



The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 48 Number 1 August-September 2006

New Field Trip Season Unveiled!

Alachua Audubon Society field trips are for birders of all levels. Absolute beginners and seasoned experts can come together in the field on any of 35 field trips—eight of them completely new—in the 2006-2007 season.

For more information about any field trip, you can find an email for most of the leaders on the Alachua Audubon Society's website or by calling the field trip coordinator [see pg 2].

Saturday, September 9, 7:00 AM

Backwaters of Cedar Key

Sign up required

Shorebird intensive boat tour of Cedar Key's remote coastal marsh with Captain Doug Maple. Featuring Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Curlew. Call Wild Birds Unlimited [352-381-1997] to reserve a spot.

Sunday, September 17, 8:00 AM

San Felasco Hammock – Progress Park

Meet John Winn in the SFH Progress Park parking lot near Alachua. Don't forget the \$2.00/vehicle access fee. Wooded floodplain, pond margins, edge habitat are promising for a diversity of migratory warblers and other songbirds. Trip difficulty: 2

Saturday, September 23, 8:00 AM

O'Leno State Park

Meet John Hintermister at Winn-Dixie in

High Springs. Don't forget the \$4.00/vehicle entry fee. Explore ecosystems from the mixed hardwood river banks and ponds of the river sink to the sand pine scrub during the peak of fall migration. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, September 24, 8:00 AM

Green Acres/Sugarfoot Prairie – NEW TRIP!

Meet Nature Operations Environmental Specialist Geoff Parks at Loblolly Environmental Center on NW 34th St. and caravan to Green Acres. Explore the swampy edge of one of the largest and most significant natural areas in urban Gainesville. Trip difficulty: 2

Saturday, September 30, 8:00 AM

San Felasco Hammock – Millhopper Road

Meet Alachua Audubon president Mike Meisenburg at San Felasco trailhead on Millhopper Road just east of I-75. Don't forget the \$2.00/vehicle access fee. San Felasco may be the area's best hotspot during fall migration. Trip difficulty: 2

Sunday, October 1, 5:30 AM

Saddle Creek Park – NEW TRIP!

Meet Rex Rowan in the Target parking lot for a trip to one of Florida's better fall migration hotspots. Part of Saddle Creek's primary birding trail is along a levee allowing birders to observe birds at canopy level. Prepare for mosquitoes and there may be a small entry fee. Trip difficulty: 2

Trip Difficulty 1: Trip within easy access to the vehicle and/or level terrain one mile or less **2:** May involve uneven terrain one to two miles **3:** May involve elevation change, uneven terrain, and/or greater than two miles

Alachua Audubon Officers &
Chairpersons of
Standing Committees

PresidentMichael Meisenburg 495-1791
Vice President.....Bruce Christensen 373-6598
Secretary.....Susan Sommerville 378-2808
Treasurer Dotty Robbins 386 454-8087
Membership..... Paul Moler 495-9419
Field Trips..... Bubba Scales 381-1997
AdvertisementsBruce Christensen 373-6598
Education Emily Schwartz 372-0754
Birding ClassesKathy Haines 372-8942
Festivals Barbara Mollison 373-4270
ConservationMichael Meisenburg 495-1791
Crane Editor.....Ingrid Scales 367-1065
.....Submissions: neznarfi@hotmail.com
HistorianMartha King 372-4149
WebsiteRex Rowan 371-9296
Yearbook Bob Carroll 372-6698
Crane CirculationMargaret Green 378-3314
Assisting with Crane circulation: Alice Tyler, Pat
Burns, Nancy Oakes

AAS Website www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud

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.

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. *The Crane* is printed on recycled paper.

**Deadline for
Oct.-Nov. Crane:
Sept. 15th**



Welcome to another year of birding in Alachua County. The purpose of this column is to share some of the more remarkable bird sightings in our area and to generally discuss trends and changes in

our local bird population as we move through the seasons. If you are new to Alachua County or to Alachua Audubon, consider attending some of our field trip offerings. It's a great way to become familiar with some of our best birding sites and to meet members of our wonderful birding community. Birders of all skill levels are welcome.

