

# The Crane

*Alachua Audubon Society*  
Volume 45 Number 4 February 2004

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## EARLY SPRING FIELD TRIPS

**Sunday, February 1, 7:30 AM**  
**Orange Creek Restoration Area**

Explore this newly-opened birding location at the eastern edge of Orange Lake. Drained for cropland fifty years ago, it has recently been restored to freshwater marsh, and can be an excellent spot for sparrows, ducks, raptors, and other open-country birds. Meet field trip leader Rex Rowan at Powers Park on the north side of Hawthorne Road (SR-20), about 4.4 miles east of Waldo Road. We'll carpool to OCRA to explore this exciting new acquisition of the St. Johns River Water Management District.

Trip difficulty: 2

**Saturday, February 14, 7:00 AM**  
**Matanzas Inlet**

Due to the conflict with the program meeting on the same date, this field trip has been cancelled. Program meeting details on page 2.

**Sunday, February 22, 8:00 AM**  
**Cone's Dike via Camp Canal**

**Limited to 12 participants** - Please call Wild Birds Unlimited [352-381-1997] to make a reservation. Meet at Powers Park on Hawthorne Road/SR 20 (see above). Trip leader Adam Kent will escort the group to a restricted access which we will use by special permission. There, we will bird a resource rich section of Cone's Dike Trail. Among other exciting finds, birders observed Clay-colored and Fox Sparrows and Least Flycatchers in this area last year. Trip difficulty: 3

**Saturday, March 6, 8:00 AM**  
**Lake Alice**

With a hardwood swamp, a wading bird rookery, open water, and densely vegetated lake margins, Lake Alice is a favorite destination for many campus-bound birders. Meet trip leader Michael Meisenburg in the Lake Alice parking lot on Museum Road on UF campus and explore one of the urban area's natural jewels. 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.

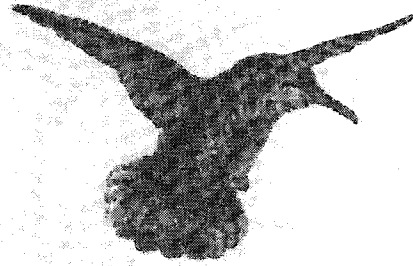
## NOMINATIONS

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 (495-9419), 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.

*Alachua Audubon Society Website*

**[www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud)**

Add it to your list of favorites and visit us for all the latest updates and/or changes for field trips and programs, as well as information on good birding spots in the area.



# PROGRAM NOTES

## February 14

The program meeting on Saturday, February 14, will feature Bubba Scales speaking on "Hummingbirds in Winter?" Yes, that is a question. And the answer is, "They're here!" As Bubba notes elsewhere in this *Crane*, a few are our usual Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, but there are also some others, mostly in the genus *Selasphorus*. Black-chinned are less numerous but also seem to be expected each winter. So another question is, "Have these hummingbirds been here all along over the years and we're just now finding them or is this something new?" Bubba will try to provide us with an answer as well as additional information on Alachua County's wintering hummingbird trend and other feeder bird phenomena, such as the reason that we see so many goldfinches some seasons and hardly any the next. The program meeting begins at 2:00 P.M. in the meeting room of the Millhopper Branch Library, 3145 NW 43<sup>rd</sup> Street.

## March 13

Coming next month on Saturday, March 13, "Butterflies and Blooms - Serendipity." A program presented by Buck and Linda Cooper, seasoned butterfly experts from Haines City, on how to become Sherlock Holmes of the fields and forests in finding Florida's butterflies, from the most common to the most elusive. The Coopers are lifelong birders who have turned their attention toward lepidoptera and surveying Florida for butterfly species. The program meeting will be followed by a field trip the next morning to a location yet to be determined. Look for details in the next *Crane*.

## AROUND THE COUNTY... by Bubba Scales

Don't take your hummingbird feeders down after the Ruby-throateds leave town any more. Those days are over. The vast majority of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds still do what we've come to expect them to do in the early fall. They migrate south. At least one has stayed, but the lingering Ruby-throateds are only the first part of the story. They have company.

A more significant event is what must now be regarded as the annual influx of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds to Alachua County. *Selasphorus* is the name for the genus of hummingbirds to which three species belong: Rufous, Allen's, and Broad-tailed. Rufous and Allen's are nearly impossible to distinguish from one another in the field, but we know that most of our *Selasphorus* birds are of the Rufous variety. If you want to know how we know, then come to the February program meeting (see details elsewhere in this *Crane*). For now, just roll with it. Of the 30 hummingbirds reported in Alachua County this winter, roughly 75% of them are *Selasphorus*. Of the rest, six are Black-chinned or identified only as a hummingbird, except for one.

