



The Crane

Volume 64 Number 2 November – December 2022

FIELD TRIPS

Below are some of our upcoming weekend field trips. Please note, however, that we are transitioning to our newly redesigned [website](#) and our [Facebook](#) page as the primary sources for the most current list of field trips. *The Crane* will continue to list all finalized trips as new issues of the newsletter are released but please check the above sources often to find the most recent details of our field trip dates and descriptions.

Saturday, November 5, 2022, 8:00 am
Prairie Creek Bird Banding Lab and AAS Native Plant Garden at Prairie Creek Preserve
7204 SE CR 234, Gainesville

In 2019, AAS partnered with the Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) to implement a long-term bird banding lab at Prairie Creek Preserve, located in eastern Alachua County. Together with UF faculty and a state-certified bander, the banding laboratory is staffed seasonally by AAS volunteers and student interns through AAS's college internship program. The banding lab is designed to provide hands-on training to students and conservation professionals in the techniques of mist-netting and bird banding while advancing our understanding of how birds utilize the regional landscape. Each semester of monitoring exposes more students to the welfare and conservation of birds and the habitats they depend on. The fundamental goal of bird banding is to record the age, sex, wing length, fat deposits, and body mass of captured species as a way of monitoring, year to year, how avian populations are faring in the wild. Bird banding ultimately helps us understand how to conserve and manage the land in which these species live and breed. AAS expanded the educational and conservation

opportunities at Prairie Creek Preserve by creating a native plant garden adjacent to the banding lab. Join Jonathan Varol and other AAS volunteers and interns at Alachua Audubon's bird banding lab to check mist nets for song birds and view the banding and bird assessment methodology. Also stroll through the lovely native plant gardens. Difficulty: 1-2.

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 8:00 am
Cones Dike from the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park Visitor Center, 100 Savannah Blvd., Micanopy. Meet trip leader Tim Hardin at the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park Visitor Center parking lot. Tim is

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Evening Programs	p. 3-4
Thank you, Barbara Shea!	p. 4
Christmas Bird Counts; Birding Class	p. 5
Backyard Birding Tour Returns	p. 6
Meet the New Interns	p. 8
Kids Go Birding	p. 11
Conservation News	p. 12
Birds and Brews	p. 14

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

Alachua Audubon Officers & Committee Chairpersons

President	Debbie Segal
Vice President.....	Tim Hardin
Secretary	Felicia Lee
Treasurer	Elizabeth Mance
Membership.....	Karen Brown
Field Trips	Open
Education	Zack Holmes
Birding Class.....	Gary Gossman
Banding Lab.....	Jonathan Varol
Festivals	Eric Amundson
Conservation	Bob Simons
Editor/Ads	Karen Brown
AAS Website	www.AlachuaAudubon.org
Facebook ..	www.facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/
Instagram	@alachuaaudubon
Contact us at	contact@AlachuaAudubon.org

Alachua Audubon Society's mission is to foster appreciation and knowledge of birds and other native wildlife, to protect and restore wildlife populations and their habitats, and to promote sustainable use of natural resources.

Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. Deadline for the Jan – Feb issue: December 15th

Content of *The Crane* fulfills the stated objectives and goals of the Alachua Audubon Society. Annual subscription to *The Crane* is included in National Audubon and/or Alachua Audubon membership. Please see the back page for more information. Additional advertisers are welcome. Please contact the editor for more information at contact@AlachuaAudubon.org

the Alachua County Big Year record holder (263 total species in 2021) and an eBird reviewer for Alachua County. We will scope Paynes Prairie from the observation tower at the visitor center to see our resident endangered Whooping Crane, as well as wintering ducks, wading birds, and other waterfowl. Then we'll enter the Cones Dike trail, which goes out into the grasslands and marshes on the east side of Paynes Prairie. We'll see Northern Harriers, Snail Kites, several duck species, Meadowlarks, and possibly Bobwhite and Wild Turkey. We'll also see several types of sparrows and other newly arrived winter birds (although some late fall migrants may still be lingering) to go with typical winter mixed flocks of warblers and vireos. The Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park entrance is at 100 Savannah Blvd, Micapony. Once you enter the park and pass the ranger station, continue straight all the way until Savannah Blvd ends at the visitor center parking lot where we will meet.



