



The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 42 Number 3 ♦ November/December 2000

Imperiled Bears of Florida

***Saturday, November 18 at 2 p.m.
Millhopper Branch Library - 3145 NW 43rd Street***

Christine Small, Habitat for Bears Campaign Coordinator, will be our speaker at the November program meeting.

The Florida black bear is our state's largest native land animal, averaging about 300 pounds in weight. Most Florida black bears live in heavily forested landscapes of pine flatwoods, sandhill scrub, and dense ti-ti swamps. They once roamed the whole state but now are restricted to five sub-populations. These roughly coincide with Eglin Air Force Base, Apalachicola National Forest, Ocala National Forest, Big Cypress National Preserve, and the Osceola National Forest-Pinhook Swamp-Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge corridor along the Florida-Georgia border.

Our bear population is estimated at 2,000 bears, down from probably about 12,000 a century ago. The decline has been caused by a combination of unregulated hunting prior to the 1950s, automobile-bear collisions, and--most importantly--loss of habitat. Today we are losing about 20 acres of wildlife habitat every single day in Florida, so the bear's future is quite uncertain. Christine, who chairs the annual Florida Black Bear festival in Umatilla, will give us details on some of the more immediate threats to bears, such as off-road activity in the national forests and ill-conceived road development. She'll bring us up-to-date on the successes of wildlife underpasses and other steps being taken by various agencies to protect bears.



Please join us at 2:00 p.m. in the Millhopper Branch Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street, Saturday, November 18 for this informative presentation. As usual, there will be refreshments and a chance to exchange your birding stories and fall migration sightings with other Audubon members.

**For 24/7 AAS information: *Call* SunDial Bird Line 335-3500, ext. BIRD (2473).
Visit AAS Web Site: <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud>**

Join Us on These AAS Field Trips

For all trips it is a good idea to bring insect repellent and something to drink.

Saturday, November 11, 8:00 a.m.

La Chua Trail

Meet at DEP District HQ: going east on University Avenue, cross Waldo Road, turn right onto SE 15th Street, and proceed 2½ miles. When the road turns left, keep going straight across the 3-way intersection, through the gate, and down the road to the parking lot. *Be on time; when the ranger shuts the gate, there's no way in.* Howard Adams will lead this half-day walk onto the Paynes Prairie basin, which has been transformed by the drought into an enormous tangle of weeds – and what could be better for sparrows and raptors? Expect Northern Harriers, Sedge Wrens, Palm Warblers, and Swamp Song, and Savannah Sparrows, but there's no telling what we'll find. A Yellow-headed Blackbird slumming with the Red-wings? A Merlin battening on grackles? A rare Lincoln's Sparrow? Probably not, but the fun is in the looking, and there's nearly always a surprise at La Chua.

Saturday, November 18

Cedar Key

As the newsletter's deadline approaches, some details are still up in the air. A university-owned boat will carry participants to Cedar Key's out islands, where Dr. Andrew W. Kratter and Dr. David Steadman from the Florida Museum of Natural History will act as birding guides. Expect a wide variety of shorebirds, gulls and terns, wintering passerines, and if we're lucky (admittedly, we seldom are) a White-winged Dove, Western Kingbird, or Scissor-tailed Flycatcher headed for South Florida. The cost will be \$25 per person (\$20 to museum members), and reservations must be made in advance by calling 846-2000 and asking for the Public Programs department. Keep up to date on any late-breaking changes by calling the SunDial Birding Line's taped message at (352) 335-3500 ext 2473.

Saturday, December 2, 5:30 a.m.

Zellwood

We'll meet in the Publix parking lot at W 34th Street and University Avenue, and carpool from there. Yes, I know 5:30 is awful early, but Zellwood has been closed for nearly two years, and the only means of access is by participating in the St. Johns River Water Management District's monthly bird surveys of the area. You'll be assigned to a team, and spend the morning birding your way along the roads and dikes of what may be the single best birding location in Florida. Last winter these fields played host to Rough-legged Hawks, Cassin's and Western Kingbirds, Vermilion, Ash-throated, and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, just about every sparrow known to modern science, and something like 175 other species. The count will end at noon, so bring a lunch.

Saturday, December 9, 6:30 a.m.


Hamilton County phosphate mines

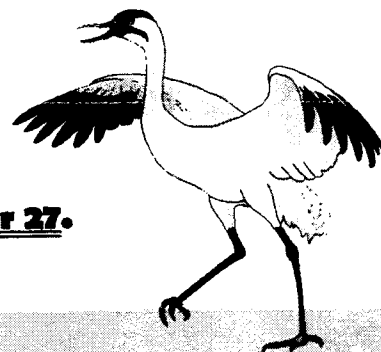
Meet at the tag agency on NW 34th Street just south of US-441 (across from the old ABC Liquors); or, if it's more convenient, meet our trip leader, Jerry Krummrich of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, at 8:00 at McDonald's at the White Springs exit (CR-136) just off I-75. These flooded phosphate mines attract water birds of every description, including at least 24 species of waterfowl over the years, herons and egrets, rails, shorebirds, Horned and Eared Grebes, raptors, and, in the brush along the waterfront, a good variety of passerines. A couple years ago we found several very cooperative LeConte's Sparrows and some Golden-crowned Kinglets, and the year after that a Yellow-headed Blackbird and a White-winged Scoter. We'll be done by lunchtime, more or less.