The month of June has become infinitely more interesting since the advent of an event known as the June Challenge. The object of this intense (but friendly) competition is simply to see as many species of birds as you can during the month of June. With most birds settling down into predictable nesting patterns, June is generally considered a slow month for birding, with few chances of seeing something rare or unusual; however, the competition has put birders into the field who normally would be cooling their heels waiting for fall migration, and some truly remarkable sightings have resulted. La Chua Trail, on the north side of Payne's Prairie basin, was a June hot-spot. Flooded and inaccessible for the past couple of years, I decided to check conditions on June 7 and was surprised to find that the water level had dropped enough to walk at least to Sweetwater Dike. Granted, this was only a short distance, and a mucky one at that, but it was truly exhilarating to be walking La Chua again. This was made even sweeter by a pair of fly-by **Black-necked Stilts** followed by a **Yellow-crowned Night Heron**, many **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks**, and even better, long looks at a pair of locally-rare **Fulvous Whistling Ducks**. That evening, Bruce Christensen visited the same route and added another local rarity, a **Limpkin**. The following day several of us tried again and were treated to what would be the most exciting find of the month, a **Snail Kite**. It seemed almost surreal watching it sail past us and perch about 200 yards out Sweetwater Dike where we were able to ogle and admire it for at least an hour. Snail Kites breed in the Everglades and are known to wander widely after nesting, but rarely this far north. This represented only the second or third record for that species in the county. The bird

continued on page 3

obligingly remained in the vicinity of La Chua Trail for a few days, which was long enough for many June challengers to get a look.

Several other stand-out birds uncovered in June included a very early **Louisiana Waterthrush** found at O'Leno State Park by Craig Parenteau (Craig, by the way, was the winner of the June Challenge, with 105 species. Congrats!), a rare-in-summer **Belted Kingfisher** found at Watermelon Pond by Judy Bryan, a **Least Tern** reported by Howard Adams, and a **Roseate Spoonbill** first spotted by Paul Sindelar at West End Golf Course and later seen by several others at various retention ponds near the Oaks Mall. Some late-lingering winter holdovers of interest in addition to the Kingfisher included **Gray Catbird**, **Chipping** and **Savannah Sparrows**, and an **American Goldfinch**.

In the shorebird department, Rex Rowan turned up our first **Lesser Yellowlegs** of the fall at Chapman's Pond on July 5. I visited the Hague Dairy on the 15th and found a handsome **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the lagoon.

There was one out-of-town sighting worth mentioning. John Hintermister, who spotted a **Short-tailed Hawk** on the road to Shell Mound near Cedar Key back in April, found another, or the same, June 30 near Shell Mound County Park on the same road.

Fall migration is rather protracted here in north Florida, extending from late July into late October. Some species, like Craig Parenteau's Louisiana Waterthrush above, arrive astonishingly early. Others don't appear until very late and still others trickle along at a measured rate throughout. By the time this issue of the Crane

goes to print the early phase of fall migration will be in full swing. Migrants that should be passing through will include **Black-and-White**, **Prairie**, and **Yellow Warblers**, **American Redstarts**, and **Louisiana Waterthrush**. By mid-August add **Blue-winged**, **Golden-winged**, and **Kentucky Warblers** and your chances for a ten-warbler-species day start looking pretty good. Mid-to late August is also arguably your best chance for one of the most difficult but prized birds of fall, the **Cerulean Warbler**.

It's not too early to mark your calendars for the North American Fall Migration Count. The count will be held September 16 and is part of a nation-wide effort to get a "freeze-frame" picture of where and in what concentrations migrants are on that date. Teams are assigned to different territories in the county and we count all the birds we see. Experienced to intermediate birders are preferred, though there is usually space for a few serious beginners. If you are interested in participating please give me a call at 377-1683, or email me at mmanetz@yahoo.com.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through July 15, 2006

Captain Doug's
TIDE WATER TOURS
from Cedar Key
For the ultimate birding experience by boat to remote coastal marshes or near shore islands. Charter only.
Call or check our website: 352-543-9523
www.tidewatertours.com

GAINESVILLE
Ford
Your Green Dealer
3333 N Main Street Gainesville
(352) 376-5371
(877) 751-3673 TOLL FREE
www.gainesvilleford.com



2006 Ford Escape Hybrid
36 CITY MPG/31 HIGHWAY MPG

Blue Highway
a pizzeria

Eat Well, Live Well...

Check us out. A short ride down Highway 441, just south of the yellow flashing light, in Micranopy. For some of the finest food you'll find anywhere.