Difficulty: 3 (elevation change, uneven ground, and/or distances greater than 2 miles)

Saturday, December 3, 2022, 8:00 a.m. Lake City Treatment Wetlands

Meet trip leader and Alachua Audubon chapter president Debbie Segal in the parking lot of Hitchcock's grocery store on US-441 in Alachua to carpool to the treatment wetlands near Lake City (you can also meet us at 8:30 at the SS Food Store a block west of I-75 at Exit #423). The Lake City Treatment Wetlands, opened in 2016, is a series of nine wetland cells constructed to treat Lake City wastewater. We hope to see a plethora of waterfowl, wading birds, and perhaps some rarities as we walk the dikes separating the cells. This site is not open to the public and the gate will be closed after we enter, so please don't be late!

Difficulty: 2 (Walking over uneven ground or distances of 1-2 miles).

Are Birds Hitting Your Windows?

A staggering number of birds are killed by collisions with windows. Follow these links for solutions and suggestions on how to prevent these needless deaths. Methods range from simple, inexpensive do-it-yourself projects to affordable and attractive window treatments you can purchase.



Ovenbird killed by window collision

- [Acopian BirdSavers](#)
- [Stop Birds Hitting Windows](#)
- [Glass Collision Solutions](#)

Audubon Evening Programs

Thursday, November 17, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom:

The Most Endangered Bird in North America: The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow by “Fabby” Baeza-Tarin

Considered the most endangered bird in North America, the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*) is a subspecies that has exhibited steep declines in their population for the last 30 years. This decline has long been attributed to the loss and fragmentation of their native habitat, Florida’s dry prairie. Efforts to bring them back from the brink of extinction has created perhaps one of the largest and most successful collaborations between federal agencies, state agencies, and non-profit organizations. Novel management tools were created by the state to maximize Florida Grasshopper Sparrows’ reproductive success and, along with the establishment of a captive-breeding population, biologists are now seeing hope for the future of Florida Grasshopper Sparrows.



Fabiola “Fabby” Baeza-Tarin was born in the border town of Ojinaga, Chihuahua Mexico. Here is more about her. I received my Bachelor’s degree in Biology and Master’s degree in Range and Wildlife Management from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas. For my master’s thesis, I worked under Borderlands Research Institute to investigate overwinter habitat requirements of two grassland bird specialists that have experienced steep population declines, Baird’s Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow on a ranch in Marfa, Texas. My fondness of grassland birds, and more specifically, the Grasshopper Sparrow brought me to Archbold Biological Station. I am a Research Assistant in the Avian Ecology Program overseeing a population of the critically endangered Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, a subspecies that resides in Florida year-round. I lead the research and manage the population of sparrows at DeLuca Preserve, a working cattle ranch. At this property, I am investigating management options that would enhance and protect avian biodiversity of cattle ranches while keeping cattle operations profitable, ultimately to export the gained knowledge to other Florida ranches. I am a subject-matter expert and spokesperson for the state-wide effort to protect and connect a network of 18 million acres of critical habitats in the state of Florida, the Florida Wildlife Corridor, to ensure the state’s ecology, economy and well-being of all Floridians for generations to come.



Join the Zoom Meeting at: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81562475681> Meeting ID: 815 6247 5681 or find it on the AAS website under [Events ->Evening Programs](#)

If you would like to receive a reminder prior to each program, please send an email to programs@alachuaudubon.org.

Past AAS Programs Available Online

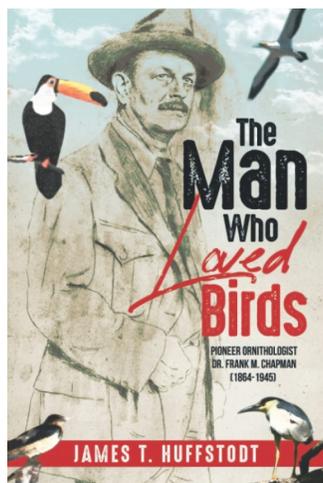
AAS evening programs are recorded and posted on our YouTube channel. Watch them online at your leisure from the [Programs](#) page of our website at www.alachuaudubon.org/programs/ or visit our [YouTube Channel](#).