Sunday, December 17

Christmas Bird Count

Experienced birders should contact Craig Parenteau at 332-1121 or e-mail Dadh20@aol.com.

 **Deadline for
articles for the
January 2001
issue of *The
Crane* is December 27.**



**Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 8
6:30 p.m.**

Meeting place is Buchholz High School. Enter at the front door and proceed to designated meeting room. Board meetings are open to all Audubon members and the public.

The Crane is published monthly throughout the year except the summer months. 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 should be mailed to Membership Chairman; see back page for name and address. Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. Please limit each article to no more than two pages. E-mail to evperry@aol.com. Or mail your disk or hard copy to Evelyn Perry, 9419 SW 67th Drive, Gainesville 32608. Telephone 371-2917.

The Crane is printed on recycled paper.

Exploring Gainesville's Nature Parks

A naturalist-led trail walk is scheduled for November 4. Come out and explore Gainesville's nature parks. All walks are free. Call to reserve your spot! Please dress appropriately for outdoor activity and bring water and snacks for longer hikes. Call Nature Operations at 334-2231 for reservations and information.

For the walk in Gumroot Park on Saturday, November 4, meet at 9 a.m. at the parking area near the corner of State Road 26 and NE 27th Avenue for an easy one-hour hike on the Timucuan Trail through scrubby flatwoods, upland mixed forest and floodplain forest.

A Honeymoon Experience

by Dana Griffin, III

Clearwater played host recently to the Florida Birding Festival and Nature Expo, a four-day love in for birders and the vendors who market the stuff we all seem to need or think we need. Several hundred bird lovers showed up, including my wife and I. We participated in several of the events, but our outing to Honeymoon Island is what will stick in our minds long after we've stop pea fretting over now much we spent on new binoculars and a spotting scope.

Honeymoon Island lies about 2 miles offshore, just north of Clearwater. A causeway takes you there. The island is as good an example as you might require of what to do and not to do with coastal habitat. The southern one-third is completely developed. The northern two-thirds are set aside as a state recreation area. It's this northern part that draws most birders. At the far north end of the park loop road is a nature trail which snakes through an open stand of pine and scrub oak. The understory is covered in a robust matting of poison ivy. Some of the vines make it nearly to the tops of the pines. Since the fruits are important as fall and winter forage for several species of smaller birds, no effort is made to control, much less eliminate, this poisonous plant. The trail eventually plunges into a mucky tangle of white and black mangroves on the far side, of which one comes to the sandy shore of an embayment. Here the trail ends.

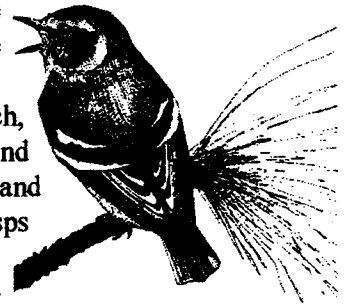
The birders on this trip got their money's worth. We'd hardly gotten started when one of our number spotted a Great Horned Owl perched about 40 feet off the footpath on a low branch of a pine. Everyone got a good look at this magnificent creature. The next prize was a Merlin poised about 200 feet away high up in a snag. The bird seemed to be dozing, occasionally fanning her tail (our leader affirmed that it was a female) and stretching a wing, but she

obviously was more awake than anyone supposed because when a Pine Warbler flew by, the raptor shot off her perch, giving those of us on the ground a terrific display of speed and aeronautics that brought gasps from the throats of several.

No, she didn't catch the warbler, but she missed only by inches. Lucky warbler.

It was at trail's end that our most incredible experience awaited. After slogging through the mangroves, we found ourselves on a shoreline facing a sand spit, perhaps a quarter of a mile away, that was covered in birds. Estimates among the more experienced calculated the number at between 2,000 and 3,000 individuals. About 70% were Common Terns. The rest ran to Caspian and Royal Terns, Whimbrels, Double-crested Cormorants and two Oyster Catchers. One of the participants - the one who came with a top of the line Swarovski spotting scope - called out a dowitcher (whether short or long-billed, he didn't say), but no one else could confirm that and the group began a round of good-natured ribbing (horrible what you have to put up with when you've laid out a couple of thousand for an optical aid). This might have escalated had it not been for a whirl of wings as virtually the entire mixed flock scrambled into the air. Our leader, Ed, called it perfectly. "It's got to be a Peregrine causing that. Check the zone above the terns!" Instantly, 17 pairs of binoculars scanned in the indicated direction and, sure enough, not one but two Peregrine Falcons were glassed completing their run over the panicked flock. Ed's stock went up by several points. Curiously, the cormorants, too big a prey for peregrines, calmly ignored the whole performance and stayed put. The two falcons continued to dive bomb the smaller birds for the half-hour we remained on site. It reminded me of nothing quite as much as wolves stampeding caribou as a way to mark a slow, sick or injured animal. A random thought crossed my mind. Over how many millions of years has a scene like this been repeated? I had no idea. I was just grateful to have been at one place on one day when such an ancient ritual was on full display.

