



The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 39 Number 6, January 1998

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday/Sunday, January 10/11 St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Call Rex Rowan at (352) 371-9296 if you plan to go on this overnight trip. St. Marks (admission \$4 per carload) is probably the best single birding spot in North Florida. It is particularly good for ducks: we can expect to see 10-15 species, most of them at pretty close range in the roadside ponds. Some participants in this trip may want to return to Gainesville the same day, while others may wish to camp, or stay in motels at Wakulla Springs, Tallahassee, or Panacea. This is a delightful trip with which to begin the new year.

Wednesday, January 14, 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

The AAS Board Meeting is open to all members and the public and is held in the conference room at the Florida Museum of Natural History, UF campus.

Saturday, January 17, 8:00 a.m. Chapmans Pond / retention ponds

Meet at Chapmans Pond, behind Veterans Park on Tower Road (turn from Tower Road (AKA SW 75th Street) onto SW 41st Place and look for the parking lot on the left, across from the Water Reclamation Facility). A good assortment of ducks can often be found on artificial ponds, and Chapmans Pond is the best place in town to see them, especially now that GRU has built a birding platform beside it. Expect Hooded Mergansers, Ring-necked Ducks, and Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal. Ruddy Ducks, American Wigeon, and Common Goldeneyes occasionally show up as well, and we often encounter

shorebirds, such as Long-billed Dowitchers, Common Snipe, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs.



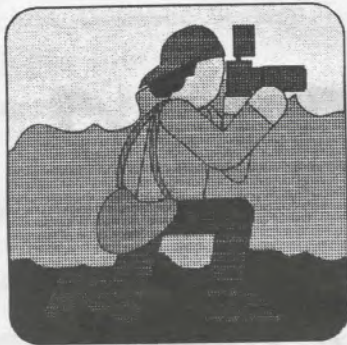
**Saturday
January 24, 2 p.m.
Program
Featuring John Moran
Details on next page!**

Saturday, January 31, 6:00 a.m. Wards Bank / Ft. Clinch State Park

Meet, to carpool, in the Publix parking lot at NW 39th Avenue and NW 13th Street. These are the two best saltwater birding sites on Florida's northeast coast, and we can expect a good selection of gulls, terns, and shorebirds. We will particularly be looking for Long-billed Curlew, Northern Gannet, Red-throated Loon, Purple Sandpiper, and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Ft. Clinch will cost \$3.25 per carload, Wards Bank 50¢ per person.

Sunday, February 8, 8:00 a.m. Bolen Bluff Trail

Meet at the Bolen Bluff Trail parking lot, about four miles south of Williston Road on US-441. This is an excellent spot to see some of Paynes Prairie's more secretive denizens, particularly sparrows, wrens, and rails. We'll also keep an eye out for Northern Harriers and other raptors, and in the woods we should encounter winter feeding flocks containing Blue-headed Vireos and Orange-crowned Warblers, among others.



Photographing the Suwannee River

John Moran, the award-winning senior photographer of *The Gainesville Sun*, will be the speaker at our program meeting on

Saturday, January 24. John's topic is "Photographing the Suwannee River." For this program, we'll meet in Millhopper Library branch, 3145 NW 43rd St., beginning at 2 p.m.

John's photos of natural scenes in north Florida have been appearing in the "Sun" for 18 years. The national magazines in which his photos have appeared include *National Geographic*, *People*, *Time*, *Life*, and *Newsweek*. His photo exhibit of the natural and folk history of the Suwannee River, "Florida's Grand Old River: a photographic essay on the Suwannee," is a part of the permanent travelling collection of the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee.

John will relate to us his experiences in taking pictures of the river and will show many of his best slides. In spring, there are two Audubon Suwannee River field trips when we'll see some of the places John has photographed. The first will be to Suwannee River State Park near Live Oak. The park is where the Withlacoochee River meets the Suwannee and was once the site of a thriving town, now completely vanished. The park also has Civil War earthworks. The trip after that is to Big Shoals, Florida's only whitewater rapids. Full details for the field trips will be in a future *Crane*.



Keeping You Posted...

SunDial Bird Line: 335-3500, ext. BIRD (2473) for the latest information on field trips, programs, where to see birds, what's happening with AAS, and last minute changes in field trips.

AAS Web Site: <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud/aud.htm> for unusual bird sightings updated on a regular basis, calendar of events, sanctuary list, AAS goals, purpose.

New AAS Members

Paul Moler, membership chairman, reports the following new members who joined in November: Matthew J. Reetz; Veronica Lye; James Penn; Suzanne Bird; Candace Valenstein; Sandi Huffman; Jill Monroe; Lori E. Murray; John M. Petti; Carole Jaworski; Virginia Mundy; Irma Harris; Linda Terry; Carol A. Campbell; Dr. & Mrs. Jay Lynch; Brenda Sapp; Barry Ross West; William & Janice Bolte; Lance & Karri Avera; Dick & Marilyn Walker. **Welcome!**

Coming next month:

Paynes Prairie Knap-In Primitive Arts Festival



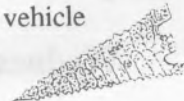
**Saturday, February 28
Sunday, March 1
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Come see how early man lived and worked...Flint Knapping/projectilepoint fashioning, deer hide brain tanning, bone, wood and antler carving, Old and New World bow and arrow construction, basket weaving, early pottery, atlatl and primitive bow demonstrations.

Paynes Prairie State Preserve
Lake Wauberg Pavilion Area
Off US 441

1 mile north of Micanopy, 10 miles south of Gainesville
(352) 466-3397

Park entrance fee \$3.25 per vehicle



Alachua Audubon Society
Officers and Chairpersons of Standing Committees, 1997-98
President.....John Winn 468-1669
Vice-President.....Rex Rowan 371-9296
Secretary.....David Wahl 336-6206
Treasurer.....Howard Adams 373-4270
Membership.....Paul Moler 495-9419
Programs.....TBA

Field Trips.....Rex Rowan 371-9296
Education.....Susan Sommerville 378-2808
Conservation Coordinator.....John Winn 468-1669
Birdwatching Classes.....Ike Fromberg 375-2246
The Crane Editor.....Evelyn Perry 371-2917 or 331-2223
The Crane Circulation.....Margaret Green 378-3314

Assisting in circulation duties of *The Crane* are:
Jean Dorney, Alice Tyler, Pat Burns, Nancy Oakes.