Audubon Evening Programs

Thursday, December 8th, at 7PM on Zoom

Biography of Frank Chapman – The Man who Created the Christmas Bird Count
Presented by James Huffstodt with an introduction by Rex Rowan.

Join us as James Huffstodt presents the enigmatic history of Frank M. Chapman, the creator of the Christmas Bird Count and a past resident of Gainesville, from his recently published book, "The Man

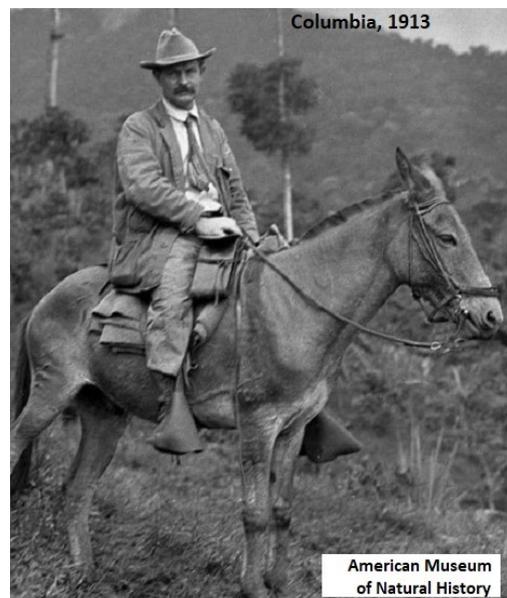


Who Loved Birds." Frank M. Chapman worked at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and made his mark as the most popular bird writer of his era, internationally renowned ornithologist (despite never having gone to college), South American explorer, museum innovator, perfecter of the bird habitat diorama, pioneer bird photographer (circa 1890), and one of the leaders in bringing an end to the bloody reign of the plume hunters. Beginning in 1885 the New Jersey resident spent winters at his mother's cottage in Gainesville until her

death in 1912. During that time, he did extensive and important bird research at Alachua Sink and the surrounding area, now a part of Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park.

James Huffstodt, 75, is a retired Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission information-education officer and lives in Tallahassee.

Join the Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89223494078> Meeting ID: 892 2349 4078
or find it on our website under [Events->Evening Programs](#).



Thank You, Barbara Shea!

Long-time AAS board member, Barbara Shea, is stepping down from her position on the Board of Directors. We offer our heartfelt thanks to Barbara for all her contributions to Alachua Audubon. Barbara has served on the Board since 2013, participating on the festivals committee for her first five years and then leading the field trips committee since 2018. One of the most important activities that AAS offers is weekly field trips to birding hotspots in Alachua County. Our field trips build a community of birders and conservation advocates. Putting together a schedule of weekly field trips with experienced birders as leaders is a monumental task and Barbara has led this effort for several years. Developing the schedule is only one aspect of successful field trips. Every week, field trip leaders must be contacted to remind them of their commitment, and provided the resources needed for a successful trip. A key contribution that Barbara made that AAS will always be grateful for was as a friend and nurse. She supported John Hintermister, one of the most knowledgeable birders in Alachua County, one of the founding members of AAS, and a former board member.

Barbara, Alachua Audubon sincerely thanks you for all you have done and greatly appreciates your plans to continue to stay involved with AAS.

By Anne Casella

Christmas Bird Counts Coming Up!

The excitement is starting to build for the birding event of the year: **the John Hintermister Gainesville Christmas Bird Count is Sunday, December 18, 2022.** We have built a great tradition over our long history (more than 50 years). The Gainesville CBC has become a model count, well-run and highly organized with great local participation (more than 130 birders last year). The count is named for the late John Hintermister, the compiler who brought us well along to our current high standards. Even though we are not on either the Atlantic or the Gulf coasts, we are often at or near the top of all of Florida counts in terms of diversity, with the current record of 175 species set in 2018. We also traditionally rank among the best counts in the country for most species with the highest numbers of individuals, and we have set all time national highs for several species (e.g., Limpkin, Snail Kite, Pileated Woodpecker, Baltimore Oriole, Black-and-white Warbler).

