



The Crane

Volume 50 Number 1 August–September 2008

September and early October field trips

Welcome to the '08-09 AAS field trip season!

There are 42 trips and events this year! That's right, 42, including 11 Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP) trips. This season is easily the most ambitious and exciting field trip itinerary that we've scheduled in years. So, put your copy of the Yearbook (inserted in this issue) on the fridge and make your plans to attend. As you are planning, please note that some trips require registration.

For specific information on the second Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP) season, see page 3.

Sunday, September 14

Cedar Key by boat with Capt. Doug Maple

Limited to 20 participants - Please call WBU [352-381-1997] to make a reservation or for details. Captain Doug Maple of Cedar Key has developed a shorebird intensive boat tour of some of Cedar Key's remote coastal marsh. The trip is timed to coincide with tide levels that cause birds to concentrate in large numbers in certain predictable areas. Expect to see large numbers of shorebirds like Dunlin and Short-billed Dowitcher as well as American Avocet, Red Knot, Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Curlew, and Whimbrel. Cost is \$25/person.



Saturday, September 27, 8:00 am

CLEP trip—Barr Hammock

The majestic Barr Hammock land bridge between Ledwith and Levy Prairies acquired through funding by Alachua County Forever in 2006. Meet senior planners with the county's Department of Environmental Protection Michael Drummond and Steve Hofstetter at Micanopy Chevron (Corner of I-75 and CR 234 in Micanopy). Diff: 2

Saturday, September 28, 8:00 am

Palm Point

Meet at Powers Park (east of Gainesville on Hawthorne Rd./SR 20). Trip leader Rex Rowan and participants will explore this migrant hot-spot during the peak of migratory bird movement for warblers, tanagers, thrushes, and more. Diff: 1

Saturday, October 4, 8:00 am

San Felasco Hammock—Millhopper Road

Meet trip leader Steve Hofstetter at San Felasco trailhead on Millhopper Road just east of I-75. Don't forget the **\$2.00/vehicle access fee**. 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. Diff: 2

Continued on page 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 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 20th**



to see as many species in the county during the month of June that you possibly or conveniently can. The good-natured competition not only enlivens the month, it also adds a good deal of information on local birding sites, bird distribution, and behavior. Every year, new "late dates" are recorded for lingering winter species, surprising coastal strays are discovered, and the relative scarcity or abundance of ephemeral species such as **Limpkin** and **Fulvous Whistling Duck** are carefully discussed and noted.

This year's highest total was a tie, with top honors going to Craig Pareteau and Judy Bryan, each logging 114 species. The total for all participants combined was a record-high 124 species, with twenty birders reporting their results. Some of the more unexpected birds that contributed to the total included **Least** and **Semi-palmated Sandpipers**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Blue-winged Teal**, and **Hooded Merganser**. A **Palm Warbler** made a cameo appearance, and three coastal species, **Brown Pelican**, **Least**, and **Royal Terns** were recorded as well.

Perhaps the most charming birding experience this June was the nightly **Barn Owl** vigil on the 441 platform overlooking Payne's Prairie. First discovered by Rex Rowan, as many as three Barn Owls were regularly seen at dusk, beginning their nightly patrols very close to the platform. They sometimes even perched after their initial wake-up flight, allowing breathtaking views of this seldom seen county resident. Most evenings there were at least a few June challengers present to swap stories and otherwise shoot-the-breeze while on watch, and lots of opportunities to share scope-eyed views of some of our common but still fabulous marsh birds with random non-birding visitors.

By the time you receive this copy of the Crane, the opening scenes of fall migration will be unfolding. **Louisiana Waterthrush**, **American Redstarts**, **Prairie**, and **Black-and-white Warblers** will all have been recorded; **Worm-eating** and **Kentucky Warblers** will begin drifting through. Some good places to see them would be San Felasco Hammock, Loblolly Woods, Palm Point, and Bolen Bluff. By the end of August we can expect a new wave of migrants, including our first **Chestnut-sided**, **Blue-winged**, and **Golden-winged Warblers**, and **Veeries**. Can't wait!

Speaking of fall migration, the fall North American Migration

Count this year is scheduled for Saturday, September 20. Intermediate and advanced birders are always needed to participate in this all day (more-or-less) event to record the migrant and non-migrant species in our county on that particular day. If you are new to our area, or are not sure about your skill level, and would like to participate, please contact me at 377-1683, or mmanetz@yahoo.com.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through July 12, 2008

Be a Part of the Solution to Climate Change!