The Crane is published monthly throughout the year except June and July. 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. Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed, can be on disk or hard copy, and must be received by **January 20** to be included in the February issue. Please limit each article to no more than two pages. **Fax to 331-2585.** Drop your disk or hard copy by **The Branch Office, 519 NW 60th Street, Suite A**, or mail to: Evelyn Perry, at the same address.
Or e-mail EvPerry@aol.com ***The Crane* is printed on recycled paper.**

Around the County...

by Mike Manetz

If you are new to Alachua County or are a recent Audubon member, the purpose of this article is to discuss trends in the breeding, migratory, and wintering bird populations of our county, and to note the rare and unusual sightings that occur. Gainesville has a remarkably large and talented body of birdwatchers, many of whose sightings appear regularly in this column. If you see a bird that strikes you as rare or unusual in our area, please let me (377-1683) or Rex Rowan (371-9296) know about it. If you are uncertain as to the rarity of a particular bird, pick up a copy of the Alachua Audubon publication *Birds of the Gainesville Region, Florida*. This inexpensive checklist (under two bucks at Florida Museum of Natural History) Lists the status of every species known to occur here, and provides early and late dates for migrant and wintering species.



We've had a few fall birds hanging on into winter. Rex Rowan found a **Painted Bunting** on La Chua trail the 19th of November. I had an immature **American Redstart** lingering in my yard through at least the 20th, and I found an **Indigo Bunting** and a **Prairie Warbler** along Cone's Dike Trail on the 23rd. More unusual was the **Northern Waterthrush** I found Dec. 6 near the power line along Rochelle Road. The interesting thing, besides the fact that waterthrush generally do not winter here, was that the bird was but a few yards from the spot where I found one last March! The March bird was assumed to be an extremely early spring migrant, but the Dec. 6 sighting raises the possibility that this was the same bird wintering here two years in a row.

There have been a few wintering land birds to note. Evelyn Perry had three **Dark-eyed Juncos** at her feeders on Dec. 3. A week later John Winn reported another in a flock of **Chipping Sparrows** near Lake Alto. Rex found the only two reported **Golden-crowned Kinglets** so far this winter. One bird was at Gum Root Swamp and the other in cypress trees along the shores of Lake Lochloosa. He also found no less than fifty **Herring Gulls** at the landfill in Archer. To my recollection, this is the largest number of these large larids reported in several years.

Waterfowl seem to be here in better numbers this year. As of mid-December seventeen species had been reported. John Hintermister found two **Bufflehead** and a **Common Goldeneye** Nov. 22 on the pond south of the main post office on SW 34th Street. They were still present on Dec. 13. Several observers have reported

large numbers of ducks on Lakes Orange and Lochloosa. Judy Bryan, for instance, found "hundreds" of **Ruddy Ducks** Nov. 19 on Lochloosa. **Lesser Scaup** and **Ring-necked Ducks** have been present in similar numbers, along with a small number (10-20) of locally-rare **Canvasbacks**. Chapman's Pond (formerly known as Kanapah sewage treatment pond) had been loaded with dabblers all winter. Up to two-hundred-fifty **Blue** and **Green-winged Teal**, plus small numbers of **American Wigeon** and **Gadwall** have been regular. Shorebirds, mainly **Lesser Yellowlegs** and **Common Snipe**, began lining the shores of the pond when water levels dropped at the end of November, but December rains raised the level again and drove the shorebirds off. On November 29 at the Hague Dairy, John Martin reported three **Snow Geese**. Fortunately the birds stayed-put for a few days, allowing several observers to check them off.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through December 14, 1997.

Birding Festival Sandhill Crane Awareness Day

- Saturday, February 14, 9 - 4 pm
- Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
Folkston, Georgia

Birding and wildlife workshops, live Bird of Prey presentations, sandhill crane program, mistnetting and banding, sunset owl prowl, swamp night boat tour, live bluegrass music and storytelling. \$5 per vehicle. If you would like more information, contact person is Joanna Taylor at (912) 496-7836.



Presented by the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Route 2, Box 3330, Folkston, Georgia 31537 (912) 496-7836.

There is a slumbering subterranean fire in nature which never goes out, and which no cold can chill... We feel warmed by it. In the winter, warmth stands for all virtue, and we resort in thought to a trickling rill, with its bare stones shining in the sun, and to the warm springs in the woods, with as much eagerness as rabbits and robins.

-Henry David Thoreau, "A Winter Walk"

Field Trip Report

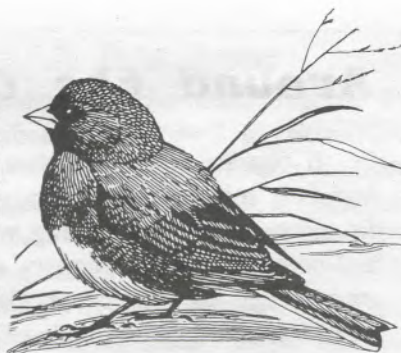
by Rex Rowan

Our December 6-7 Florida Caverns State Park camping trip coincided with the arrival of two very large and imposing cold fronts. This did not particularly bother the six birders who stayed at motels; however, my family and I camped out, and ended up sleeping - when we were sleeping and not shivering - in coats, woolen hats, and gloves.

I'd hoped the fronts would repay our suffering with a truckload of northern birds, but there were actually fewer than last time (in December 1995), and our two morning walks were disappointing. We got a nice look at three **Dark-eyed Juncos** feeding on the road and a brief view of a **Golden-crowned Kinglet**, but the two **Winter Wrens** we encountered were very evasive; our only really good find was a flock of **Rusty Blackbirds** foraging in flooded bottomland near the Chipola River. We saw no Brown Creepers, Fox Sparrows, or Purple Finches at all.

We went home via St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, and again found less than the cold weather would have led us to expect. Apalachee Bay, usually a good place to find loons, grebes, and scoters, was empty. However we did see about a dozen ducks in the ponds on the way in, including two **American Black Ducks** very close to the road.