The calzones will make all of your wildest dreams come true!
-Rex Rowan

- Hand-crafted brick-oven pizza & calzones
- Gorgeous salads
- Gourmet sandwiches
- Home-made desserts
- A fine selection of beers, wines & sodas

Open Tue-Sat 11:30-9:00,
Sun 12-8:00 / (352) 466-0062

President's Report

At the April AAS board meeting, I was elected chapter president for the upcoming year, and it couldn't have happened at a better time. Riding the enthusiasm that having new officers and board members brings, we are undertaking some exciting projects. Perhaps the most significant among those projects is our plan to bring American Kestrels back to Alachua County.

Over the last couple of years, Bob Simons has installed several American Kestrel nesting boxes around the county. Finding successful nesting in boxes near Watermelon Pond, he asked the AAS board to support the project to help it grow. We agreed. Soon, Bruce Christensen brought the Boy Scouts of America on board to build 100 boxes as an Eagle Scout project. With donations from local businesses (Terra-Com Environmental Consulting, Inc. and Central Builder's Supply of Gainesville),

our cause is moving forward and boxes are being built. Our next step is to contact GRU, Progress Energy, and Clay Electric Cooperative to ask if they will let us install boxes on utility poles.

The potential for this project to succeed is great. Alachua County is in the middle of the range of Southeastern American Kestrels, our resident subspecies. However, unlike other counties (such as Marion), we have very few nesting boxes and hence probably fewer than 10 breeding pairs. We have miles of suitable habitat, but few appropriate nest sites.

Kestrels are the smallest North American falcon, and the only falcon to breed in Florida. They are obligate cavity nesters but do not excavate their own cavities. They rely largely upon the work of woodpeckers who have abandoned their own cavities. However, it is critical that the cavities are in the correct habitat. Years ago, the birds lived in the sandhills—a natural community dominated by longleaf pine and kept thinly wooded by frequent fires. Suitable habitat exists today in the

continued on page 5

SWEETWATER
ORGANIC COFFEE COMPANY

THE WORLD'S FINEST
SHADE GROWN
ORGANIC & FAIR TRADE SPECIALTY COFFEE.
WE ROAST TO ORDER DAILY FOR THE
ULTIMATE FLAVOR & FRESHNESS.

AVAILABLE AT:
WARD'S SUPERMARKET, MOCHA NOW,
WILD BIRD'S UNLIMITED, DORN'S,
SWEET DREAMS ICE CREAM, SATCHEL'S PIZZA,
UPPERCRUST BAKERY, BLUE HIGHWAY PIZZA,
WILD IRIS BOOKS, EARTH PETS

www.sweetwaterorganiccoffee.com

FAIR TRADE
USDA
CERTIFIED

ARTISAN ROASTED & FAIRLY TRADED

A Wonderful Birding Experience Awaits...
Reserve some time...

Marsh front, gulf views and shorebirds!
Go to cedarkeygetaway.com
OR call Tracey @ 352-375-1219

Moonlight and Magnolias
by Ron Hutchinson

A fast-paced comedy based on the true story behind Hollywood's making of "Gone With The Wind"... one of the most beloved films of all time.

"Frankly, my dear, this is one funny play."
- New York Daily News

The Hippodrome State Theatre
375-HIPP • thehipp.org • 25 SE 2nd Place, Gainesville

Sweet Dreams
HOMEMADE
ICE CREAM
of Gainesville

3437 W. University Avenue (next to Goering's Bookstore)
(352) 378-0532

Now Selling at the Downtown Farmer's Market on Wednesdays!

pastures of western Alachua County, but isolated snags ridden with woodpecker cavities are rare.

The solution is simple, and while it requires considerable financial cost, labor, and equipment, our plan is proceeding and should be successful. By this time next year you should be seeing dozens of kestrel boxes scattered throughout western Alachua County. Hopefully, the kestrels won't be far behind.

Michael Meisenburg

P.S. We need storage space for the boxes! If you can provide some temporary storage space, please contact Bruce Christensen at 373.6598.



Harmony Gardens

Nursery and Garden Center
@ GreenerySquare

5416 NW 8th Ave Gainesville, FL (352) 378-3808

Providing for living exterior environments
Specializing in Native Plants
Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden Specialists

RENAISSANCE PRINTING

serving your printing needs since 1972



- DocuTech Digital Copies • Express Fax • Digital Color Copies
- Custom Finishing • Desktop Publishing • Offset Printing
- Fast Professional Service • Free Pick-up & Delivery

4130 N.W. 16th Blvd.
Gainesville, FL 32605
(352)372-2233 • FAX 372-3435

Solar Contracting Since 1977

Energy Conservation Services of North Florida Inc.