On December 28, hummingbird bander Fred Bassett captured and banded an adult female Calliope Hummingbird in a Northwest Gainesville yard, an Alachua County first and a rare record for the state. A Broad-billed Hummingbird was reported concurrently from the same location but Mr. Bassett was unable to capture it and no one has managed to get definitive photographic proof of its identity. If we are yet able to prove its identity, this putative Broad-billed will be a first record for Florida.

Alachua County got more big news, five feet of it in fact, on January 3 when Celia Lockwood spotted a Whooping Crane in the UF Animal

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fields on SW 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. From its unique sequence of color bands, this bird was determined to be a member of a group that learned to migrate from Wisconsin by following an Ultralight aircraft. On January 8, Panhandle birder Jean Williams observed two Whooping Cranes from La Chua Trail. No band sequence was reported from either bird.



La Chua Trail has also been a good place from which to see waterfowl. Most notably perhaps are the Mallards and Northern Pintails that John Hintermister and Mike Manetz found in the vicinity of Sweetwater Dike on December 11. On December 28, Howard Adams and Barbara Mollison observed a drake Canvasback along La Chua Trail. Howard and Barbara also saw a group of four hen Northern Shovelers there, a fairly unusual sighting in the county. Snow Geese were reported on two occasions; one by Pat Burns on December 9 from private property near Alachua and two by Mary Landsman and others who observed two flying over near the San Felasco Progress Park unit.

San Felasco's Progress Park unit has also made more news lately for its sparrows. Many birders have been visiting the fields near Lee Sink to reap the rewards of Becky Enneis' diligence. On November 10, Becky found an Ash-throated Flycatcher and, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, she found a Dickcissel. On December 20, she and Bob Carroll went back for more. This time, they came across a large flock of Song and Vesper's sparrows in a field very near the entrance gate. In picking through those birds, Becky and Bob also managed to dig up a Henslow's Sparrow and a LeConte's Sparrow. Since then, birders from all over North Central Florida have been privy to good looks at North America's most furtive sparrows.

While Alachua County birders distress about whether to wear long or short sleeves, people on the rest of the continent are praying for a break from frigid arctic temperatures. With frozen water bodies and diminishing natural food sources creeping their way southward, we might have a busy second half to winter. American Goldfinches and Chipping Sparrows are finally coming to feeders and birders like Dave Steadman are finding new birds for the winter. On December 28, he observed a Brown Creeper in San Felasco Hammock and on January 4 observed another in his yard in Tioga, this time among a small flock of

Golden-crowned Kinglets. Shannon Cline, Ingrid, and I all saw a creeper in San Felasco Hammock on January 14.

Thanks to all who submitted reports through January 17.

## **CBC: 2003**

### **Gainesville**

This year's Gainesville Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 14. Sixty-eight observers in 11 teams tallied birds within the 15-mile diameter circle of the count area. Although the individual number of birds for many species was low, the total number of species observed was high at 147, only two below last year's all time high of 149 for Gainesville. New to the count circle was a Least Flycatcher found by John Hintermister on Cone's dike. Thanks go to John Martin for his computer tabulation/graphics expertise and Griselda Forbes for the wonderful pizza and libations. The 2004 count is scheduled for Sunday December 19.

--Howard Adams

### **Cedar Key**

January 2nd, 2004 was a lovely day for birding in and around Cedar Key. Only the afternoon calm and the resulting sand gnats marred the day. Of course, the extremely low counts of even normally common birds were a source of disappointment and worry. The species count was a respectable 134 (recent high 140, 1998; all time 148, 1980), but with few exceptions numbers were noticeably lower. Long-billed Curlews (3) were in the Shell Mound area again, and the boys in the airboat also saw Peregrine, Merlin and a record number of Red knots (237, previous high, 123, last year). A Magnificent Frigatebird was still at the summer roost at Seahorse Key, and a group of eight Canvasbacks (new high) was also seen by those aboard the UF boat. For the second consecutive year a Piping Plover was tallied; this time on Sandspit beach in Cedar Key, not far from the electric line that featured eight White-winged doves, a regular species in recent years. Seldom counted Virginia rails were at Barnett's Creek in Lower

### **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 again be at the clubhouse for Mill Pond, 401 NW 48th Boulevard, across from Gainesville Health & Fitness Center on Newberry Road.