Our December 12 La Chua Trail hike came on that very soggy weekend, and was about the only part of it that *wasn't* rainy. Again, ducks were scarce - we saw only a **Mallard**, a **Mottled Duck**, and an airborne flock of 20 **Lesser Scaup** - but the seven of us (plus two rangers) otherwise had a productive walk, finding a **Sora** in a little sinkhole beside the path, an **American Bittern** near Alachua Lake, a couple **Marsh Wrens** in the cattails at Gator Point, and eight species of sparrows, including **Grasshopper**, **White-crowned**, and **Vesper**. Our final tally was 61 species, not bad for four hours on the Prairie.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, GAINESVILLE, FL 21 DECEMBER 1997

Our weather was pleasant this year for the Gainesville CBC with mild temperatures, 51-73°, and very little wind. My group was in shirt-sleeves by 11:00. Having had over 4½ inches of rain for the month, normally a dry month with 2 inches less than that for the entire month, many areas were very wet. There just wasn't any place for most shore birds to be. The only ones we found were the two **yellowlegs** in addition to those we don't usually think of as shore birds: **Killdeer**, **Common Snipe**, and **American Woodcock**. The latter, a bird that likes wet places, gave us a new high, albeit an increase of only one. Chapman's Pond, with the great new overlook provided by GRU, became too deep for most of the puddle ducks. Earlier in the month before our heavy rains, it had been the place to study ducks and a miscellany of other birds.

Two warblers were our only

birds new to the count. Greg McDermott spotted a **Blue-winged Warbler** high in an oak tree near Lake Wauburg while the rest of us were concentrating on the birds around and on the lake. Fortunately Mike Manetz had a good look at the **Northern Waterthrush** and was able to give it a specific designation. Possibly seen on earlier counts, all waterthrushes seen previously have not been identified as to species.

Most of the new highs were small increases over previous highs. The two exceptions were the "exotics." Previous highs for the **Eurasian Collared Dove** and **House Finch** were both one; the new highs were 39 and 14, resp. That sounds like the way of exotics.

Usually coastal, a **Brown Pelican** found by Judy Bryan's team at Newnan's Lake, may have been the one which was new to the count last year. The only **Common**

Loon was spotted by Martha King's group in the retention pond behind the west end of the Scotty's on University Avenue. It may not be able to leave for awhile. Birds found on Paynes Prairie in areas generally closed to the public were **Henslow's** and **Grasshopper Sparrows** at Persimmon Point (where found in the past) and a **Fox Sparrow** at Hickory Ranch.

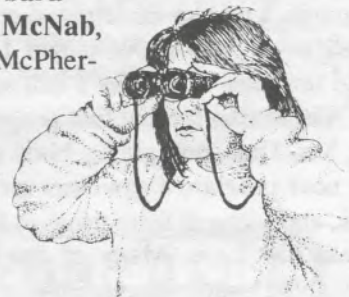
As usual, our Count-Up was held at Civitan. Their most recent renovation provided us with an even better facility. We thank Griselda and Ethan Forbes for arranging for and organizing the food and drink. They even declined help for the clean-up from us weary bird counters. Again there is no way I can thank Bob Knight enough for once again entering the data into the archaic data base on my laptop as each group reported its numbers for each species. His son, Adam, manned the adding machine for

immediate totals. With the tremendous help I had, we were finished about 9 p.m. (a new low!).

Craig Parenteau, my co-compiler for the count, was ill and missed the count (and count-up) for the first time since we took over the job from John Hintermister in 1982. Craig had already done the tremendous job of arranging for the CBC by setting up the teams and phoning many of the participants.

-Barbara P. Muschlitz

Observers (Team leaders in bold): **Howard Adams**, John Hintermister, Adam Knight, Bob Knight, Scott Knight, John Martin, Don Morrow, Brad Williams, **Jim Weimer**, Susan Weimer, Lowery Douglas, Sydney Jones, Bryant Roberts, Terry Taylor, **Mike Manetz**, Lourdes Bielsa, Mike Bubbs, Sam Cole, Tom Hctor, **Barbara Muschlitz**, Alice Farkash, Dale Henderson, Mary Landsman, Greg McDermott, **Brian McNab**, Roan McNab, Grace Kiltie, Carmine Lanciani, Ginny Steadman, **Dan Pearson**, Kelly McPherson, Tom Workman, **Rex Rowan**, Sara Byrd, Matt Williams, **Tom Webber**, Karen Johnson, Charlie Lane, Paul Sinderlar, **Martha King**, Lyla Lundeen, Alice Tyler, **Larry Johnson**, Dave Beatty, Michael Meissenberg, Richard Mortensen, **Judy Bryan**, Phil Callahan, Ruth Ernsberger, Eric Marzoff, Frank Mead, Linda Terry, Karen Warr, **Feeder Watcher**: Cathy Reno.



Tabulation: New species and new highs underlined.

Common Loon	1	Common Moorhen	194	Brown Thrasher	19
Pied-billed Grebe	77	American Coot	1629	American Pipit	3
Horned Grebe	2	Limpkin	1	Cedar Waxwing	13
Brown Pelican	1	Sandhill Crane	1596	Loggerhead Shrike	55
Dbt-crested Cormorant	609	Killdeer	309	European Starling	406
Anhinga	122	Greater Yellowlegs	18	White-eyed Vireo	47
American Bittern	4	Lesser Yellowlegs	4	Blue-headed Vireo	56
Great Blue Heron	127	Common Snipe	81	<u>Blue-winged Warbler</u>	<u>1</u>
Great Egret	152	American Woodcock	32	Orange-crnd Warbler	36
Snowy Egret	33	Bonaparte's Gull	12	Northern Parula	2
Little Blue Heron	104	Ring-billed Gull	1601	Blk-thr Blue Warbler	1
Tricolored Heron	27	Herring Gull	11	Ylw-rumped Warbler	4573
Cattle Egret	136	Forster's Tern	36	Ylw-throated Warbler	20
Green Heron	17	Rock Dove	177	Pine Warbler	130
Blk-cr Night-Heron	51	Eur. Collared Dove	39	Palm Warbler	158
White Ibis	1062	Mourning Dove	304	Black&White Warbler	41
Glossy Ibis	11	Common Ground Dove	3	American Redstart	1
Wood Stork	36	Barn Owl	1	Ovenbird	8
Wood Duck	122	Eastern Screech Owl	22	<u>Northern Waterthrush</u>	<u>1</u>
Green-winged Teal	74	Great Horned Owl	20	Common Yellowthroat	114
Mottled Duck	12	Barred Owl	36	Northern Cardinal	364
Mallard	6	Whip-Poor-Will	2	Eastern Towhee	157
Blue-winged Teal	200	Belted Kingfisher	27	Chipping Sparrow	263
Gadwall	1	Red-headed Woodp.	7	Field Sparrow	8
American Wigeon	15	Red-bellied Woodp.	173	Vesper Sparrow	11
Canvasback	1	Ylw-bellied Sapsuckr	41	Savannah Sparrow	71
Ring-necked Duck	953	Downy Woodpecker	90	Grasshopper Sparrow	1
Lesser Scaup	172	Northern Flicker	74	Henslow's Sparrow	1
Common Goldeneye	1	Pileated Woodpecker	88	Fox Sparrow	1
Bufflehead	3	Eastern Phoebe	138	Song Sparrow	63
Hooded Merganser	37	Tree Swallow	1671	Swamp Sparrow	188
Red-brstd Merganser	1	Blue Jay	180	Wht-throated Sparrow	91
Ruddy Duck	13	American Crow	316	Wht-crowned Sparrow	2
Black Vulture	127	Fish Crow	151	Dark-eyed Junco	1
Turkey Vulture	405	Crow, sp.	130	Red-winged Blackbird	9403
Osprey	6	Carolina Chickadee	88	Eastern Meadowlark	224
Bald Eagle	61	Tufted Titmouse	270	Rusty Blackbird	1
Northern Harrier	24	Brwn-headed Nuthatch	19	Boat-tailed Grackle	768
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12	Carolina Wren	268	Common Grackle	758
Cooper's Hawk	4	House Wren	110	Brown-headed Cowbird	146
Accipiter, sp.	1	Sedge Wren	23	Baltimore Oriole	8
Red-shouldered Hawk	69	Marsh Wren	13	House Finch	11
Red-tailed Hawk	38	Ruby-crnd Kinglet	216	American Goldfinch	248
American Kestrel	40	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	132	House Sparrow	33
Wild Turkey	26	Eastern Bluebird	74		
Northern Bobwhite	17	Hermit Thrush	30	Number of Species	140
King Rail	19	American Robin	278	Total individuals	34533
Virginia Rail	18	Gray Catbird	73		
Sora	36	Northern Mockingbird	132		

