



The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 48 Number 3 December 2006–January 2007

December & January Field Trips

Saturday-Sunday, December 2-3 Merritt Island NWR/Brevard County

From a promontory coastline that attracts seabirds to shore, to salt marshes with skulking rails skulk, to wetlands with dabbling ducks, Brevard Co. has serious birding resources. AAS has hired local guide, David Simpson, for a professional's insight on the best use of our time but you can be sure that Viera Wetlands will be on the short list where a Masked Duck has recently been seen.

Sign-up was not initially required for this trip but it is now requested. Local leader, Bruce Christensen, has some important info for you. So, **please call Wild Birds Unlimited [352-381-1997] to register.** Meet at the Titusville Burger King (Jct. SR 402 and US-1) at 8:00 AM on 12/2. Please prepare for a long day (optional overnight and second day) of full exposure. Difficulty: 3

Saturday, December 9, 8:00 AM Chapman's Pond

Meet Ron Robinson in the Home Depot parking lot for a tour of Chapman's Pond and other local retention areas where ducks, wading birds, and more often overwinter in large numbers. Difficulty: 1

Sunday, December 17, SPECIAL EVENT Christmas Bird Count

Call John Hintermister [386-462.1109] to discuss details if interested in participating.

Saturday, December 30, 8:00 AM Hague Dairy

Meet Mike Meisenburg at the Tag Agency on NW 34 St. near Hwy. 441 and bird one of the area's best spots for sparrows. Chance at Yellow-headed Blackbird. Difficulty: 1

Saturday-Sunday, January 6-7 St. Marks NWR

Limit 20 people. **Call Wild Birds Unlimited [352-381-1997] to register.** Meet John Hintermister 8:00 AM at the St. Marks visitor center for a trip to one of Florida's premier winter birding spots. Difficulty: 3

Saturday, January 13, 8:00 AM Alligator Lake

Meet Jerry Krummrich at the Alligator Lake Park parking lot (enter from SE Country Club Rd. in Lake City) for one of the field trip season's newest highlights. Difficulty: 3

Saturday, January 20, 8:00 AM San Felasco Hammock (Progress Park)

\$2/vehicle entry fee. Meet Adam Kent at the Progress Park/North entrance to San Felasco Hammock for a sparrow intensive trip. Trip difficulty: 2

Saturday, February 3, 7:00 AM Matanzas Inlet

Meet Bubba Scales at Powers Park on Hawthorne Road and carpool to the coast for a day of seabird observation at Florida's wildest inlet. Trip difficulty: 3

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

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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.

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. *The Crane* is printed on recycled paper.

**Deadline for
Dec.-Jan. Crane:
Jan. 15th**



The fall migration count was a great success. We had a record number of participants and all reported having a wonderful time. Highlights included a couple of **Short-tailed Hawks** spotted by both the

Newnans Lake and North Rim teams, a **Least Flycatcher** reported by the North Rim team, and a **Nashville Warbler** tallied by the team at the Progress Center. (See full results elsewhere in this issue). The weeks immediately following the count produced few surprises in the warbler department, but some non-warbler sightings made up for that. Ron Robinson again reported a **Hairy Woodpecker** from his neighborhood, and Pat Burns found another at O'leno State Park, possibly the same one she saw earlier in the fall. On September 20 Michael Meisenburg found a **Philadelphia Vireo** at his birdbath, while Rex Rowan had one in his yard later in the week. Andy Kratter located an early **Lark Sparrow** September 21 at Evergreen Cemetery, and two days later Linda Holt reported a **Black-billed Cuckoo** from her yard.

As October rolled in, **Swainson's Thrushes**, **Scarlet Tanagers**, and **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were reported from several locations, including many backyards. A **Painted Bunting** turned up October 8 at the Hague Dairy; a week later Tom Hctor found another at Newnans Lake. The big warbler finale didn't begin until mid-month, when Pat Burns and others began reporting **Black-throated Green** and **Bay-breasted Warblers** regularly from Bolen Bluff. Geoff Parks experienced a fallout October 18 at Loblolly Environmental Center, with warblers dripping from the trees and bouncing along the boardwalk, just the kind of day birders live for. Many of these birds stuck around for Pat, who visited four days later and tallied 16 species of warblers. Pat's sightings also included a delightful harbinger of winter, a **Golden-crowned Kinglet**. In the weeks following, there were several sightings of Golden-crowns both here and elsewhere in the state, possibly indicating a big year for that species.