**Deadline for the next Crane is February 21**

*The Crane 3*

Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, and Florida Scrub-Jays were observed on CR 345 as well as the usual area of CR 347 adjacent to Cedar Key Scrub State Preserve. New highs also for Black Vulture (43), and Semipalmated Plover (356), and

for three whose presence is not all that welcome: Brown-headed Cowbird (112), House Finch (4), and House Sparrow (119). The 2004 count will be held on Thursday, December 30.

--Dale Henderson

Species in bold-faced type are new to the Count indicated. Numbers underlined type represent a new high for the count.

Common Loon	GV	CK	Common Moorhen	248	0	Tree Swallow	212	0
Pied-billed Grebe	105	11	American Coot	592	1	Carolina Chickadee	70	45
Horned Grebe	0	7	Sandhill Crane	1761	0	Tufted Titmouse	251	15
Am White Pelican	12	304	Black-bellied Plover	0	209	Brown-headed Nuthatch	1	2
Brown Pelican	0	254	Semipalmated Plover	0	<u>356</u>	Carolina Wren	315	29
Dbl-cr Cormorant	581	2750	Killdeer	268	18	House Wren	110	23
Anhinga	112	0	American Oystercatcher	0	213	Sedge Wren	12	10
Magnificent Frigatebird	0	1	American Avocet	0	52	Marsh Wren	19	16
American Bittern	10	0	Greater Yellowlegs	35	56	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	285	27
Great Blue Heron	88	60	Lesser Yellowlegs	2	0	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<u>359</u>	24
Great Egret	162	160	Willet	0	830	Eastern Bluebird	78	10
Snowy Egret	107	25	Spotted Sandpiper	0	17	Hermit Thrush	28	3
Little Blue Heron	171	10	Whimbrel	0	11	American Robin	1961	1093
Tricolored Heron	3	16	Long-billed Curlew	0	3	Gray Catbird	117	41
Cattle Egret	64	0	Marbled Godwit	0	48	Northern Mockingbird	203	89
Green Heron	4	1	Ruddy Turnstone	0	429	Brown Thrasher	18	6
Black-cr'd Night-Heron	97	18	Red Knot	0	237	European Starling	295	93
Yellow-cr'd Night-Heron	0	3	Sanderling	0	<u>678</u>	American Pipit	4	0
White Ibis	1060	73	Western Sandpiper	0	1191	Cedar Waxwing	4	0
Glossy Ibis	300	0	Solitary Sandpiper	1	0	Orange-cr'd Warbler	43	3
Wood Stork	24	6	Least Sandpiper	62	88	Northern Parula	1	0
Black Vulture	162	<u>43</u>	Dunlin	0	2530	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2068	734
Turkey Vulture	527	200	Short-billed Dowitcher	0	838	Yellow-throated Warbler	31	6
Blk-bell Whistling-Duck	2	0	Wilson's Snipe	62	8	Pine Warbler	83	44
Snow Goose-Blue	2	0	American Woodcock	11	1	Prairie Warble	2	1
Snow Goose-White	5	0	Laughing Gull	0	182	Palm Warbler	589	44
Muscovy	80	0	Bonaparte's Gull	28	0	Black&White Warbler	65	6
Wood Duck	121	12	Ring-billed Gull	537	1212	American Redstart	1	0
Gadwall	2	0	Herring Gull	8	45	Ovenbird	4	0
Mallard	8	0	Caspian Tern	0	4	Northern Waterthrush	2	0
Mallard, feral	7	6	Royal Tern	0	69	Common Yellowthroat	208	30
Blue-winged Teal	183	0	Forster's Tern	69	190	Ylw-breasted Chat	1	0
Northern Pintail	4	0	Black Skimmer	0	405	Eastern Towhee	131	57
Green-winged Teal	27	60	Rock Dove	170	0	Chipping Sparrow	581	49
Canvasback	0	8	Eur. Collared Dove	92	123	Field Sparrow	16	1
Ring-necked Duck	414	0	White Winged Dove	1	8	Vesper Sparrow	55	0
Greater Scaup	0	1	Mourning Dove	792	43	Savannah Sparrow	173	2
Lesser Scaup	3	275	Common Ground-Dove	4	23	Grasshopper Sparrow	14	0
Bufflehead	0	172	Eastern Screech-Owl	16	7	Henslow's Sparrow	3	0
Common Goldeneye	1	0	Great Horned Owl	10	3	Nelson's Sp-ldd Sparrow	0	5
Hooded Merganser	116	76	Barred Owl	26	9	Seaside Sparrow	0	8
Red-breasted Merganser	0	56	Black-ch'd Hummingbird	1	0	Fox Sparrow	1	0
Osprey	6	23	Sceloporus sp.	1	0	Song Sparrow	63	12
Bald Eagle	--	27	Belted Kingfisher	19	37	Lincoln's Sparrow	1	0
Bald Eagle, adult	42	--	Red-headed Woodp.	37	0	Swamp Sparrow	371	10
Bald Eagle, immature	18	--	Red-bellied Woodp.	242	49	White-throated Sparrow	74	2
Bald Eagle, unknown	3	--	Ylw-bellied Sapsucker	45	7	White-crowned Sparrow	12	0
Northern Harrier	34	4	Downy Woodpecker	100	13	Dark-eyed Junco	1	0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	11	2	Northern Flicker	96	2	Northern Cardinal	602	72
Cooper's Hawk	5	3	Pileated Woodpecker	72	11	Red-winged Blackbird	5574	220
Red-shouldered Hawk	102	11	Least Flycatcher	1 (new)	0	Eastern Meadowlark	191	0
Red-tailed Hawk	39	4	Eastern Phoebe	257	30	Common Grackle	1095	146
American Kestrel	56	5	Vermilion Flycatcher	3	0	Boat-tailed Grackle	1031	249
Merlin	1	1	Western Kingbird	2	0	Brown-headed Cowbird	291	112
Peregrine	0	1	Loggerhead Shrike	64	1	Baltimore Oriole	27	0
Wild Turkey	56	2	White-eyed Vireo	67	14	House Finch	119	4
Northern Bobwhite	2	0	Blue-headed Vireo	52	1	American Goldfinch	272	33
Clapper Rail	0	44	Blue Jay	219	11	House Sparrow	59	112
King Rail	2	0	Florida Scrub-Jay	0	9			
Virginia Rail	8	2	American Crow	337	21	Number of species	147	134
Sora	78	5	Fish Crow	8	145	Number of individuals	28792	18723
			Crow, sp.	51	2			