Solar Pool & Hot Water Systems
Solar Electric System Design
Solar Electric Contracting

Tom Lane
Gainesville (352) 377-8866
Ocala 622-1445 • Fax (352) 338-0056
www.ecs-solar.com

6120 S.W. 13th Street • Gainesville, Florida 32608 • U.S.A.
State Solar Contracting License #CVC 056643

Coquette

As dawn ignites the heavens pale,
your image sparks pure joy in me:
a flash of rust with cocked-up tail,
a puckish look for all to see.

How could life without your song
- denied its cadence crisp and sweet
- deprived of melody rich and strong,
end a day still incomplete?

You twist and flit from bush to bough;
you dip and bob upon the wall,
beguiling movements that allow
your impish figure to enthrall.

You enter every open door
to seek out hidden nesting sites:
a hanging hat, an open drawer,
or nooks within the rafter's heights.

You're charming: a jaunty little puff
with coat of fawn and chestnut blend.
Dark shiny eyes speak clear enough,
"Hey! I'm a Carolina wren."

- James Minick



Brasington's Adventure Outfitters

Providing outdoor and travel needs since 1972

COLUMBIA - WILDERNESS SYSTEMS - HOBIE - KEEN
VASQUE - PATAGONIA - THE NORTH FACE - YAKIMA
THULE - ROYAL ROBBINS - KELTY - CAMELBAK AND MORE!

Gainesville:
2331 N.W. 13TH STREET
352/372-0521
352/635-4307

Ocala:
406 E SILVER SPRINGS BLVD
352/861-8022
888/454-1991

www.brasingtons.com

Memorial Weekend at the Magic Hedge

The last thing I put in my carry-on bag, as I was packing for a trip to Chicago with my wife Kirsten, was my binoculars. I did it out of habit, not because I thought I would really need them. I am both an Audubon and an ABA member so it's against the law for me to travel without them.

I had connected with a woman who was leading a trip outside of Chicago for a local Audubon group. But the logistics of getting to her trip seemed next to impossible. She asked me if I had ever bird watched in Chicago. I told her that I had been there about ten years ago and I resisted the urge to tell her "that even though Gainesville was a small town compared to her city, we did have pigeons, House Sparrows and starlings". She suggested that I visit a Chicago city park called Montrose Point, a favorite stopping place for birds migrating across Lake Michigan.

At 7:30 the next morning I am in a Taxi heading to Montrose Point. Twenty dollars later the cab driver drops me off at a golf course and says "I think the park you are looking for is near here". Dripping with confidence I walk about ten steps in a random direction, when to my amazement a beautiful male Mourning Warbler pops up to the top of a small shrub. As I am admiring the bird, I hear a loud rattling behind me. I turn to see a disheveled older gentleman climb off of an ancient bicycle with a huge old fashioned basket hanging from the handlebars. There were old clothes, a large paper bag and a bottle stuffed into the basket. I was pretty sure

he was going to ask me for some spare change and then he reached into his bag and pulled out his Swarovski EL binoculars. That's when I knew I must be in the right place.

He quickly points out a Swainson's Thrush, a White-crowned Sparrow and a Baltimore Oriole and points me toward the park. I start down a walk way with the golf course on my left and Lake Michigan on my right. Within the first fifty yards or so I see a Warbling Vireo, an Indigo Bunting and an Olive-sided Flycatcher to my left and a Spotted Sandpiper and a Caspian Tern to my right.

I begin to see a few birders up ahead and then I hear it: the sound of hundreds of birds singing! The first tree I get to on the edge of the park is filled with birds... Redstarts, Wilson's Warblers, Blackpolls, Warbling and White-eyed Vireos and an assortment of Empidonax. Flycatchers. A birder standing nearby says "the real action is up in the hedge." I walk up a little hill and I see a sign put up by the Chicago Parks Department that reads "The Magic Hedge."