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is an annual census of birds administered by the National Audubon Society. CBCs are intense, day-long surveys for experienced and intermediate-level birders. Each count takes place in an established 15-mile diameter circle and is organized by a count compiler. Volunteers identify and tally all birds they see and hear along their specified routes or within their designated zones. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

By Compilers: Andy Kratter and Bob Carroll

Gainesville: Sunday, Dec. 18. Contact Andy Kratter at kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu or 352-226-2462, or Bob Carroll at gatorbob23@yahoo.com or 352-281-3616. Details on this highly anticipated and hugely popular evening count-up are still being worked out.

Other CBCs taking place around north central Florida: (Volunteers needed for all of these counts!)

Melrose: Thursday, Dec. 15. Contact Laura Berkelman at berkelman@windstream.net or Sallie Carlock at santafeaudubonfl@aol.com preferably before December 1st. Volunteers needed. Evening count-up at Trinity Episcopal Church in Melrose.

Ichetucknee/Santa Fe/O'Leno: Tuesday, Dec. 20. Contact Ginger Feagle at ginger.feagle@myfwc.com or 386-586-8249. Volunteers needed. Evening count-up at Ichetucknee Springs State Park.

Lake City: Thursday, Dec. 29. Contact Valerie Thomas at v.thomas57@gmail.com or 386-466-2193. Volunteers needed. There will be an evening count-up.

Cedar Key: Wednesday, Jan. 4. Contact Jonathan Varol at 352-226-4472 or jvarol@gmail.com. No evening count-up. Volunteers needed.

Birding Courses Offered

Calling all bird enthusiasts! Develop or refresh your skills in identifying the birds in our region. Santa Fe College Community Education, in partnership with Alachua Audubon, offers bird watching courses. Each course consists of 4 field trips to local natural environments, guided by local birding experts. Field trips begin at 8:00 AM, and each trip lasts 2-2.5 hours. Register online for the courses at the [Santa Fe College Community Education](http://sfcollege.edu/cied/communityed/index) website: (sfcollege.edu/cied/communityed/index) Click on "Registration," "Take a Class," and "Outdoor Adventures." The course number is NAT00003.1B6. Or register by phone by calling the registrar at 352-395-5193. Course Fee: \$49.00. Register early as classes fill quickly.

Note: Must be at least 18 yrs old to register. Prior experience is not necessary, but you must bring binoculars.

Course dates:

Winter 2023: February 11, February 18, February 25, March 4

Spring 2023: March 18, March 25, April 1, April 8

**Registration begins on January 9th
for both sessions.**

The Annual Backyard Bird Tour Is Back and We Need Your Help!



We're Looking For Hosts!

Do you love feeding your birds? Do you attract a wide variety to your backyard? Would you like to share your tips and tricks with the birding community? Then this opportunity might be for you! The tour is tentatively scheduled for February 18th, 2023.

About The Tour

- One-day self-guided tour through some of Gainesville's premier backyard birding habitats
- Learn how to attract birds to your own yard with different foods, water sources, and plants
- Educational displays and birding experts at each house
- See brightly colored winter visitors such as Baltimore Orioles, American Goldfinches, and many others



If you are interested in being a host please contact Christina Opett at ctina0824@gmail.com or contact@AlachuaAudubon.org.

**Sweetwater Wetlands Park &
Alachua Audubon Society**

Present

**Wednesday Bird
Walks at the Wetlands**



When: Every Wednesday @ 8:30 am
from September - May

Where: Sweetwater Wetlands Park -
Entrance Pavilion

Walks are free with park admission fee (\$5/vehicle)
Bring water, binoculars, sunscreen, and walking shoes



North Shore Birding Festival

The seventh annual NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL on Lake Apopka in Central Florida, sponsored by Orange Audubon Society, is Thursday morning, December 1st through Monday, December 5th. Registration is now open!

Participate in field trips on the 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore property and other Central Florida sites. Friday and Saturday night keynotes at Wekiwa Springs State Park with catered dinners are followed by owl and woodcock walks. Add to your life list while exploring a unique birding hotspot only 35-45 minutes from Orlando attractions. Photographers—fantastic shots await! The Lake Apopka North Shore is the top eBird hotspot in Florida (for comparison of hotspots, see this link). Nearly 370 species of birds have been sighted, more than any inland site in the U.S. including the Everglades. Seen at the December 2021 festival —172 species.