Great New Bird TV Program!

by Evelyn Perry

A few weeks ago in my quest to find something interesting on television, I happened upon a listing in my satellite guide called All-Bird TV. I switched to the appropriate satellite — called Animal Planet or APL where I had watched some good cat and dog programs before — and was in time to see one of the first of the All-Bird programs. I was so excited and so much wanted to be able to tell everybody about it that I took notes but as usual could not later read what I had scribbled down.

The setting for that first program was Arizona, with the host Ken Dial spotlighting birds seen on actual field trips. The next program I saw was set in Central Park in New York, and viewers were made to feel like they were part of a field trip there. Many of the birds "spotted" are then highlighted with characteristics given much like the National Audubon video tapes. The programs are very professionally done but with lots of humor too, making them very enjoyable for any level of birder.

At the end of the shows in the credits, I discovered that producers are National Audubon Society and Nature Conservancy and a web site is given. Just before publication of this issue, I took the time to follow up and went to the National Audubon site and Animal Planet (Discovery channel) site, finally finding something on the programs. So in lieu of my masterful note-taking, I've "pulled" the following information off the internet to share with you. Unfortunately, the end of my story is not good: I called Cox Cable and asked if APL is available via Cox in this area. The very helpful lady I spoke with said, "No, but if you like, I'll enter a request that it be *made* available." So, if all of you call, maybe one of these days Cox will carry it. For any of you in the "country" like me and have a satellite dish, the channel is Satcom C4 (or F4) 15. I will try to tape future shows and will share these with anyone who may be interested.

Info from NAS web: "All Bird TV Takes Manhattan on Monday, November 17...Only National Network Birding Program Makes Premiere in New York When Animal Planet Comes to Time-Warner Cable. New York's nature watchers will be in for a real treat when All Bird TV (ABTV), the only national network television broadcast devoted entirely to birds and birding, makes its Manhattan debut. All Bird TV is only one of the many unique nature programs New York's viewers will be able to experience as part of Time-Warner Cable's rollout of "Animal Planet" in New York City. All Bird TV airs on Mondays, 12:30-1 p.m. and 4:30-5 p.m., Saturdays, 3:30-4 p.m. and 6:30-7 p.m., and Sundays, 4:30-5 a.m. During the November 17 premiere, ABTV viewers will experience the unusual and fascinating birds of the American Southwest as host Ken Dial takes ABTV's cameras to Arizona. Then, on November 24, a special "Urban Birds" edition of All Bird

TV will highlight New York's surprising variety of birds with an up-close look at birding in Central Park and other locations that are among the New York area's best-kept secrets. Produced by Animal Planet, the National Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy, All Bird TV has changed the conventional view of bird watching. Viewers are invited to accompany the program's host, professor and bird expert Ken Dial, as he takes them on a series of off-beat birding adventures in exotic locales across the country. In each episode, Dial strives to provide an intimate "human's-eye view" of the avian world. Not content to observe from a distance with binoculars, Dial shatters the usual image of birders as he scales trees, climbs mountains, takes to the skies, and dives into swamps, rivers and streams in search of his elusive subjects. All Bird TV also highlights the host's enthusiastic perspective through segments featuring Dial's personal demonstrations of bird behavior — from nesting techniques to differences in mating calls — as he seeks to provide information for everyone from the novice birder to the sagest expert. Dial also provides insights about the evolution, lifestyle, science, and societies of the birds he encounters. Ever wonder why a flamingo is pink? Why are pigeons so prominent in cities? What does a yellow-bellied sapsucker really look like? How can birds remember their complex migration patterns year after year? These questions, and many more, are answered as Dial introduces viewers to some of the nation's foremost experts and bird enthusiasts while he explores the diverse world of our fine feathered friends. All Bird TV is produced for Animal Planet by Big Rock Productions and Zmedia Productions in association with the Nature Conservancy and the National Audubon Society. For Big Rock Productions, David McKillop is executive producer and Dennis Allen is executive producer for Zmedia. For Animal Planet, Margo Kent-Green is executive producer and David E. Gerber is director for productions. For The Nature Conservancy, Ben Thomas is director of film and video. For Audubon Productions, Katherine Carpenter is executive producer. Animal Planet is the new "all animals, all the time" cable network from Discovery Networks, U.S. Launched in 1996, and now available in more than 28 million homes, Animal Planet offers a wide range of programming for animal lovers of all ages, including documentaries, news coverage, children's programs, dramatic reality-based series, magazine shows, game shows and more. Discovery Networks, U.S., a unit of Discovery Communications Inc., operates and manages the Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, and Animal Planet. Animal Planet's web site address is <http://www.animal.discovery.com>. Founded in 1905 and supported by 550,000 members in 518 chapters throughout North America, the National Audubon Society strives to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, for the sake of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."