N.B. Other early October birds our group encountered were: In the pine-oak forest, Osprey, Eastern Towhee, Palm Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Northern Mockingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker; along the shoreline, Least Tern, Forster's Tern, Sandwich Tern, Laughing Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Willet, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Spotted Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Great Egret, and White Ibis.



Around the County. . .

by Mike Manetz

The gods of birding must have read my last article in *The Crane* and, being made aware therein of the scarcity of migrant warblers and having pity upon us, saw fit to supply a quantity for the North American Migration Count September 16. In other words, we did fairly well. We tallied a very respectable 24 warbler species, with particularly good numbers of Ovenbirds (151), Chestnut-sided Warblers (30), and Northern Waterthrushes (48). While the large numbers of shorebirds at Newnan's had already begun to dissipate with rising water levels, 13 species were recorded for the count including 3 Wilson's Phalaropes plus a new county record and blockbuster of a bird...a Hudsonian Godwit. John Hintermister, Judy Bryan, and Bob Knight found it in the northeast corner of the lake and informed me by cell phone as I was counting Chimney Swifts north of Alachua, and it took all my self-control to stay in my count-territory for the rest of the day! They also picked up four Roseate Spoonbills, a first for the fall count. Another exceptional bird found that day was a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher along Cone's Dike near Camp Canal. Ordinarily a difficult bird to identify, it obliged the basin team by calling several times, and luckily Dave O'Neill, who is very familiar with the bird from years of birding up north, was able to make the identification. Rounding out the highlights was the first Barn Owl reported here in several years and found near Persimmon Point by Rex Rowan's team. We also had our first count-day *selasphorus* hummingbird that had been visiting a feeder in Judy Bryan's southwest Gainesville yard.

Hot on the heels of the count was the arrival of Hurricane Gordon, an event much anticipated by a motley band of birders that huddled in a gusty Palm Point dawn hoping to catch a look at some God a'mighty good storm-tossed rarity as is often seen at Newnan's in the wake of a tropical blow. They weren't disappointed. Just after I left the vigil and headed for work, John Hintermister looked up and shouted "Sandwich Terns" as two first county record birds flew over the group. Later the band drove over to the Windsor side of the lake, where Andy Kratter queried, concerning a bird he had in his scope,...."can someone tell me why this isn't an American Oystercatcher?" Of course no one could because it *was* an Oystercatcher, yet another county record bird, and only the second inland record of that species in the state.

A few good warbler days were recorded after the count. October 8 at San Felasco, I checked off 16 species, including 18 Redstarts, 15 Black-and-white Warblers, 14 Ovenbirds and a Bay-breasted Warbler. Adam Kent

checked there three days later and came up with a great warbler list highlighted by one rare Canada Warbler. There was a notable influx of Wilson's Warblers around the state in October, and Alachua County claimed a few. Bryant Roberts found one Oct. 11 at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens. I spotted a female at the Hague Dairy the next day, and the following week Barbara Muschlitz got one along LaChua Trail. Barbara, Karen Johnson, Ruth Palenik, and Pat Burns turned up another prized fall bird, a Nashville Warbler, Oct. 21 on a side-road north of NW 156th Ave. Nashville Warblers are seen here at a rate of about one every two years.

Rex Rowan made a case for the philosophy of "stay in one place and all the birds will come to you." At his birdbath this fall he recorded an amazing 19 species of

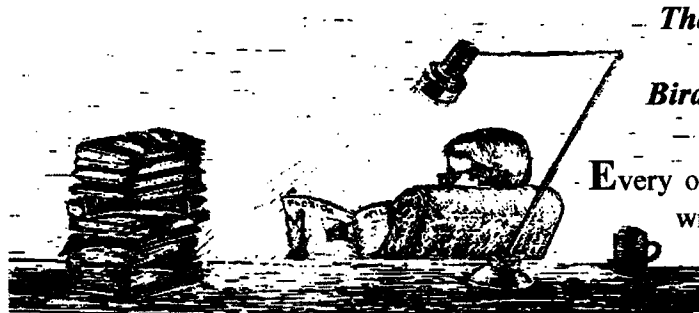


warblers including the relatively rare Black-throated Green and Bay Breasted Warblers. In addition he had visits from four thrush species including Gray-cheeked, as well as Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

One place worth checking in early winter is the Hague Dairy. This UF experimental dairy farm is on CR 237 about a half-mile north of Hwy 441. Many of our open-country winter birds can be seen there, including American Pipit and several species of sparrows. Among the huge numbers of blackbirds that gather there in November are usually a few good rarities. It has been a fairly reliable spot of Yellow-headed Blackbird. In fact, one has been spotted there already this winter. As the number of blackbirds builds up through the month, raptor species such as Cooper's Hawks and an occasional Merlin usually show up to take advantage of the feast. There is a cattail pond along the road near the barns and silo that has been good for Soras and other marsh birds. If you go, please park well off the roads and give a wide berth to dairy operations. While the birding public is graciously granted access, please remember this is a working farm.