Other winter visitors started rolling in by the middle of October. While helping lead a field trip at Bolen Bluff October 14, Andy Kratter spotted a **Greater White-fronted Goose** flying across the basin. Tom Wronski picked out a male **Vermilion Flycatcher** the following day along U.S. 441, also on the basin. This could well be the same male that wintered in

that general location last year. In case you have not heard, the basin has dried out quite a bit, and the viewing platforms at Bolen Bluff and LaChua Trail are both accessible by foot. Cone's Dike trail is also passable from the Visitor's Center to its terminus. Thanks go to the PPSP rangers and mowers for helping us reclaim sacred birding grounds! Stefan Rayer was birding LaChua Trail October 30 and noticed a sparrow he thought might be a **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow**. After a close examination, and a return trip to be certain, Stefan confirmed a perfect description of the bird, which would represent a first record in our county for that normally coastal species. The Hague Dairy remains the only reliable place for **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, as one was reported there October 29. For the third year in a row, a **Winter Wren** was found along the Black Lake Loop at River Rise, this time by an Alachua Audubon field trip on November 4. The following day Rex Rowan, leading a Jacksonville Audubon field trip, found a **Least Flycatcher** and a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at LaChua Trail. On November 8 John Hintermister spotted a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** on a wire along CR 231. The bird stayed long enough for a few of us to enjoy, including Rex Rowan, for whom this marked county life-bird number 300. Thanks to John and congrats to Rex on that milestone.

Not really a winter visitor, and indeed not a bird expected here any time of the year, a fly-by **Reddish Egret** was picked out by Dave Steadman and Andy Kratter October 22 while they were scanning the basin from the Sweetwater Overlook. I believe this is only the third record for that species here in over 30 years.

By the time you receive this issue of the *Crane* it will be high season for ducks. Best places to check include Chapman's Pond and the ponds at Home Depot and the 34th Street Post Office. This may also be a big year for ducks on Payne's Prairie Basin. Sparrows should be thick at the Hague Dairy, along LaChua Trail, and Cone's Dike. Sandhill Cranes will be returning to the UF Beef Teach-

ing Unit (Sandhill Station) at Williston Rd. and SW 23rd Street. Check these flocks for an occasional Snow Goose or even Whooping Crane. Both have been known to show up there. If you don't check, how will we ever know?

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through November 9, 2006

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Save the Date: AAS Holiday Party

Do you plan to give books as gifts this holiday season? No need to go to the internet!

On **December 8th from 7 to 9 PM at Goerings Books Store**, AAS will host a holiday party. There will be food, wine, soft drinks, and music. We will have a silent auction featuring wares and services from local artisans and businesses. It's an excellent opportunity to purchase holiday gifts, visit with friends you don't normally see in mosquito-free environments, and support your local Audubon chapter and local businesses. Goerings will donate a portion of all purchases that evening back to the chapter. **Sweet Dreams Ice Cream** shop will be participating with avian-stylized frozen treats (Blue Jay Sorbet, Chickadee Crunch, etc.) and a special menu item whose proceeds will be donated back to the chapter. If that cools you down too much, **Sweetwater Organic Coffee Company** will supply bird-friendly, shade-grown coffee. If you have an item or skill to donate to the silent auction, please contact Helen Warren (377-7755). If you would like to contribute a food item, please contact Susan Sommerville (378-2808). In any case, please plan to attend!

AAS Organic Christmas Trees And Wreaths

Alachua Audubon Society will be bringing organically grown Christmas trees and wreaths to Gainesville. If you already ordered one, you may pick it up at Harmony Gardens in Greenery Square (5416 NW 8th Ave, off of Newberry Road) on **Sunday, December 10th from noon to 5 PM and Monday, December 11th from 9 AM to 5:30 PM.**



If you have not ordered a tree, but would like to purchase one on site, we have ordered a surplus that will become available beginning Wednesday, December 12 until they are all sold.