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The Crane
January 1998



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

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

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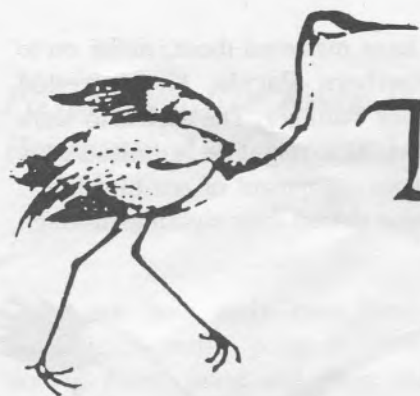
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The Crane

Alachua Audubon Society

Volume 39 Number 7, February 1998

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, February 8, 8:00 a.m.

Bolen Bluff Trail

Meet in the Bolen Bluff parking lot, 4 miles south of Williston Road, SR-331. We'll bird the oak uplands for the usual forest birds, including Blue-headed Vireos and Orange-crowned and Yellow-throated Warblers, and then descend onto the Prairie (which may be flooded halfway out the dike) to look for Sedge Wrens, various sparrows, rails, and raptors.

Saturday, February 14, 8:30 a.m.

Bird-banding at Morningside Nature Center

Meet in the parking lot at Morningside, on University Avenue two miles east of Waldo Road. Licensed bird-bander Rex Rowan will attempt to net and band a variety of pinewoods birds, including Eastern Towhee, Gray Catbird, Chipping Sparrow, American Goldfinch, and the terrifyingly strong-jawed Northern Cardinal. This is probably as close as you'll ever get to some of these species. If it rains, don't come - banding in the rain can chill the birds.

Sunday, March 1, 7:00 a.m.

Suwannee River State Park

Meet in the Publix parking lot at NW 13th Street and NW 39th Avenue. It will be our first trip to this state park (admission \$3.25 per car), which features a trail through the hardwoods adjoining the Suwannee River and another through sandhills. Come and explore it with us.



FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Saturday, February 28, 1:00 p.m.

Don Goodman speaking on "Landscaping to Attract Wildlife"



This program is a gardener's recipe for attracting butterflies, hummingbirds, and song birds. There are both native and non-native plants that attract these forms of wildlife into yards and gardens. Don's presentation will provide an introduction to the selection and landscape use of plants favored by

wildlife in our area.

Don has been the director of Kanapaha Botanical Gardens since 1978 when initial plans for the gardens began. The gardens, at 4700 SW 58th Drive, opened to the public in 1986. Last winter the gardens attracted Florida's first recorded Allen's Hummingbird.

Don's program is a follow-up to the popular and well-attended program Ron Robinson presented in January a year ago on plantings, feeders, water-drip birdbaths, and other things to do to increase the number and variety of birds for you to see in your own yard. So you may want to come early to make sure you have a seat! Please note: The program begins at 1:00 p.m. — an hour earlier than the usual program — and that we are again meeting at the Tower Road Branch of the Alachua County Library, 3020 SW 75th Street.

Around the County...

by Mike Manetz

If you are waiting for the first bird-sign of spring, you are too late. Lyn Badger reported two **Purple Martins** at Kanapaha Prairie on the 17th of January. Martins are typically our first returning spring migrants, and Lyn's birds beat the early record for the county by three days!

This has been an unusual winter in several ways. Backyard birders probably noticed that in a year of massive finch irruptions in more northerly states, **Goldfinches** were relatively absent from their feeders into the middle of January. Also by mid-January **Cedar Waxwings** and **American Robins**, while present, were not numerous or conspicuous. Another interesting feature up to mid-January was the persistence of atypical warblers. Of the twelve warbler species reported on the Christmas Count, several, including **Blue-winged**, **Black-throated Blue**, **American Redstart**, and **Northern Waterthrush**, are not expected here in winter. I had a Redstart lingering in my yard at least as late as the 19th of January. Add the **Prairie Warbler** found at Veterans Park by an Alachua Audubon field trip and that totals thirteen species of warblers reported since mid-December! Also unusual this winter was the appearance, after several winters absence, of **Fox Sparrows**. One was found at Hickory Ranch (Paynes Prairie) on the Christmas Count, and at least two more were at San Felasco Hammock the 11th of January.

Brown Pelicans were once considered extremely rare in the county, but over the past few years they have been seen much more frequently. One Pelican spent most of last winter at Newnans Lake, seen often on a fallen snag along Lakeshore Drive south of Palm Point. This winter, one bird was counted at Newnans on the Christmas Count, and on Jan. 10, Linda Terry found five of them there.

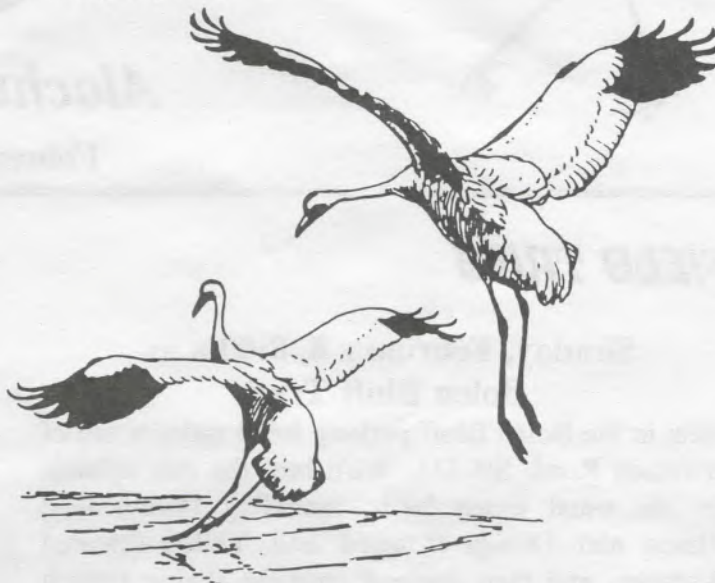
Evelyn Perry reported a probable female **Rufous Hummingbird** on the first of January. Because of the remote possibility that the bird could be a female Allen's Hummingbird, we can only reliably call it a *Selasphorus* species. The bird was still present as of Jan. 17. Evelyn also has a **Dark-eyed Junco** patronizing her feeders. A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was seen at mid-month by Rex Rowan near the first small sinkhole on the right along the first stretch of La Chua trail. Much of La Chua trail was under water in January, but some of the best sparrow habitat remained accessible.