Thanks to those who shared their sightings through October 25, 2000.



The Sibley Guide to Birds by David Allen Sibley. 2000 by Alfred A. Knopf. 544 pp., \$35.

Birds of North America by Kenn Kaufman. 2000 by Houghton-Mifflin. 384 pp., \$20.

Every once in a while, a great birder stops birding long enough to write a book. This fall, it happened twice. David Sibley, an artist and birding-tour leader, published what can only be called a *tome*. It's arguably too unwieldy for the field, with a weight of three pounds and dimensions of 9¾ x 6 (versus

8 x 5 for the National Geographic guide – hereafter NGS – and 7¼ x 4½ for Peterson). At the very least you'll have to purchase a largish fanny pack for it. But there's a reason it's so big: in illustrating a degree of variation unknown in previous North American guides, and in its increased level of detail, it aims to supercede NGS as the guide of choice for the experienced birder, and it may well have succeeded.

Sibley writes to sharpen the perception of already-proficient birders. But Kaufman, who is probably the more knowledgeable of the two, is looking in the opposite direction. He thinks, "If we don't spread the gospel of birding, it will die out as a pastime – and then who will care enough about birds to work for their conservation?" He therefore addresses himself to the novice, the angler, the gardener, the person taking the Beginning Birdwatching class or looking out the kitchen window at the feeder, or the simply curious – people who are well-disposed towards birds, and would enjoy them if this whole birding thing didn't seem so *complicated*. He therefore designed this guide to be handy – at 7½ x 4½ (about the same as Peterson) it's just the right size to slide into a jacket pocket – and to be accessible.

He made one questionable decision. *Birds of North America* uses photographs instead of paintings. Photographs do not work in field guides, for the simple reason that photographs do not show field marks with anything like the necessary emphasis. "But they show the *real bird*," you may reply. I'll defer to John Hintermister, who made the most astute remark I've heard on this matter: "I don't want to know what the bird looks like. I want to know what to look *for*." Have you ever listened to a non-birder describe a bird he's seen? It sounds like nothing on earth. A friend's wife once told me repeatedly about a *purple bird* she'd seen. I was mystified until she excitedly pointed one out to me: a Common Ground-Dove, which has a rosy blush on its breast. This sort of thing happens because non-birders don't know the characteristics that distinguish one species from another. They don't know what to look *for*. Paintings, diagrammatic rather than artistic, clarify patterns; photos obscure them.

But on the other hand, Kaufman chose some really *nice* photos. He scanned them into the computer, removed the

distracting background, enhanced them for greater brightness and clarity, and then arranged them on the page so that they form little groupings, just like the paintings in any other field guide. And I have to admit that some of these are very successful. Neither the NGS nor the Sibley guide depicts so well the characteristically distinct breast-streaking of a breeding-plumage White-rumped Sandpiper, for instance – a field mark that, once learned, makes for fairly easy identification.

The written descriptions are simple, lucid, and to the point – as you'd expect from someone who has long been *the* expert on field identification, the closest thing birding has to a pope. The range maps are better than those in any other field guide, using darker or lighter shades to represent greater or lesser abundance at a given season or during migration. And a sort of color-coded index, tied to a simple key on the first page, allows you to find any given group of birds in short order. In my opinion, a less experienced birder will still find the Peterson guide more helpful than any other, partly because of the illustrations and partly because it confines itself to birds of the East, which simplifies things enormously. But I strongly recommend Kaufman's *Birds of North America* as a secondary resource.

I would never urge *The Sibley Guide* on a beginner, though a sensible one might learn a lot from it, were he content to take from it what he could use, and let the subtleties and complications go for the time being. Complications and subtleties are there in plenty; Sibley is not writing just another field guide, and he feels justified in stretching out a bit. Take Ring-billed Gull, the gull we see every winter in our parking lots and over our lakes. If he wants to show Ring-billed Gulls in flight, he does: a first-winter from above and below, a *darker* first-winter from below, a second-winter from above, and an adult non-

breeding from above and below – six flight illustrations for a single species. There are 26 illustrations of the Herring Gull in various plumages (NGS has 13, Peterson 6), and 39 of the Red-tailed Hawk (6 in NGS and Peterson).

While Kaufman's design resembles that of most guides – pictures on one page, text and maps opposite – Sibley's is new. Each page is divided into two columns, and each column devoted to one species. At the top of each column is the bird's name, measurements, and – I like this touch – “general impression and shape,” AKA *jizz*. An Acadian Flycatcher's *jizz*, for instance, is “Large and long-winged. Flat forehead with distinct peak on rear crown and broad bill.” At the bottom of the column are the range map and a very detailed description of the bird's song and calls. In between are the illustrations: two small ones show the spread wing and tail from above and below, and two or three larger ones show different plumages, such as juvenile and adult, or first-year female, adult female, and adult male. The text is interspersed among the illustrations: a note such as “thin, dark eye-line” is placed near the bird's head, and a small pointer stretches from those words to the eye-line. As noted earlier, more difficult identification problems are given more space.