Reserve a tree (if you haven't already ordered one), by calling Bruce Christensen (373-6598) to check for availability and prices. Thank you for supporting AAS and an environmentally responsible Christmas tree vendor!



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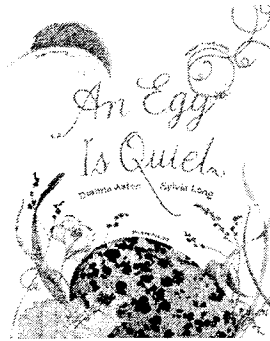


Book Review: An Egg is Quiet

By Dianna Aston Illustrated by Sylvia Long
Chronicle Books, 2006, 32 pp, Ages 5-10, \$16.95

You know how a really good book can draw you in? I'm an adult and not ashamed to say that browsing in the children's section at Goerings Book Store a few months ago, that's exactly what happened to me. I'm sure that fatherhood had something to do with my heightened sense of enjoyment, but I honestly think that the single me of years past would have been nearly as mesmerized just by virtue of my love of birds.

Simply, *An Egg is Quiet* is a beautiful book. The inspiration for the book happened in the author's childhood when a friend was asked by a teacher to describe an egg and replied, after some thought, "An egg is quiet." Dianna Aston writes a simple text that tells a story about the diversity of eggs, using a variety of adjectives that we don't normally ascribe to eggs such as; a *cozy* penguin egg under its father's feathers, a *shapely* dogfish egg, a *clever* Sooty Tern egg camouflaged among the rocks,



textured Cassowary eggs, a *warm* sea turtle egg buried in sand, many *artistic* eggs, and describes how an egg is *giving*, allowing the little fetus inside to develop. What will captivate you equally is the visual feast of Sylvia Long's multiple, masterful illustrations (eggs of over 70 species of animal are illustrated). Besides the

many, many different bird eggs featured in the book, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and even dinosaurs are not left out. The book is recommended for ages 5-10, but I think that even younger children will enjoy looking at the beautiful pictures and learning the simple storyline, whereas older children will enjoy the many side notes

that teach more detailed facts about the oviparous creatures featured in the book (e.g., why seabird eggs are pointy on one end, or how many hummingbird eggs equal the weight of one ostrich egg).

Go to Goerings Book Store or Wild Birds Unlimited and browse for yourself. But take \$16.95 with you, because those of you who have young people in your lives will want to share this book. As an avid birder with a young son, I can guarantee that.

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Fall Migration Bird Count September 16, 2006 Results