Has anyone seen a **Hairy Woodpecker** at Morning-side yet this winter?

Now would be a good time to break out that tape of bird songs and start brushing up on your vocal identification skills. If you are not at all familiar with songs of local birds, start with **Carolina Wren** and **Northern**

Cardinal. When you have mastered those, move on to **Tufted Titmouse**, **Northern Parula**, **Great-crested Flycatcher**, and **Summer Tanager**. The trick is to work on just a few at a time. You might be surprised how much it can enhance your enjoyment of our bird life.

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through January 17, 1998.



Wednesday, February 11, 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

The AAS Board Meeting is open to all members and the public and is held in the conference room at the Florida Museum of Natural History, UF campus.

Alachua Audubon Society
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The Crane Circulation.....Margaret Green 378-3314
Assisting in circulation duties of *The Crane* are:
Jean Dorney, Alice Tyler, Pat Burns, Nancy Oakes.

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Or e-mail EvPerry@aol.com ***The Crane* is printed on recycled paper.**

Paynes Prairie Knap-In Primitive Arts Festival



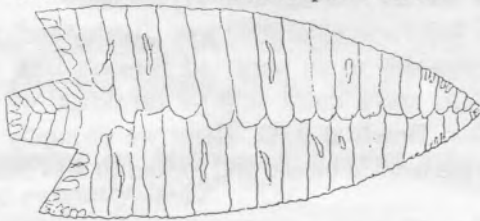
Saturday, February 28
Sunday, March 1
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Come see how early man lived and worked...Flint Knapping/projectile point fashioning, deer hide brain tanning, bone, wood and antler carving, Old and New World bow and arrow construction, basket weaving, early pottery, atlatl and primitive bow demonstrations.

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Sandhill Crane Awareness Day

- Saturday, February 14, 9 - 4 pm
- Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
Folkston, Georgia

Sponsored by Okefenokee Wildlife League and Suwannee Canal Recreation Area

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 8:30am - 10:30am | <i>Bird Mistnetting & Banding</i> |
| 9:30am - 10:30am | <i>Storytelling & Music</i> |
| 10:30am - 11:30am | <i>Live Birds of Prey & Snakes</i> |
| 11:30am - 12:30pm | <i>Basic Birdwatching Workshop</i> |
| 12:30pm - 1:30pm | <i>The Endangered Mississippi Sandhill Crane</i> |
| 1:30pm - 2:30pm | <i>Plantings for Wildlife</i> |
| 2:30pm - 3:00pm | <i>Zoo, Atlanta</i> |
| 3:00pm - 3:30pm | <i>Swamp Seining</i> |
| 5:00pm - 7:30pm | <i>2-1/2 hour Guided Sunset Boat Tour</i> |
| 5:00pm - 7:30pm | <i>Tower Sunset Owl Prowl (Limit 25 people. For reservations, call 912-496-7836.)</i> |

Bird of prey flying demonstrations at 10:30 a.m. Live Bluegrass Music all day. The concession offers guided boat tours, boat and canoe rentals, food, souvenirs.

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Coffee Anyone?

A year or so ago I wrote a short article for *The Crane* about how shade-grown coffee is being replaced by coffee grown in full sun. The coffee grown under tall canopy trees is substantially more bird-friendly, so several organizations, including National Audubon Society, are making an effort to reverse the trend.

When I wrote that article, there was little coffee designated as shade-grown available; even some of the coffee companies claimed they didn't know if their coffee was shade-grown or sun-grown. Now that's changing, and more coffee specifically labeled as shade-grown is on the market. Unfortunately, it is generally more expensive than supermarket brands, and also it is usually only obtainable through mail order. But if purchased wholesale, the price comes down a little, and at least one company gives a further discount to Audubon chapters.

So my question is: are there enough Alachua Audubon members who might be interested in this that we could place an order? The minimum we can order is 15 pounds, so maybe we need a half dozen or so people for us to place an order. If you're at all interested, give me a call at 468-1669.

--John Winn

New Members for December

Matthew Williams; Bruce Mastron; William Ellis; Shena Groger; Tammy Lynch; Karen and Randy Ealy; Howard and Laurel Freeman; Patrick Heggy; Ashley Heller-Shore; Glenn Israel; Bill Marchbank; William Kilroy; Cindy Toth; Catherine Charron; Audrey Holt; John Martin; Jill Tew; Garish and Sheri Robbins.

Keeping You Posted...

SunDial Bird Line: 335-3500, ext. BIRD (2473) for the latest information on field trips, programs, where to see birds, what's happening with AAS, and last minute changes in field trips.

AAS Web Site: <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/aud/aud.htm>

Coming April 5 & 6...

Birding Festival at Fanning Springs State Park

Florida's Hidden Coast Birdfest

Sponsored by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Florida Game and Fish and the US Fish and Wildlife Service and others

Details in next month's *Crane*

Field Trip Report

(Greg McDermott led the St. Marks NWR field trip on January 10-11. It sounds like one of our best St. Marks trips ever, so I thought I'd let Greg tell you about it himself. - Rex Rowan, Field Trip Coordinator.)

Great weather and some very nice birds were the highlights of this year's two-day trip to St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (it actually became a trip across the entire Panhandle, but more on that later). My hopes were not high as we began the trip at 5:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the 39th Avenue Publix. Very few bird reports had been received from that area, and the consensus was that duck numbers on the refuge were down. By the time everyone had assembled at the St. Marks Visitor Center at 8:30, we had an impressive assemblage of 19 people from Gainesville, Micanopy, Hawthorne, and Lake City.

Our first stop was the lighthouse, where we scanned Apalachee Bay for loons and sea-ducks while the sun was still favorably in the east. There were no scoters in sight, but the group did get decent looks at several **Common Loons** and **Horned Grebes**. **Canvasbacks** were plentiful on Lighthouse Pond, and we were able to pick two **Redheads** out of the pack. Most of the group proceeded to the shoreline to try and flush **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** from the *Spartina*. By fanning out and walking slowly, we were able to get good looks at several **Nelson's Sharp-taileds**, as well as one **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (life bird #1 for me for the trip). While the rest of the group was chasing sparrows, Bryant Roberts and Howard Adams found a **Reddish Egret**, a species not normally found so far north in winter.