The Sibley Guide has its faults. For instance NGS is quite specific, in its treatment of the *Myiarchus* flycatchers (Great Crested, Ash-throated, etc.) about the exact arrangement of red and brown on the underside of the tail – don't roll your eyes, sometimes it's the only way you can tell which is which – while Sibley contents himself with indicating “extensive rufous” or “fairly extensive rufous.” Not all the illustrations are as good as they might be; he has definite strengths and weaknesses.

But it's foolish to quibble over details when faced with so encyclopedic and monumental a book. I'd encourage you to buy it and study it. Not because you want to be “a good birder,” but because a good field guide teaches you *how to see*, and the better you see, the more the world opens up to you. I like the way Kaufman puts it in his introduction: “Birding is something that we do for enjoyment, so if you enjoy it, you are already a good birder. If you enjoy it a lot, you're a great birder. But by sharpening your skills, you still may increase your enjoyment.” By that definition, anyone buying either of these books is in grave danger of becoming a great birder.

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These wonderful sponsors all have most generously supported environmental education in Alachua County schools for the past five to ten years. Our thanks to them as well as to the teachers who plan and use Audubon Adventures and to the students who respond with new attitudes, understanding and caring about the natural world.

- Susan Sommerville
AAS Education Chair

Have Cranes, Will Travel

by Alan Keitt

Last February I took the opportunity to attend my first meeting of the North American Crane Working Group in Albuquerque New Mexico. On the middle day of the presentations there was a declared holiday so that all attendees could visit the famous Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. This is the winter home of huge flocks of Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes. On the bus trip down to Bosque, I sat with Joe Duff of Operation Migration.

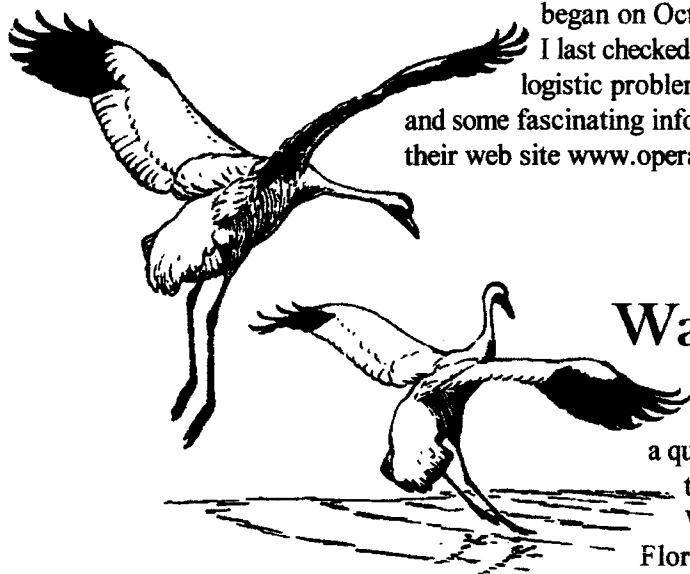
Operation Migration was founded by Bill Lishman who was “Father Goose” to a flock of geese with his ultralite airplane. I am sure most readers of *The Crane* have seen the documentary of this flight on PBS. Since then, with Joe Duff, he has chaperoned more geese, swans and cranes on migratory flights.

Joe is a commercial photographer and pilot who has become interested in the process of how the birds imprint on the plane. He told me fascinating details of his aerial crane relationships. For instance, he can tell when any crane begins to tire by watching the rate of wing beating. If needed he can pull out of line and drop back to catch the tiring bird in his air stream until it has revived and can keep up. He has worked out some slick techniques including exposing the chicks to recorded ultralite motor noise while in the egg. He has also trained the older chicks to run

around inside a circular pen while he motors the wingless ultralite on the outside. This is a prelude to getting them to fly in a group after the plane.

Of interest to Florida birders and "craniacs" is the plan to establish a third flock of Whooping Cranes in addition to the original one that nests at Wood Buffalo Park in Alberta and the non-migratory flock of captive-reared birds that has been established in central Florida. This new flock is targeted to have summer breeding grounds in the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Central Wisconsin (the site of some of my most memorable birding trips as a kid) and to winter on the Florida Gulf Coast at the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Refuge south of Homosassa. They will be shown the migratory route by following an ultralite aircraft. The Chassahowitzka site was chosen after an extensive survey revealed that the prevailing food web most closely resembles that at Aransas in Texas where the wild flock winters. The reliance on tidal water may be a real advantage as the drought has dried up many of the roosting sites for the central Florida flock.