The first warbler I see in the hedge is a male Magnolia and then a Chestnut-sided, a Nashville and a Canada. A woman asks me to come look at a bird she's studying. It's a Connecticut Warbler, slowly walking on the ground and jumping up to grab insects off of the undersides of leaves. It was one of four Connecticut Warblers I would see that day.

I spent the next eight hours by the hedge, studying warblers up close and personal. The birds were in the hedge all day. This was hands down the best warbler day I have ever had.

continued on page 7

Wild Birds Unlimited®

Your Backyard Birdfeeding Specialist

Birdseed · Feeders · Nesting Boxes · Nature Gifts · Optics

4215 NW 16th Blvd Gainesville
352-381-1997

www.wbu.com/gainesville
gainesvillewbu@hotmail.com

Mon-Sat 10-6 Sun 12-5



MICANOPY ANIMAL HOSPITAL



Medical, Surgical and Dental Services
Molly Pearson, DVM

Lori Wendland, DVM Joan McKinney, DVM
306 NE Highway 441, Micanopy, FL 32667

www.micanopyanimalhospital.com (352) 466-0067

There is no painful “warbler neck” at the hedge since the birds are all at or slightly above eye-level. Before the day was through I had picked up two lifers; a Philadelphia Vireo and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.

The big excitement for the local birders started at about 3 pm when a photographer came up from the beach and told us he “just took a picture of a big Dunlin.” After explaining to him that there were no “Big Dunlins,” he described what sounded like a Whimbrel, so we headed down to the lake to take a look. A Whimbrel is apparently a really great bird for the area. It was quickly added to the Illinois hotline and within an hour many Chicago birders descended on the beach.

The next day I went back to the “Magic Hedge” for a few more hours. While my two day total did include plenty of pigeons and starlings, I was thrilled with the 86 species I saw, including 21 species of warblers. If you find yourself in Chicago during spring or fall migration, don’t forget your binoculars, and don’t miss the Magic Hedge.

Scott Flamand

Audubon Adventures

Alachua Audubon is delighted to thank the following sponsors of Audubon Adventures. Their generous donations help develop an appreciation of nature and the environment in our youth. Sponsors so far this year are:

- Howard Adams
- Mary Lousie Brey
- Jane Brockmann
- Thomas D. Carr
- Mary Clench
- Don and Mary Lou Eitzman
- K.M. and S.P. Eoff
- Barbara Fearney
- Laurel Freeman
- Karen Johnson
- Martha King
- Barbara Larson
- Barbara Mollison
- Barbara and Bud Muschlitz
- Susan S. Rout
- John Winn

SOLD






We're selling houses.

**HELEN WARREN
REALTOR®**

ERA Trend Realty
4141 NW 37th Place, Suite A
Gainesville, FL 32606

352-377-9666 Office
352-376-0470 Fax
352-214-7255 Cell
E-Mail: hwarren@era.com
Website: www.era.com

  **MLS**



**Interested in Ideas?
Looking for good information?
Finding the Internet disappointing?**

Visit our
Magazine Stand
'Global in scope, local in color.'
**Goerings
Book Store**

3433 West University Westgate 378-0363
Open Mon-Sat 10:00 to 9:30 Sun 10:00-5:00



ADVENTURE OUTPOST

CANOE & KAYAK TOURS, SALES, RENTALS

Over 40 North Florida Waterways
Save this coupon 20% off any tour
See our website for calander & trip
descriptions
www.adventureoutpost.net





**Ward's
Supermarket**

Produce
Meats
Seafood
Natural Foods
Plants

Hours: 8—8 Mon.—Sat.
9—7 Sunday

**5% off your order
with this coupon**

515 N.W. 23rd Ave.
Gainesville, FL 32609-
8527
FAX (352) 372-1199
(352) 372-1741

Alachua Audubon Society
P. O. Box 140464
Gainesville, Florida 32614-0464

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Gainesville Florida 32601
Permit No. 18

The Crane

August-September 2006

iii

Join Audubon!

**Not for
Renewals**

To join Audubon on 3 levels (National, Florida, and Alachua), fill in application and mail to:

Paul Moler
7818 Highway 346
Archer, Florida 32618

If you have any questions, contact Paul at 495-9419 or pmoler@worldnet.att.net

Chapter E-18 New Membership Application

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please check level of membership:

Basic \$35.00 Senior \$15.00 Student \$15.00

Introductory Membership One Year \$20.00 Two Years \$30.00

Please enclose your check payable to National Audubon Society