Audubon Climate Change Forum: The Problem, Two Important Solutions, and Options for Personal Actions

A climate change forum focused on the solutions and providing options for personal action, will be held on September 12, 2008, from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM. The forum will be held at the University of North Florida, University Center-Room 1058, at 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224.

The speakers will include **Allen Tilley**, Professor Emeritus UNF and Moderator of the North Florida Global Warming Study Group, **Tom Larson**, Cool Cities/Smart Energy Solutions Campaigner, Sierra Club Florida, and **Pete Johnson**, Audubon of Florida Climate Change Field Organizer. The topics will include Climate Change, Carbon Cap and Trade and Renewable Electricity Standards, and Options for Personal Action to Make a Difference!

Participants are encouraged to bring their binoculars for birding on the UNF nature trails afterward! Please contact Pete Johnson, Forum Organizer at petejohnson71@gmail.com or 904-626-1725 for more information and to RSVP.

Forum sponsors include Audubon of Florida, Duval Audubon, The UNF Environmental Center, Sierra Club Northeast Florida Group, and WE Can Solve the Climate Crisis Campaign.

Sunday, October 5, 8:00 am

Chastain-Seay

Meet trip leader Bob Carroll at the tag agency on NW 34th Street just south of US-441 (across from the old ABC Liquors) and carpool to Chastain-Seay near Worthington Springs. Chastain-Seay is a riparian woodland park with boardwalks and trails on the upper Santa Fe river and is a relatively new birding spot for Gainesville area birders. Diff: 2

Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP)

This year Alachua Audubon is sponsoring its second annual series of field trips that brings attention to local land conservation efforts. These trips highlight properties that protect plant and animal life. Each trip is co-led by a representative from the land management organization or agency and AAS representative and each will focus on that site's unique flora, fauna, and history. These field trips are designed to be educational experiences, so the emphasis will be on much more than birding. The entire season is listed below.

- **Sat, Sept. 27**—Barr Hammock
Alachua County Forever
- **Sun, Oct. 19**—Loblolly Woods
Gainesville Nature Operations
- **Sun, Oct. 26**—Split Rock
Gainesville Nature Operations
- **Sat, Nov. 15**—Tusawilla Prairie
Alachua Conservation Trust
- **Sat, Dec. 20**—Morningside Nature Center
Gainesville Nature Operations
- **Sat, Jan. 3**—Sweetwater Preserve
Alachua County Forever
- **Sat, Jan. 17**—Gum Root Park
Gainesville Nature Operations
- **Sat, Feb. 28**—Blues Creek
Alachua Conservation Trust
- **Sat, Mar. 14**—Prairie Creek
Alachua Conservation Trust
- **Sat, Mar. 28**—Hogtown Headwaters
Gainesville Nature Operations
- **Sat, May 9**—Watermelon Pond
Alachua County Forever

Etiquette for the Advanced Birder?

There are some significant differences between the types of birdwatchers. While one might expect differences in the ability to identify birds, some surprising research has shown that an advanced birdwatcher may be more harmful to birds than the novice observer.

In my graduate study at the University of Florida, I surveyed over 180 birdwatchers at Florida birding festivals to test a hypothesis that advanced birdwatchers would report the least amount of potential impact behaviors. It seems logical that advanced birders would behave more appropriately since they typically have years of experience in the field and are more likely to be aware of ethical considerations when viewing wildlife. However, the results showed that on average, when compared to casual birders, the intermediate and advanced birders were significantly more likely to participate in potential impact behaviors. For example, they were more likely to use vocalized calls, more likely to flush birds and more likely to enter private property to see birds. The study suggested that these advanced

birders believed that the perceived benefits of observing birds outweighed the liabilities of their actions.

Is this true for you? How far would you go to add that absent bird to your life list? Do you know someone who might be negatively impacting birds (perhaps naively)? While this study was not meant to stereotype or criticize, I hope it can be used to help all of us realize how closely we are interconnected to wildlife. No matter what level of experience or what level of intent, we are potentially impacting birds and their habitats. I'd like to encourage birdwatchers of all specializations to review the American Birding Association's Principles of Birding Ethics

(<http://www.americanbirding.org/abaethics.htm>) at least once a year. Reminding ourselves and others of our commitment to the welfare of our avian friends is an important step in preserving them for the future.

The complete study mentioned above, is at:
http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0010560/bireline_h.pdf

Buz Bireline

Audubon Adventures

The start of the school year means we are now soliciting sponsors for classroom sets of Audubon Adventures. If you have been a sponsor in the past you know how important this program is to Alachua County students. For some children it's the first exposure to learning about the environment, wild birds, and other animals. Who knows? In one of the classrooms you sponsor there may be a future ornithologist who one day may say, "I became interested in birds back in elementary school from a publication called *Audubon Adventures*."