As a prelude to the Whooping Crane flight, Joe is leading a group of 13 captive reared sandhills to Florida. The flight began on October 3 and had progressed at least as far as Kentucky when I last checked. This will allow them to assess landing sites and the myriad logistic problems encountered in such a venture. The progress of this flight and some fascinating information on cranes and their flight behavior can be found on their web site www.operationmigration.org. Stay tuned. It should be interesting.



.....More on Cranes.....

Wandering Whooping Cranes

by Barbara Muschlitz

The Whooping Crane Conservation Association puts out a quarterly newsletter, appropriately named *Grus Americana*. In their October issue, they included an article on a pair of Whooping Cranes missing in April from those introduced in Florida. In mid-May a pair showed up in south central Illinois, then disappeared again. Presumably these were the birds missing from the

Florida flock. In early July two were spotted on Michigan Peat Company property near Sandusky, Michigan, seemingly to have settled in for the summer. The company was delighted to have the birds in their naturally reclaimed bog area and blocked access into the area so that the cranes would not be disturbed. The article suggests "If these birds find their way back to Florida for the winter and return North next spring it may be the source of another migratory population of whooping cranes."

BRIDGING THE GULF

The following article written by Ian Hartzler, Project Manager, is reprinted with permission from Gulf Crossings (Volume 4 No. 1), a publication of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. To learn more about the organization and this project, visit www.gcbo.org/site_partners.htm and www.gcbo.org.

Some people still assume that hummingbirds must migrate on the backs of geese. After all, how could a tiny bird the weight of a penny fly from Canada to Costa Rica twice a year, crossing over 600 miles of the Gulf of Mexico each trip?! But in fact that's exactly what Ruby-throated Hummingbirds do whether you accept it or not. Our knowledge of the amazing migration cycle across and around the Gulf of Mexico has increased, but we still have much to learn. The goal of Gulf Crossings is not only to learn more about migratory landbirds through partner-

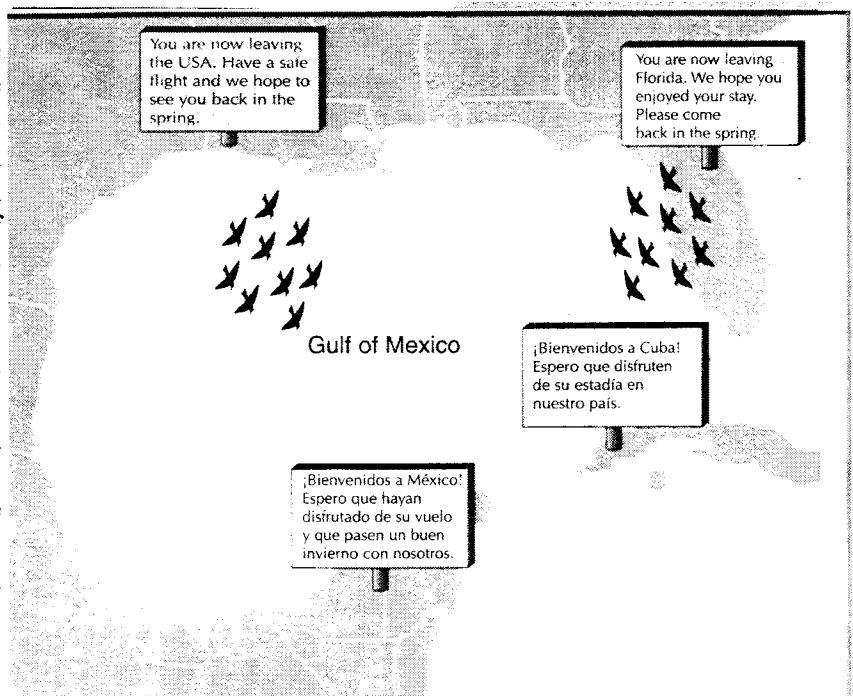
ships around the Gulf, but also to use this knowledge and these partnerships to protect these birds and their habitats throughout their itinerant life cycles.

A century ago not only was the migration of hummingbirds questioned, but the whole concept of landbirds flying across the Gulf of Mexico was generally not accepted. It wasn't until 1904 that Wells W. Cooke presented the seemingly preposterous theory of trans-gulf migration. This was challenged and debated until 1943 when George H. Lowery of Louisiana State University confirmed the

trans-gulf migration theory after viewing massive movements of birds passing across the face of the moon as he watched from ships out in the Gulf. Bird migration can be hard to study because many landbirds migrate at night, at high elevations, and over a vast area. It has now been shown that millions of birds and hundreds of species cross the Gulf twice a year during migration, but there is still much that remains unknown.

One of the ways the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory is involved in this important research is through our coordination of the Migration Monitoring Project, in which citizen scientists participate by monitoring migratory birds. The actual protection of the Gulf coastal habitat and, in many cases, more in-depth research is carried out by the site partners in the Gulf Crossings Project which the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory coordinates along with our partner TNC's Wings of the Americas. Such a coordinated conservation effort in such a large area is not without its obstacles. Three different countries and fourteen different states share the Gulf of Mexico region. Among the 34 site partners around the Gulf there are huge differences, such as in language, culture, background, economic status, experience, habitat, etc. These differences make it challenging to communicate and coordinate among these sites. However, all of those involved in Gulf Crossings have a very important bond that draws them together: the migratory birds they share. Birds defy the laws of ownership, private property, and nationality. Because they are shared, they bring people together towards a common goal of protecting them. And unless there is this cooperation in protecting them, it is unlikely that they will be protected.