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck 42	Common Nighthawk 7	Yellow-throated Warbler 66
Wood Duck 56	Whip-poor-will 4	Pine Warbler 57
Mottled Duck 30	Chimney Swift 207	Prairie Warbler 41
Blue-winged Teal 44	Ruby-throated Hummingbird 16	Palm Warbler 8
Wild Turkey 16	hummingbird, sp. 1	Cerulean Warbler 1
Northern Bobwhite 1	Belted Kingfisher 14	Black-and-white Warbler 39
Pied-billed Grebe 12	Red-headed Woodpecker 54	American Redstart 33
Double-crested Cormorant 48	Red-bellied Woodpecker 267	Prothonotary Warbler 7
Anhinga 113	Downy Woodpecker 169	Worm-eating Warbler 5
Great Blue Heron 44	Northern Flicker 8	Ovenbird 82
Great Egret 71	Pileated Woodpecker 110	Northern Waterthrush 32
Snowy Egret 51	Eastern Wood-Pewee 16	Louisiana Waterthrush 2
Little Blue Heron 52	Acadian Flycatcher 46	Kentucky Warbler 3
Tricolored Heron 19	Least Flycatcher 1	Common Yellowthroat 119
Cattle Egret 227	Empidonax, sp. 10	Hooded Warbler 17
Green Heron 8	Eastern Phoebe 1	Summer Tanager 38
Black-crowned Night-Heron 10	Great Crested Flycatcher 10	Scarlet Tanager 4
White Ibis 195	Eastern Kingbird 10	Eastern Towhee 67
Glossy Ibis 52	Loggerhead Shrike 17	Northern Cardinal 471
Wood Stork 6	White-eyed Vireo 399	Blue Grosbeak 23
Black Vulture 46	Yellow-throated Vireo 15	Indigo Bunting 11
Turkey Vulture 109	Red-eyed Vireo 261	Bobolink 3
Osprey 9	Blue Jay 242	Red-winged Blackbird 375
Bald Eagle 14	American Crow 181	Common Grackle 21
Northern Harrier 1	Fish Crow 45	Boat-tailed Grackle 213
Cooper's Hawk 2	crow, sp. 43	Brown-headed Cowbird 6
Red-shouldered Hawk 54	Purple Martin 2	Baltimore Oriole 15
Short-tailed Hawk 3	Barn Swallow 34	House Finch 69
Red-tailed Hawk 11	Carolina Chickadee 153	American Goldfinch 1
American Kestrel 4	Tufted Titmouse 280	House Sparrow 30
Merlin 2	Brown-headed Nuthatch 1	
King Rail 5	Carolina Wren 402	
Common Moorhen 131	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 345	
American Coot 5	Eastern Bluebird 29	
Sandhill Crane 2	Veery 50	
Killdeer 6	Swainson's Thrush 2	
Spotted Sandpiper 3	Wood Thrush 1	
Solitary Sandpiper 1	Gray Catbird 4	
Least Sandpiper 4	Northern Mockingbird 151	
Wilson's Snipe 15	Brown Thrasher 34	
Laughing Gull 1	European Starling 63	
Forster's Tern 2	Blue-winged Warbler 13	
Rock Pigeon 47	Tennessee Warbler 10	
Eurasian Collared-Dove 27	Nashville Warbler 1	
Mourning Dove 234	Northern Parula 118	
Common Ground-Dove 6	Yellow Warbler 48	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo 13	Chestnut-sided Warbler 18	
Eastern Screech-Owl 7	Magnolia Warbler 1	
Great Horned Owl 5	Black-throated Blue Warbler 4	
Barred Owl 28	Blackburnian Warbler 23	



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Mark Your 2007 Calendar Now!

Save these dates for two special Audubon programs, both conducted in the meeting room of the Millhopper Public Library at 4135 NW 43rd Ave.

Saturday, January 27 at 2:00 p.m

Dr. Ken Meyer will present his latest research on two interesting birds; the White-crowned Pigeon (a mostly Caribbean species found in the Keys and Everglades National Park) and the Short-tailed Hawk. Last year, everyone enjoyed Dr. Meyer's talk on the Swallow-tailed Kite and we are really looking forward to this presentation!

Saturday, February 24 at 2:00 p.m.

Bob Montanaro of Osprey Watch at Pelican Island will show a great movie that he made in which he follows the nesting attempts of a pair of Ospreys. Montanaro spent over 100 days filming at the Refuge to chronicle the lives of the Ospreys.

Don't miss either one!

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Honor For One Of Our Own

Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) will be honoring Audubon's own **Rex Rowan** as a Conservation Steward at the upcoming **Conservation Stewards Awards Banquet**. Co-author of the book, "A Birdwatcher's Guide to Alachua County, Florida" (recently released in an expanded second version), Rex literally wrote the book on local birding. In addition, he's been a tireless advocate for land conservation. The event will be held on **Wed., Jan. 17th from 6-9pm at the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH)**. The keynote speaker is **David Steadman**, Curator of Ornithology at the FLMNH. Invitation packages will be sent soon! Check ACT's website for updates: www.AlachuaConservationTrust.org.

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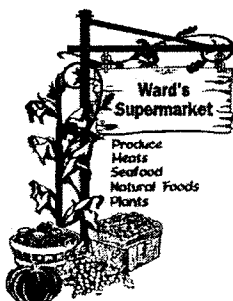
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The Crane

December 2006-January 2007

DAVID WALSH

AAS Events

AAS Holiday Party

December 8th 7-9pm
Details on page 4.

Christmas Tree & Wreath Pick-up

Sunday, Dec. 10th—12-5pm
Monday, Dec. 11th—9am-5.30pm
at Harmony Gardens
Details on page 4.

Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 17
All day event
Details on page 1.

Join Audubon!

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

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