Our next stop was Headquarters Pond, which proved to be almost duck-free (a lonely **Green-winged Teal** was the only occupant). A **Sora** obliged us, however, by walking around the cattails just off the platform while our group watched. A quick jaunt out the Mounds Pool Trail yielded a small group of **Brown-headed Nuthatches** and little else, so we decided to start the long walk (some may say Death March) to Stoney Bayou to look for **Vermilion Flycatchers**. The first pond along the trail contained several **Mallards** and **Northern Pintails**, as well as numerous **Common Snipe** and **Dowitchers**. Some of the group decided to linger here as opposed to continuing the arduous trek. For the hearty souls who pressed on, perseverance was rewarded, first by a flock of six **Greater White-fronted Geese** flying over Stoney Bayou Pool #2, and then, after walking almost to the end of Stoney Bayou Pool #3, by a lone immature female **Vermilion Flycatcher**. Along the way, Bryant managed to flush a **Grasshopper Sparrow**, and also found two **Pectoral Sandpipers**, a rare bird in winter in Florida. On the drive back to the visitor center, Barbara Muschlitz and Mary Landsman found two **American Black Ducks** keeping company with several **Mallards** in a roadside pool.



It was now late afternoon. We drove down to Mashes Sands County Park on Ochlockonee Bay, and then to Alligator Point. There we found the **Common Gulls** and **terns**, huge rafts of **scaup**, and a nice flock of about 25 **Common Goldeneye**, including several beautiful drakes.

Most participants headed back to Gainesville on Saturday evening. Only five foolish individuals had not had enough and decided to bird on Sunday as well. Over a seafood dinner in Panacea, it was agreed that we would head another 160 miles west to the Ft. Walton Beach landfill, where the Rare Bird Alert reported a **Harris's Sparrow** and an **Ash-throated Flycatcher**.

We left Panacea at 5:00 a.m. Sunday and, after a 28-mile detour due to an unnamed person's lack of navigational skills and a quick stop for breakfast, we arrived in Ft. Walton Beach at 9:00. There we promptly found the gates to the landfill closed and locked (it was Sunday, after all!).

We met a birder from Tallahassee who had come for the sparrow and together we secured permission to drive the neighboring Ft. Walton Sprayfields. There we found an open gate that connected to a power line cut that connected to the landfill. It appeared that luck would be on our side after all! We walked the power line cut to the area in which both the sparrow and the flycatcher had been seen. In a field adjacent to the landfill, we found 12 more **Greater White-fronted Geese** and four blue-morph **Snow Geese**. After walking the area described in the Rare Bird Alert for about an hour and a half, we had found many **Savannah, Vesper, and Field Sparrows**, as well as one **White-crowned Sparrow** and one **White-throated Sparrow**.

Finally, Mary Landsman flushed a sparrow that she described as "large." Knowing that **Harris's Sparrow** is the largest sparrow in the U.S., we concentrated on finding the bird she had flushed. Finally Eric, the birder from Tallahassee, exclaimed, "I've got it!" and we all spent the next 15 minutes watching an adult **Harris's Sparrow** (life bird #2 for me for the trip) feed with several **Field Sparrows** and an adult **White-crowned**.

While basking in the afterglow of a successful chase, someone made the comment that we already had twelve sparrow species for the trip, and all we needed to make it really great was a **LeConte's Sparrow**. Eric replied "Oh, I can tell you where to find those!" and proceeded to draw us a map to a place near Shell Point, almost back where we had started from eight hours earlier.

We piled back into the car and headed east again, across the Apalachicola River back into the Eastern Time Zone, and three and a half hours later we were once again pulling up to Apalachee Bay. We followed Eric's map past a condominium complex to a small patch of broom-sedge next to a pond. His directions were right on the money, for almost immediately after exiting the car we spotted a lovely LeConte's Sparrow (lifebird #3) sitting near the top of a broom-sedge stalk feeding in the golden light of a fading afternoon. We had put too many miles on Howard's mini-van that day, but, to a person, I think we all agreed it was worth it. I had added three lifebirds for the trip (all sparrows), and our two day trip list contained 17 species of waterfowl and an amazing 13 species of sparrows! It all proves that occasionally, just occasionally, these field trips turn out all right.

Birds to Bytes

BirdSource's "Great '98 Backyard Bird Count" invites families to make history

Count sponsored by Audubon & Cornell takes place Weekend of February 20-22

Ithaca, NY, January 20 - People all across the continent can help make bird-watching history on February 20, 21, and 22 by participating in the first-ever BirdSource Backyard Bird Count, co-sponsored by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

The BirdSource Great '98 Backyard Bird Count, the first of its kind, invites every family and individual in the country to count birds they see at their bird feeders, backyards and local parks or other outdoor locations, aiding scientists' understanding of the effects of weather phenomena on bird movements. The key to this history-making event is that participants contribute their sightings online, through a revolutionary World Wide Web site, BirdSource <<http://birdsource.cornell.edu/>>, a joint project of Audubon and Cornell. In turn, BirdSource provides almost instantaneous feedback to participants through compelling graphics, animated maps and constantly-updated summaries.

"The BirdSource Great '98 Backyard Bird Count is a state-of-the-art project and a great family activity. It's fun, it's easy to participate in, and it's good for science," says Cornell Lab of Ornithology Director John Fitzpatrick. "All



you need is a love of the outdoors and access to a computer. Everyone who participates in BirdSource's first Backyard Bird Count can tell generations to come that they helped make history, being the first to take part in an instant, continent-wide bird survey on the Internet."

"It has become increasingly apparent that weather phenomena like El Niño may influence the winter movements of birds," says Audubon Senior Vice President for Science Frank Gill. "We need people to help us. If every one of the approximately 60 million bird watchers in the United States could participate, they would add significantly to our knowledge of how weather has impacted birds before they begin their journeys north." The BirdSource Great '98 Backyard Bird Count will take place when birds are at the southern-most point in their migrations, just before they begin their spring return trips.

Now, everyone can help by being part of the BirdSource Great '98 Backyard Bird Count. On the weekend of February 20-22, parents, children and grandparents - anyone with an interest in birds and access to the Internet - should watch their bird feeders and count the maximum number of the different bird species they see. For those without feeders, counts can be made in backyards, neighborhoods or local parks. Participants can spend as little or as much time as they want counting birds during the three-day period. They are invited to submit their counts via BirdSource - which also offers assistance in bird identification - on an easy-to-use form.