A new way that Gulf Crossings has started to encourage this type of cooperation is through sister site partnerships between sites in the Gulf Crossings network. Sister site partnerships are mutually beneficial cooperative relationships between two sites in the Gulf Crossings network that have commonly shared features. The birds themselves are a shared feature, but sometimes there are also similar threats and management activities that the two sites can help each other with. In some cases, one site will be able to



provide for a need of the other site. Such sister linkages will allow both sites to benefit by sharing their experiences and cooperating to make their conservation work more efficient.

Gulf Crossings has recently established two such sister linkages. A partnership between Anahuac NWR, in southeast Texas, and the Ria Lagartos Biosphere Reserve in Yucatan, Mexico, will hopefully allow these two sites to discuss management strategies and practices related to the similar habitat at their reserves. A second linkage between the Houston Audubon Society, Texas, and the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve in Quintana Roo, Mexico, is going to fund urgently needed conservation projects in Sian Ka'an. There are many advantages to this type of partnership, and each relationship will vary according to the particular needs and features of the sites involved.

Through communication and coordination among the partners in the Gulf Crossings network and between the sister site partners, the possibilities and efficiency of conservation work in the Gulf of Mexico region will increase. There is no longer a question of whether or not trans-gulf migration takes place. The question today is will we be able to work together to allow these migrants to continue their gulf crossings.

"The greater the efforts we make to fathom the secrets of the birds, the more our knowledge expands, the clearer becomes our realization that the secrets of the birds will remain mysteries of nature as long as she abounds with the miracles of life."

- Hans Dossenbach, German Illustrator



A Groundbreaking Celebration

Sand Point Park, Titusville

Sunday, November 12 - 12:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

What is the Birding Trail?

- Identifies birdwatching sites throughout the state
- Makes it easier for you to find and enjoy natural areas
- Brings economic motivation to conservation efforts
- Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is a gateway for the east Florida section.

Enjoy:

- Free food
- Bluegrass music by the "Shadetree Pickers"
- Birdwatching hayrides at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
- Birdathon awards ceremony

The Great Florida Birding Trail is a project of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Spreading the Word

by Scott Flamand

As Festival Coordinator for Alachua Audubon, I am lucky to have both the responsibility and the fun of educating the public about our group and our goals. To that end, we will be participating in several public festivals this year, including the Animal Fair at the Florida Museum of Natural History, the Farm and Forest Festival at Morningside Nature Center, and the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival.

At these events we will set up our Audubon booth. The tables will be full of lots of information and manned by a couple of smiling Audubon folks. I like to think we will have something for everyone: For potential members we provide information about joining our organization and our various field trips and programs. For curious nature lovers, we answer questions about the birds they have seen in their own yards, and how to attract more. For kids we provide a fun bird identification quiz, with prizes available for the more astute youngsters. We also keep on hand information and pamphlets about Keeping Cats Indoors, the Chimney Swift Program and Building Bird Houses. Our table is never a boring place to be!

As you can tell, we will need lots of assistance. I will be asking for help in manning the booths in shifts, donations of magazines, and any other ideas you come up with to improve our booth.

Plan now to come join us at our Audubon table at one of the festivals this year! If you would like to donate any recent issues of Audubon or The Florida Naturalist or if you would like to help at our booth, please call me at 331-0035. The magazines can be dropped off any school day at the front office of Buchholz High School, or I will be glad to come pick them up from you.

Mark Your Calendars! The Great Backyard Bird Count 2001

February 16 through February 19, 2001

For details contact Sally Conyne at sconye@audubon.org or (215) 297-9040.



NAMC Alachua County Participants

(leaders underlined):

Howard Adams, Jessica Archer, Alex Ayerigg, Dave Beatty, Ed Bonahue, Pat Burns, Sesame Fowler, Kristen Candelera, Sam Cole, Alice Farkash, Holly Freifeld, Chuck Graham, Paul Graham, Mary Hart, John Hintermister, Josh Hintermister, Tom Hctor, Lisa Huey, Glen Israel, Larissa Israel, Karen Johnson, Marcie Jones, Greg Kaufman, Grace Kiltie, Richard Kiltie, Bob Knight, Andy Kratter, Carmine Lanciani, Mary Laodsmann, Dave Leonard, Ashley Manetz, Mike Manetz, John Martin, Kelly McPhearson, Michael Meisenberg, Barbara Muschlitz, Dave O'Neill, Craig Parenteau, Dotty Robbins, Bryant Roberts, Rex Rowan, Maralie Rumfh, Lenny Santisteban, David Sexton, Katie Sieving, Paul Sindilar, Kate Smith, Rua Stob, Laura Stockman, Terry Taylor, Linda Terry, Tom Webber, John Winn