**GAINESVILLE:** Compilers: Howard Adams and John Hintermister. Observers-68 (Team leaders in bold face): Team 1-**Howard Adams**, John Hintermister, Adam Knight, Bob Knight, Scott Knight, Brad Williams, Barbara Mollison, Brad Hall, Steve Collins, Wes Ingwersen, Bob Wallace, Team 2-**Craig Parenteau**, Bubba Scales, Susie Hetrick, Ivan Samuels, Mark Smith, Julieanne Tabone, Stefanie Krantz, Team 3-**Mike Manetz**, Ed Bonahue, Paul Stodola, Robin Beckett, Michael and Amy Jenkins, Mike Paczolt, Team 4-**Barbara Muschlitz**, Dale Henderson, Linda Hensley, Karen Johnson, Mary Landsman, Greg McDermott, Helen Warren, Team 5-**Brian McNab**, Grace Kiltie, Carmine Lanciani, Marta Wayne, Team 6-**Dan Pearson**, Scott Flamand, Ken Scott, Ginger Morgan, Stefan Rayer, Joni Ellis, Team 7-**Rex Rowan**, Lloyd Davis, John Martin, Bob Carroll, Becky Enneis, Paul Sindelar, Team 8-**Adam Kent**, Karl Miller, Scott Robinson, Linda Terry, George Vesper, Maralee Joos, Team 9-**Martha King**, Pat Burns, Lyla Lundeen, Alice Tyler, Team 10-**Dave Beatty**, Dottie Robbins, Michael Drummond, Lisa Madola, Steve Hofstetter, Team 11-**Andy Kratter**, Judy Bryan, Jeremy Kirchman, Bob Simons, Peter Polshek.

**CEDAR KEY:** Compilers: Ron Christen and Dale Henderson. Other observers: Howard Adams, Steve Barlow, Nathan Folland, Brad Hall, John Hintermister, Jeff Hoover, Wendy Hoover, Grace Kiltie, Richard Kiltie, Angel Kwolek-Folland, Mary Landsman, Ken Litzenberger, Brian McNab, Barbara Mollison, Don Morrow, Barbara Muschlitz, Alice Reakes, Scott Robinson, John Terborgh, Aaron Zaretski

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**Alachua Audubon Society Officers and Chairpersons of Standing Committees - 2003-2004**

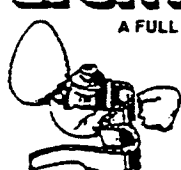
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**February 2004**

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Chapter E-18

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