



The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

SPRING FIELD TRIPS



Saturday, April 16, 8:00 AM
Devil's Millhopper

Meet field trip leader Steve Hofstetter in the Devil's Millhopper State Geological Site parking lot for a morning of birding in one of Gainesville's most beloved nature parks.

Don't forget the **\$2.00/vehicle entrance fee or your annual park entrance permit**. The path boarding the rim of the Devil's Millhopper sink and the boardwalk down to its soggy base, provides excellent vantage points to observe migratory and resident birds from different perspectives. Trip difficulty: 3

Sunday, April 17, 8:00 AM
Ft. Desoto County Park

Meet trip leader John Hintermister at the park's visitor center at the southern tip of Pinellas County. To reach the visitor center, go south on I-275, west on Hwy 682, and then south on 679. Once you are in the park, follow the signs. Ft. Desoto is one of Florida's premier birding destinations during migration because it is a prominent land feature for birds returning from the south over the Gulf of Mexico. Last year's trip featured an aston-

ishing 25 species of warbler. Bring food, water, a hat and sun screen.

Trip difficulty: 2



Saturday, April 23, 6:30 AM
Cedar Key

Meet trip leader Rex Rowan in the parking lot of the Target store on Archer Road just east of I-75. Cedar Key is a quintessential Florida birding destination where birders can often view flocks of shorebirds over one shoulder and flocks of songbirds over the other. Two years ago, field trip participants encountered a classic migratory "fallout" of warblers, thrushes, tanagers, and orioles. Participants may want to stay in Cedar Key for lunch. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, April 24, 8:00 AM
Palm Point

Meet trip leader Bob Carroll at Powers Park on Hawthorne Road/SR 20 and caravan to Palm Point from there. Palm Point is often the area's hotspot for warblers, thrushes and

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Alachua Audubon Society Website

www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud

Add it to your 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.

**Around
The County...
By Bubba Scales**

Cofrin Nature Park in NW Gainesville isn't completely canopied. The eponymous Geoff Parks has been working there almost daily since September in a rush to open the city's newest nature park and in a span of 40 minutes on the morning of April 7, he observed the northward migratory flight of 22 **Common Loons**. But the leading lawn chair loon is still Andy Kratter who had already bested Geoff's count with 52 Common Loons from his SE Gainesville yard on the 4th.

Pat Burns' assiduousness paid off again on February 17 since, among the dozens of Green-winged Teal at Chapman's Pond, she might have been the first of us to look carefully at each and every one. As a result, she found a single **Common Teal** among them - the county's second ever. At Home Depot in the next retention pond over, Rex Rowan found a **Greater White-fronted Goose** on the 13th. Marilyn Spalding had reported a

more significant but less obliging flock of 14 Greater White-fronted Geoses that roosted on Kanapaha Prairie for several days around February 7.

Other reports of lingering winter birds were braided with reports of some remarkably early spring migrants. On February 14, Mandy Walsh-McGehee reported the county's earliest-ever **Louisiana Water-thrush** from her Alachua yard and on the next day, Pat Lanzillotti reported a **Dark-eyed Junco** at her NW Gainesville feeder. Linda Hensley reported an extremely early **Mississippi Kite** in the skies over NW Gainesville on February 27. On March 2, Elizabeth Farley reported the county's earliest-ever **Yellow-throated Vireo** from her Melrose yard and on March 8, John Hintermister found a **Lincoln's Sparrow** near the prairie overlook on 441. On the same day, Scarlet Howell observed a single **Swallow-tailed Kite**, the county's earliest ever, over I-75 in south Alachua county. On March 27, Andy Kratter



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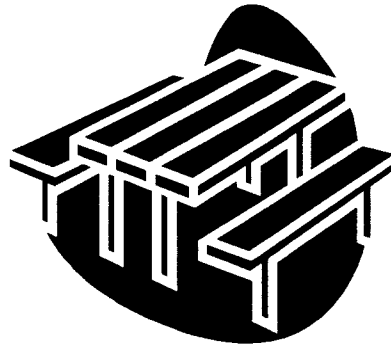
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The Alachua Audubon Society's mission is to foster appreciation and knowledge of birds and other native wildlife, to protect and restore wildlife populations and their habitats, and to promote sustainable use of natural resources.

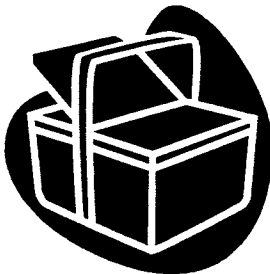
Alachua Audubon Society Annual Picnic

This year's annual election and picnic will be held on **Wednesday April 20, at 6 p.m. at a new location**. This year's annual picnic dinner will be held at '*the Little House on the Prairie*' which is the new residence of Howard Adams and Barbara Mollison.



Directions: From downtown Gainesville travel east on University Avenue (SR 24). Turn right southeast onto Hawthorne Road (SR 20) and proceed past the Alachua County Sheriff's Office until you reach SE 35th Street. Turn right (south) at the Lil' Champ and follow the road 1.5 miles until it dead ends at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. Go through the gate and follow the lime rock road for 0.5 mile. The house will be on the right—4104 SE 35th Street.

There will be a brief meeting for the election of board members and officers. Nominations are for President: Howard Adams, Vice-president Rex Rowan, Secretary Linda Krause, and Treasurer Barbara Mollison. Board members terms expiring in 2008 include Kathy Haines, Helen Warren, Leslie Straub, Bob Carroll, and Bob Simons. Bruce Christensen and Dottie Robbins will be filling vacant position expiring in 2007.