NAMC Alachua County September 16, 2000

Pied-billed Grebe 61
 Am White Pelican 50
 Dbl Cr Cormorant 122
 Anhinga 12
 American Bittern 2
 Great Blue Heron 95
 Great Egret 216
 Snowy Egret 120
 Little Blue Heron 78
 Tricolored Heron 16
 Cattle Egret 2522
 Green Heron 9
 Blk-cr Night Heron 3
 White Ibis 194
 Glossy Ibis 52
 Roseate Spoonbill 4
 Wood Stork 36
 Black Bell Whistling Duck 22
 Wood Duck 36
 Mallard 5
 Mottled Duck 91
 Blue-winged Teal 673
 Northern Shoveler 2
 Black Vulture 110
 Turkey Vulture 163
 Osprey 16
 Northern Harrier 1
 Bald Eagle 12
 Cooper's Hawk 4
 Red-shouldered Hawk 81
 Red-tailed Hawk 12
 American Kestrel 8
 Merlin 1
 Wild Turkey 79
 Northern Bobwhite 15
 King Rail 1
 Sora 2
 Purple Gallinule 4
 Common Moorhen 54
 Sandhill Crane 6
 Killdeer 10
 Greater Yellowlegs 6
 Lesser Yellowlegs 48
 Hudsonian Godwit 1
 Semi-palm Sandpiper 1
 Western Sandpiper 2
 Least Sandpiper 102
 Solitary Sandpiper 5
 Spotted Sandpiper 7
 Pectoral Sandpiper 17
 Stilt Sandpiper 10
 Long-billed Dowitcher 6

Common Snipe 12
 Wilson's Phalarope 3
 Caspian Tern 2
 Black Tern 5
 Rock Dove 201
 Eurasian Collared Dove 44
 Mourning Dove 331
 Common Ground Dove 7
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo 21
 Barn Owl 1
 Eastern Screech Owl 21
 Great Horned Owl 6
 Barred Owl 6
 Common Nighthawk 5
 Whip-poor-will 1
 Chuck-wills-widow 1
 Chimney Swift 230
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird 23
 selasphorus sp. 1
 Belted Kingfisher 26
 Red-headed Woodpecker 26
 Red-bellied Woodpecker 213
 Downy Woodpecker 189
 Northern Flicker 16
 Pileated Woodpecker 87
 Eastern Wood-Pewee 31
 Acadian Flycatcher 38
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 1
 empidonax sp. 18
 Great cr. Flycatcher 9
 Eastern Kingbird 14
 N. Rough-winged Swallow 1
 Barn Swallow 99
 Blue Jay 279
 Am. Crow 227
 Fish Crow 110
 Crow sp. 110
 Carolina Chickadee 92
 Tufted Titmouse 337
 Br. headed Nuthatch 6
 Carolina Wren 424
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1
 Blue gray Gnatcatcher 318
 Eastern Bluebird 55
 Veery 52
 Swainson's Thrush 13
 Gray Catbird 8
 Northern Mockingbird 218
 Brown Thrasher 46
 Loggerhead Shrike 33
 European Starling 117
 White-eyed Vireo 370

Blue-headed Vireo 1
 Yellow-throated Vireo 20
 Red-eyed Vireo 221
 Blue-winged Warbler 14
 Golden-winged Warbler 1
 Tennessee Warbler 9
 Orange-crowned Warbler 1
 Northern Parula 143
 Yellow Warbler 45
 Chestnut-sided Warbler 30
 Magnolia Warbler 11
 Black-throated Blue Warbler 3
 Blackburnian Warbler 21
 Yellow-throated Warbler 52
 Pine Warbler 91
 Prairie Warbler 40
 Palm Warbler 7
 Cerulean Warbler 1
 B&W Warbler 51
 American Redstart 62
 Prothonotary Warbler 8
 Worm-eating Warbler 5
 Ovenbird 151
 Northern Waterthrush 48
 Louisiana Warbler 1
 Kentucky Warbler 4
 Common Yellowthroat 94
 Hooded Warbler 20
 Summer Tanager 62
 Scarlet Tanager 3
 Northern Cardinal 371
 Blue Grosbeak 8
 Indigo Bunting 17
 Painted Bunting 1
 Eastern Towhee 67
 Red-winged Blackbird 771
 Bobolink 3
 Boat-tailed Grackle 241
 Common Grackle 1953
 Brown-headed Cowbird 54
 Baltimore Oriole 4
 House Finch 92
 House Sparrow 62

145 species

14640 individuals



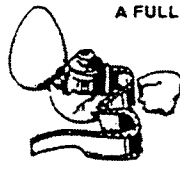
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The Crane

November/December 2000



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

Paul Moler, 7818 Highway 346, Archer, Florida 32618

Check the level of membership desired and enclose your check payable to:

National Audubon Society

If you have any questions, call Paul at 495-9419.

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