Visit the website to see festival schedule, speaker and leader biographies, and locations and lodging.

Suspect a crime against Florida's birds, fish, wildlife or natural resources? See an injured animal? Report incidents to FWC's Wildlife Alert Reward Program online or call 888-404-3922. From your cell phone call *FWC or #FWC, or send a message to Tip@MyFWC.com. Learn more at MyFWC/contact/wildlife-alert.



Did You Know?

Caterpillars dominate nestling diets in 16 out of 20 bird families. Carolina chickadees rear their young almost exclusively on caterpillars. To rear one clutch of nestlings until they fledge, chickadees must catch from 6-9 *thousand* caterpillars! They need landscapes with plants that support insects.

Please plant native plants!

Meet the Interns

Alachua Audubon continues our highly successful college internship program. The fall semester brings us 5 new interns who have each chosen a primary and secondary project on which to work. In addition, we have 3 new mentees from Audubon Florida's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI) that we are mentoring for the school year.. The CLI is a one-year long experience, offering opportunities for student applicants to become engaged in the AAS and Florida Audubon networks (read more about CLI on [page 9](#)). AAS board member Pratibha Singh asked them to answer a few questions and below are their answers.

NATALIE BEVER, AAS INTERN

1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Natalie Bever, my hometown is Wayzata, Minnesota and I am a 4th year Wildlife Ecology and Conservation student. This past summer I did wildlife research in Kenya and I hope to go back soon. I am also an avid wildlife photographer (you can find me on Instagram @lavenderdot) and hope to publish my works someday.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

I have always loved birds growing up as I used to feed them outside my window. I didn't know much about birds until I took Avian Biology with Scott Robinson and that really peaked my interest.

3. What are the 2 projects you are going to be working on in your internship with Audubon?

My two projects are working at the bird banding lab with Jonathon and working on educational presentations and bird walks with Felicia.



JESSICA MARTIN, AAS INTERN

1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Jess Martin. I was born in Gainesville but raised on the outskirts in the small towns of Windsor and Interlachen, two towns you've probably passed by on your way to the beach. I am currently a student at Santa Fe College with plans to transfer to UF next fall to study Natural Resource Conservation.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

While birds have always been fascinating to me, I took a much deeper interest in them after getting a long and up-close encounter with a family of Florida Scrub Jays in the Ocala National Forest. I am also now a huge advocate for the Florida Scrub Jay to be our state bird.

3. What are the 2 projects you are going to be working on in your internship with Audubon?

During my time interning with Alachua Audubon, I am working at the Prairie Creek Banding Lab and will also be helping to monitor and maintain Kestrel nesting boxes.



CHANCE MCGAREY, AAS INTERN

1. Tell us about yourself.

I am originally from Kennesaw, GA, just outside of Atlanta. I spent two years at Kennesaw State University before transferring to UF. I'm starting my senior year at UF as a Wildlife Ecology and Conservation major, and I am the vice-president of GREBE, the UF Audubon Campus Chapter.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

My first exposure to birdwatching was Spring '22 when I decided to take Dr. Scott Robinson's avian biology course to satisfy a vertebrate biology requirement. Our first trip was in January to St. Mark's to see shorebirds and ducks. That trip was my first time going birding, as well as my first time making an eBird checklist. I loved the species ID challenges as well as the diversity you could find in just one area, and so I was hooked.

3. What are the 2 projects you are going to be working on in your internship with Audubon?

During my time as an Audubon intern, I'll be banding birds at the Prairie Creek Banding Lab as well as working on maintaining kestrel nesting boxes. I've already completed a few weeks at the banding lab extracting and banding birds like White-eyed Vireos and Gray Catbirds, and I'm looking forward to working with Bob Simons on the kestrel nesting boxes.



MASON ROWE, AAS INTERN

1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Mason Rowe and I'm a sophomore at the University of Florida pursuing a biology major with minors in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation and statistics. I grew up in Hollywood, Florida and went to South Plantation High School.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

I've always enjoyed nature walks and being outside, and I like watching how animals interact with each other. I think birds' behaviors are really interesting, especially how they interact with one another. I especially like corvids because of their intelligence and complex social groups, and I recently started feeding cashews to a murder that lives in my area.