Bring your ***favorite covered dish creation*** to share with others. Alachua Audubon Society will provide refreshments, plates, and eating utensils, but most of the time will be spent relaxing, looking for and talking about birds, and feasting on a wide range of Epicurean delights! Everyone is welcome, members and non-members alike. Do not forget to bring your binoculars and insect repellent.

The Crane is published six times during 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 per issue. *The Crane* is printed on recycled paper.

Woodpeckermania 2004

By John Ennis

My birding goal for 2004 was to be less goal oriented. Quickly failing that, I decided that one of my goals would be to see all North American woodpecker species, all twenty-two members of the family *Picinae*.

It started as an obsession with finding a White-headed Woodpecker during a February trip to Southern California. I was successful. Soon thereafter, I read an article about the

“Woodpecker Wonderland” near Sisters, Oregon in the March 2004 edition of *Winging It*.

Eleven of the twelve woodpeckers that nest in Oregon can be found in this area. I decided Sisters would be my backup location to find woodpeckers I missed elsewhere.

For the White-headed, I had to hike through snow and ice about a half mile, uphill both ways, to the maintenance shop at Mount San Jacinto State Park. I heard the pecking for minutes before I found the bird. When the ranger said “dead tree”, I did not know he meant the one lying on the ground. After scanning the trees, I saw movement and looked down to find the woodpecker on a fallen pine only fifty feet away.

At trip end, I still needed Williamson’s Sapsucker, Lewis’ Woodpecker, lifer Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers, and the Arizona and Texas specialties. By fall, I planned to set up temporary residence in Sisters if need be. Obsessions are wonderful; everyone should have a couple or three.



In August, I was fortunate to add the University of Nevada in Reno and Las Vegas as a client. I got my Three-toed Woodpecker in the Mount Jefferson Wilderness/Sisters area and the Arizona Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, and Ladder-backed Woodpecker at Madera Canyon and the Saguaro National Park as byproducts of business trips to those Nevada cities. It was my first visit to the Saguaro National Park. Awesome!

In early November, I attended the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen and picked up fifty plus Golden-fronted Woodpeckers as the last nail in the coffin of this obsession. John 22, Picinae 0!

My 2004 Gila Woodpecker was fairly rare. There is a small colony of Gila Woodpeckers established in the palm trees of a park in Brawley, California, far from the Saguaro cacti of Arizona.

Bruce Smithson, Danny Thorpe, and others from the Lower Cape Fear Bird Club helped me find my lifer Black-backed Woodpecker near Mono Lake. It was a classic pose! Two birds side-by-side, one a back view and the other a side profile. It was a bird guide picture, if my camera had not been in the SUV.

I saw two Three-toed Woodpeckers at a burned out camp at Round Lake near Sisters. I watched the second fly behind a large tree and I moved in position, expecting her to come around the trunk. She did and I got a look in direct sunlight from five feet. I could count the toes! Yes, my camera was in the rental car.

The full title of the Sisters’ article is “Woodpecker Wonderland: There’s a whole lotta flakin’ going on in Oregon’s Eastern Cascades” by Steve Shunk. He assisted me by e-mail with locating the Three-toed Woodpecker. Steve’s company is Paradise

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other migratory songbirds. The open waters of Newnan's Lake provide a contrast in habitats that can add a great deal of diversity to the trip list. Trip difficulty: 1

Saturday, April 30, 8:00 AM

San Felasco Hammock: North Entrance

Meet trip leader Rex Rowan at San Felasco trailhead on Millhopper Road just east of I-75. Don't forget the **\$2.00/vehicle access fee or your annual park entrance permit**. San Felasco's meandering streams, sinkholes, ridges, and slopes set the stage for a very diverse bird habitat. During migration, many species of passerine bird can be found foraging for fuel throughout the hammock. Enjoy one of Gainesville's migratory bird hotspots during the peak of spring migration. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, May 1, 8:00 AM

Lake Alice

Join field trip leader Bubba Scales in the Lake Alice parking lot on Museum Road on the UF campus. Make close observations of nesting wading birds from the lake margin, watch Purple Martins forage for flying insects just above the surface of the lake, stroll through the swampy lowlands looking for passerine migrants, and canvas the thick vegetation at the end of the boardwalk. This is the last field trip of another great field trip season. Trip difficulty: 1

(Continued from page 4)

Birding (steve@paradisebirding.com).

My favorite bird was a little female Arizona Woodpecker. I was sweating bullets over missing this species after being shut out around Madera Canyon for a couple of days. She popped up on a tree in front of me; I wanted to hug her!

There was virtually no luck involved. I knew where to find the birds, had backup locations, and the determination to stay as long in Sisters or Arizona as needed to complete the list.

What was involved was the help of others - the ranger at Mount San Jacinto, my fellow bird club members, and Steve Shunk - plus money and many frequent traveler points.

The goal achieved, I have decided my goal for 2005 will be...errrr...to be less goal oriented.

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observed the county's second-ever spring **Nashville Warbler** in his yard.

Bob Wallace's observation of eight **Broad-winged Hawks** in NW Gainesville on March 30 seemed to suggest that the balance of bird activity has swung firmly in favor of spring migration. Since then, the most noteworthy reports are of a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Paynes Prairie by Barbara Mollison on the 31st (earliest county), a **Swainson's Warbler** at Bolen Bluff by Chris Burney on April 3, an **Acadian Flycatcher** (earliest county) and a **Worm-eating Warbler** (tie-earliest county) at Loblolly Education Center by Pat Burns and Ruth Palenik on the 6th. Thanks to all who submitted reports through April 8.

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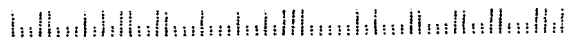


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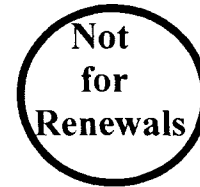
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