The Audubon Adventures program is aimed at third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms. Each sponsored class receives four sets of newsletters with materials for 32 students in each set. They are filled with information and learning activities. There is also a teacher's manual with support ideas, activities, and evaluations.

It only takes a phone call! Please call 372-0754 and ask Emily Schwartz to send you sponsor materials if you would like to help.

Bob and Erika's River Rafting Trip in ANWR

Having never been to the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge – the largest wilderness area in North America – we arranged for a guide, Carl Donohue (an Australian), to guide us the first half of July on a two week rafting trip down the Marsh Fork and Canning River from up in the Brooks Range to the shore of the Arctic Ocean. We drove up the Dalton Highway from Fairbanks to Happy Valley on the North Slope. From there we went by bush plane (a 56 year old deHavilland Beaver) to a landing strip (some tire marks on the tundra) on the upper Marsh Fork.

We unloaded our gear, food, and uninflated rubber raft plus a foot pump held together by duct tape. We had three cans of bear spray, but no guns. We pumped up the raft, lugged our gear a couple hundred yards to the main channel of the river, and set off on our adventure. The river, from start to finish, is a wide spaced tangle of braided channels.

Some time around midnight, with the sun still well above the horizon, we set up our first camp on a gravel bar. We noticed two female Dall sheep with their ba-

bies on a hilltop across the river and had a look at them with the scope. After setting up our tents and eating a light supper, we went off to bed. I had wondered if we would be able to sleep with the sun shining all the time, but both Erika and I fell asleep as soon as our heads hit our little camp pillows.

The next morning, I had my first real chance to look around for birds, and discovered that white-crowned sparrows, American tree sparrows, redpolls, and arctic warblers were the common birds there in the willows by the river. Over the open river, mew gulls and arctic terns were common. As we went down river later that day, we saw wandering tattlers and red-breasted mergansers.

After paddling hard to negotiate the many series of class 2 rapids for a few hours, Carl stopped the raft by an area where the water was slow and deep. He then stripped down and leaped into the river – this same river that was periodically going past and partially under thick beds of snow and ice. The challenge was on, so I dove in and swam back out as fast as possible.

Erika and I bathed twice more in the days that followed. The icy water was even better for drinking. We filled our water bottles directly from the river.

On the third day, after exploring the hills above the river, Erika and I hiked downstream to where the river went through a small canyon with vertical rock walls. As we got near, a beautiful white gyrfalcon flew in over our heads, circled about calling, and did a few dives at us. What a sight! Later that day, as we rafted down river, we saw four male harlequin ducks, a golden eagle, and some willow ptarmigan.

On day 4, we came to the junction of Marsh Fork with the Canning River - a vast maze of separate channels intermixed with thick sheets of beautiful blue and white layered ice which sometimes covers all the channels. This July main channels were open. Later, we passed some cliffs occupied by a pair of rough-legged hawks. By climbing up the hills above the cliffs, we were able to get some good photos.

One day later, at a camp out on the open tundra, surrounded by thousands of mosquitoes, we got good looks at a yellow-billed loon and then a snowy owl that

flew by in the beautiful midnight sunlight. We continued each day, setting out after breakfast at noon, paddling hard most of the afternoon in spurts as conditions in the rapids dictated, and setting up camp at midnight or later. In various places out on the tundra, American golden plovers, Lapland longspurs, and Smith's longspurs – all in glorious breeding plumage – were nesting.

One very foggy day an apparition appeared on the left bank. It was a large herd of caribou. Another day, Carl spotted a herd of musk ox in the willows on the west bank. We pulled the raft up on shore and went to have a closer look so Carl and Erika could get some photos and video.

One morning a few days later, before Carl and Erika were up, I watched another herd of caribou pass by and noticed a lone wolf following well behind the herd. We found fresh tracks of grizzly bears and wolverines twice and of a wolf once.

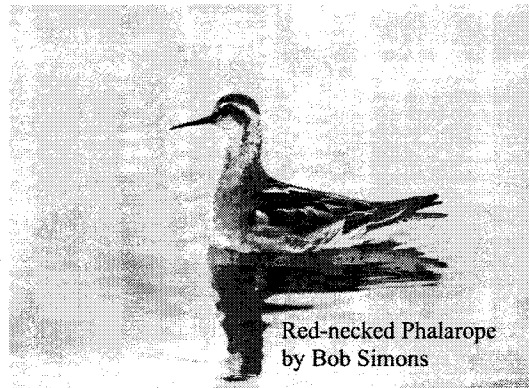
We reached the Canning River Delta on day 8, and from there on, the wind blew steady at

about 30 miles per hour, keeping the mosquitoes at bay. However, it also made paddling the raft more difficult. On the last day, near the coast, the river slowed down and the wind blew so strong that we had to pull the raft along with ropes and push it by hand while wading in the cold water. Dry pants and muck boots protected us from the cold, but it was hard work.