Forms will be interpreted by Audubon and Cornell scientists for instant display on the web. "BirdSource allows virtually up-to-the-minute analysis of important data," says Cornell's Fitzpatrick. "Watching the count results will be like watching election returns from all across the country, right on your own computer screen. This exciting and engaging technology - a tool that just wasn't available before the creation of BirdSource - will revolutionize our ability to keep track of birds."

BirdSource contributors have already helped make some exciting discoveries. Winter finches typically remain in Canada throughout the year; however, BirdSource's Winter Finch Survey has revealed that this season, finches are streaming into the U.S. in recordbreaking numbers. In addition, households participating in Project FeederWatch - a winter survey of North American feeder birds - have been using BirdSource to log their counts, giving scientists an insight into bird distribution. BirdSource's Great '98 Backyard Bird Count will help scientists round out their picture of what has been a truly singular winter.

To learn more about the Great '98 Backyard Bird Count, visit the BirdSource web site. People interested in counting can also call Cornell at 1-800-843-2473 or write: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

1997 Cedar Key Christmas Bird Count: 2 January 1998

Despite a strong Northeasterly wind and the extreme low tide which resulted, the Cedar Key CBC recorded 138 species, its highest total since 1989. New maximums were recorded for **American White Pelican**, **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, **Wood Stork**, **Cooper's Hawk** (having profited from the Eurasian Collared Dove explosion), **Semipalmated Plover**, **American Avocet**, **marbled Godwit**, **Red Knot**, **Common Snipe**, and **Common Grackle**. Species recorded for the first time were **American Bittern**, **Cattle Egret**, **Wild Turkey**, and **Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow**. Also notable were 3 different sightings of **Western Kingbird** (although probably only 2 different individuals), last noted on the 1980 count.

Mention should be made of the special contributions of some of our observers: Dr. Gian Basili, of Florida Audubon, who drove from his home in Mount Dora to find the first **Red-breasted Nuthatch** since 1989, and Don Morrow, John Hintermister, and Ken Litzenberger, who not only battled the wind and low temperatures, but had an unscheduled "flight" out of the airboat that is used to survey the more inaccessible sections of the count area.

After some discussion, it was decided to schedule next year's count for Saturday, January 2. Many, many thanks to our stalwart band of observers.

--Dale C. Henderson

Compilers Ron Christen & Dale Henderson. Other Participants: Howard Adams, Gian Basili, John Hintermister, Grace Kiltie, Carmine Lanciani, Mary Landsman, Mike Manetz, B.K. McNab, Derrick McNab, Don Morrow, Barbara Muschlitz, Bo Page, Bryant Roberts, Rex Rowan, Betty Smocovitis, David Steadman, and Nancy Taylor

Common Loon	26	American Avocet	71	Carolina Wren	42
Pied-billed Grebe	3	Greater Yellowlegs	28	House Wren	27
Horned Grebe	23	Lesser Yellowlegs	14	Sedge Wren	18
Am White Pelican	230	Willet	703	Marsh Wren	36
Brown Pelican	172	Spotted Sandpiper	23	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	107
Dbl-cr Cormorant	1097	Whimbrel	21	Bl-gray Gnatcatcher	13
Anhinga	4	Marbled Godwit	14	Eastern Bluebird	17
American Bittern	1	Ruddy Turnstone	46	Hermit Thrush	7
Great Blue Heron	104	Red Knot	106	American Robin	1686
Great Egret	152	Sanderling	34	Gray Catbird	41
Snowy Egret	20	Western Sandpiper	186	Northern Mockingbird	65
Little Blue Heron	32	Least Sandpiper	156	Brown Thrasher	12
Tricolored Heron	20	Dunlin	1700	American Pipit	1
Cattle Egret	10	Peep, sp.	620	European Starling	166
Green Heron	1	Short-bld Dowitcher	469	White-eyed Vireo	15
Blk-cr Night-Heron	67	Common Snipe	9	Blue-headed Vireo	6
Ylw-cr Night-Heron	14	Laughing Gull	119	Ylw-rumped Warbler	839
White Ibis	8	Bonaparte's Gull	4	Ylw-throated Warbler	4
Wood Stork	11	Ring-billed Gull	1761	Pine Warbler	42
Snow Goose	1	Herring Gull	56	Prairie Warbler	2
Wood Duck	18	Caspian Tern	3	Palm Warbler	94
Green-winged Teal	15	Royal Tern	10	Blk-&-White Warbler	7
Redhead	2	Forster's Tern	379	Common Yellowthroat	79
Greater Scaup	80	Black Skimmer	230	Northern Cardinal	110
Lesser Scaup	999	Eur. Collared Dove	122	Indigo Bunting	1
Scaup, sp.	75	Mourning Dove	61	Eastern Towhee	116
Bufflehead	88	Common Ground Dove	43	Chipping Sparrow	12
Hooded Merganser	51	Rose-Ringed Parakeet	4	Field Sparrow	3
Red-brstd Merganser	88	Eastern Screech Owl	5	Savannah Sparrow	22
Black Vulture	20	Great Horned Owl	5	Nelson's Sharp-tailed	13
Turkey Vulture	122	Barred Owl	7	Salt-Marsh Sharp-tailed	4
Osprey	25	Belted Kingfisher	31	Sharp-tail Sparrow, sp	3
Bald Eagle	26	Red-bell. Woodpecker	39	Seaside Sparrow	7
Northern Harrier	9	Ylw-bell. Sapsucker	11	Song Sparrow	23
Cooper's Hawk	4	Downy Woodpecker	16	Swamp Sparrow	57
Red-shouldered Hawk	7	Northern Flicker	6	White-thr Sparrow	13
Red-tailed Hawk	13	Pileated Woodpecker	10	Red-winged Blackbird	363
American Kestrel	4	Eastern Phoebe	29	Eastern Meadowlark	2
Peregrine	1	Western Kingbird	2	Rusty Blackbird	10
Wild Turkey	10	Tree Swallow	6	Boat-tailed Grackle	145
Clapper Rail	30	Blue Jay	18	Common Grackle	803
Sora	4	Florida Scrub-Jay	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	2
Common Moorhen	2	American Crow	8	American Goldfinch	42
American Coot	1	Fish Crow	171	House Sparrow	31
Black-bellied Plover	157	Crow, sp	50		
Wilson's Plover	4	Carolina Chickadee	32	Total species	138
Semipalmated Plover	205	Tufted Titmouse	18	Total individuals	16,934
Killdeer	40	Red-brstd Nuthatch	1		
Am. Oystercatcher	269	Brn-headed Nuthatch	2		

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