird at his home in Alachua that he identified as a Blackthroated Green or Townsend's Warbler, either of which would be extraordinary.

But the hottest topic of this winter's birding activity is the unprecedented number of hummingbird sightings. Since Ruth Palenik's first report of a Selasphorus hummingbird in the early fall, another 34 reports of wintering hummers have come in from around the county. Rex Rowan's efforts to collect and summarize these reports, with some additional information from Hummer/Bird Study Group bander Fred Bassett, have yielded the following totals as of January 16: 23 Selasphorus (two of which were confirmed as Rufous by Bassett), two Ruby-throated, three Black-chinned, and another six identified only as hummingbird.

While on the subject of species whose exact identity is often difficult to determine, tyrant flycatchers were also obliging this winter. The first report of Myiarchus flycatchers (probably Ashthroated) came from Doug Wassmer, a Tampa area birder, who attended a ranger-led Persimmon Point hike on November 16. On December 1, Michael Meisenburg and Ingrid Scales found another such bird where the DEP headquarters driveway intersects the Gainesville-Hawthorne rail trail. On the same day, Adam Kent refound the two birds first reported by Wassmer in the same location at Pesimmon Point. A confirmed Ash-

throated Flycatcher sighting came during the CBC. A Western Kingbird was also observed that day.

On December 21, Dr. David Steadman observed an Empidonax flycatcher in the Natural Area Teaching Lab behind the entomology buildings on the UF campus. Over the next week or so, several other birders were able to make close observations of this bird and most concluded that it was a Least Flycatcher, although no definitive evidence was gathered.

Sparrow enthusiasts were not disappointed this winter either. On November 24, Patty Orr, Ingrid Scales, Adam Kent, and I were among the most fortunate of all the "emberiziphiles" when the wayward Kent found the county's third ever Claycolored Sparrow near the end of Cone's Dike Trail. We all observed the bird from close range for some ten minutes. We also observed an Indigo Bunting, a Painted Bunting, and a Fox Sparrow on the same day. The first two Fox Sparrow reports of the season, one from Barbara Muschlitz and the other from Mike Manetz, came in independently on November 23. Two other Fox Sparrows have been reported in December.

On December 8, Judy Bryan found two Henslow's Sparrows along the fence line at the Sweetwater Overlook on Paynes Prairie. Craig Parenteau refound the same sparrows during the CBC. Adding the Henslow's that I found at Persimmon Point brings the CBC total for that species to three. A better story, perhaps, is the 15-20 Grasshopper Sparrows observed at Persimmon Point on December 1 by Adam Kent and others. Eight of those sparrows were refound and tallied during the CBC. Before the winter is over, area birders may also be able to observe a LeConte's Sparrow, tentatively reported from San Felasco on January 1.

Evelyn Perry was the first of three area birders to report a Dark-eyed Junco at her birdfeeder. Hers showed up on November 20. Marcy Jones and Bliz Feldherr had similar luck, with birds visiting their feeders for several days in November and December respectively.

Thanks to all who shared their observations through January 16.

### **COMING SOON**

March & Program Meeting: "Backyard Wildlife Attractions," Millhopper Branch Library, 3145 NW 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, 2:00 P.M. Ron Robinson will offer tips on how best to attract wildlife, including landscaping ideas and feed and water recommendations. Additionally, Ron will offer advice on squirrel-proofing and on how to avoid window strikes.

#### Alachua Audubon Society Officers and Chairpersons of Standing Committees - 2002-2003

President	Scott Flamand	331-0035	Programs &
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Conservation.. Michael Meisenburg 495-1791 Crane Editor......John Winn 468-1669 Submissions: john@homeagainfarm.com Crane Circulation... Margaret Green 378-3314 Assisting with Crane circulation: Alice Tyler, Pat Burns, Nancy Oaks, John Dorney

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February 2003

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Chapter F-18

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