In the delta area glaucous gulls, pacific loons, and parasitic jaegers were common. Our final camp spot was about three miles from the shore of the Arctic Ocean. There were many small ponds there with red-necked and red phalaropes, tundra swans, and other birds. The next to last day we hiked to the Arctic Ocean, seeing Sabine's gulls along the way and lots of long-tailed ducks, common eiders, and sandpipers of many kinds.

I had hoped to jump very briefly into the Arctic Ocean, just to say I'd done it. But something about the beautiful blue-white ice bergs, the pack ice in the distance, the strong wind, and the 40 degree air temperature kept me safely on shore.

Bob Simons



Red-necked Phalarope
by Bob Simons

Community Calendar

President's Report

Several months ago Earleton resident and artist Phil Robinson contacted Alachua Audubon Society with exciting news: he had an upcoming showing and sale, and wanted to donate the proceeds to AAS. Since then, he has had two showings, and has donated to AAS the proceeds from both. The first was a month-long showing at Satchel's Pizza, and the second was a larger event at the Hippodrome State Theater. A few weeks ago AAS received a check from Phil for \$1,200.

Raising money is new territory for AAS, and while we were still learning how to do it, we are also learning how to spend it. Last week we sponsored a Florida mile for Operation Migration, the program that teaches migratory routes to whooping cranes using ultralight aircraft. The proceeds from Phil's art sale went directly to that very important organization. With help from people like Phil, Bubba & Ingrid Scales (who hosted a bird feeder cleaning fundraiser), and the AAS members who work on our fundraisers: the Christmas tree sale and the silent auction social, Alachua Audubon Society will be better able to support the agenda and goals of our organization.

Michael Meisenburg

- ♦ **Sep 6** Sierra Club Ardisia pull, San Felasco Hammock, 9 a.m.
- ♦ **Sep 16** Florida Native Plant Society local meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- ♦ **Sep 20** Florida Native Plant Society field trip to Phifer Flatwoods, 7:45 a.m.
- ♦ **Sep 24-28** Florida Keys Birding & Wildlife Festival, Marathon
- ♦ **Oct 3-5** Nature Coast Birding & Wildlife Experience, Cedar Key
- ♦ **Oct 3-4** Fall Native Plant Sale, Morningside Nature Center
- ♦ **Oct 4** Sierra Club Ardisia pull, San Felasco Hammock, 9 a.m.
- ♦ **Oct 18-19** ButterflyFest at Florida Museum of Natural History
- ♦ **Oct 19-26** Ding Darling Days, Sanibel
- ♦ **Oct 21** Florida Native Plant Society local meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Additional details may be found at the following web sites:

ButterflyFest: <http://flmnh.ufl.edu/butterflyfest/>

Ding Darling Days: <http://www.dingdarlingdays.com/scheduleofevents.html>

Florida Keys Birding and Wildlife Festival: <http://www.keysbirdingfest.org/>

Florida Native Plant Society, Paynes Prairie Chapter: <http://www.fnps.org/pages/chapters/chapterpg.php?keyword=PaynesPrairie>

Nature Coast Birding & Wildlife Experience: <http://www.ncbwe.com/>

Sierra Club, Suwannee-St. Johns Chapter: <http://florida.sierraclub.org/ssj/outings.htm>

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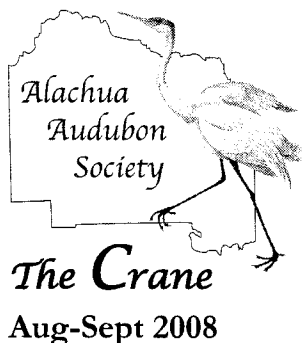
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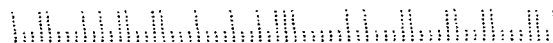
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Organic Christmas Trees!

AAS will once again be selling organically grown Christmas trees and wreaths as a fund raiser again this year. Don't forget that you have to order your tree and wreaths ahead of time. The details on varieties of trees, prices and order date in the next issue of *The Crane*. Spread the word! If you have questions about the sale please contact Bob Carroll at gatorbob23@yahoo.com.



Join Audubon!

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

Paul Moler 7818 Highway 346 Archer, Florida 32618

Questions? Contact Paul 495-9419 or
paulmoler@bellsouth.net

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