3. What are the 2 projects you are going to be working on in your internship with Audubon?

One of the projects is the bird banding lab. I've received a lot of help and educational experiences in this project and have gotten a newfound appreciation for birds by seeing them so closely and getting the chance to work hands-on. The other project I'm working on is the native plant garden, whose plants help attract birds for the bird banding lab and provide an educational resource about Florida native plants.



ABIGAIL WILLER, AAS Intern

1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Abby and I'm from Wellington, Florida. I currently attend the University of Florida and am in my third year. I am majoring in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, and minoring in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

I have always had a deep fascination with reptiles, and that has been my main study focus so far. I wanted to expand my knowledge into other areas, like birds. I have always enjoyed birds, raptors in particular.

3. What are the 2 projects you are going to be working on in your internship .

The first project I assist with is the Prairie Creek bird banding laboratory. At the lab we set up mist nets, large nets strung between poles, which capture small birds. We carefully work to extract the birds from the nets, where we then band them and collect data. The second project I will be assisting with is the data analysis on what has been collected at the banding lab. The analysis of the data is highly important and will be used for many different things.



Conservation Leadership Initiative Program

Alachua Audubon Society (AAS) is again participating in Audubon Florida's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI). The CLI is a one-year long experience, offering opportunities for student applicants to become engaged in the AAS and Florida Audubon networks. Numerous experiences are available both in person and online. Study topics will include Audubon Florida's Community Science Initiatives, sustainability partners, hands-on restoration and conservation projects, advocacy, and more. Students learn about career options in the field of conservation, and they commit to completing a project in collaboration with their mentor. The overall goal is to develop the next generation of leaders.

Each student applicant is paired with an Audubon chapter leader, involving mentoring opportunities for the chapter leaders while the students also network and learn from each other. For the 2022-2023 CLI year our mentors/students are: President Debbie Segal/Colleen McDonough; board member Tim Hardin/Gisella DePiazza; and board member Gary Gossman/Liel Shachr. Later this fall these CLI students, their mentors and Florida Audubon will participate in a half-day regional activity to further develop the program.

Two of our current AAS board members are past CLI students. Kayla Ehrlich was a CLI student last year and her primary role on the AAS board is creating and maintaining AAS social media posts. Kayla has developed eye-catching and effective content for several AAS programs. Zach Holmes was a CLI student several years ago (and past president of the UF student Audubon chapter, GREBES), and recently returned to UF for a graduate degree. Zach is involved in several AAS initiatives. He coordinates and runs the evening monthly presentations, leads some field trips, assists with the bird banding lab, and recently developed a volunteer spreadsheet.

By Gary Gossman

(Continued on next page)

GISELLA DEPIAZZA, CLI INTERN

1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Gisella DePiazza and I am a third-year student attending the University of Florida majoring in Natural Resource Conservation with a minor in Wildlife Ecology. I am in pursuit of a career that focuses on conservation biology and management and really enjoy studying ecosystem functions and ecology. I was born and raised in St. Augustine.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

While there are a lot of birds I take interest in because of the diversity found, I would have to say Great Horned Owls are my favorite. The neighborhood I grew up in has this small, informal park that my father and I would go to practically every day. A few years ago we discovered a family of Great Horned Owls that nested in a large oak tree. I made sure to visit them every day and, as time passed, I understood their behaviors more, I watched generations form, and to this day look forward to going home to pay a visit to the owls.

3. What are the 2 projects you are going to be working on in your internship with the Audubon?

As a CLI intern, I look forward most to getting involved in a likeminded community where I can expand my knowledge and see where my interests can take me. Being a part of Audubon Florida is a valuable experience that can assist me with spreading appreciation and newfound interest in Florida's natural beauty to others and something I would like to accomplish.



COLLEEN MCDONNOUGH, CLI INTERN

1. Tell us about yourself.

I'm a third-year environmental science student at the University of Florida. I'm also obtaining a certificate in GIS, which involves using digital cartography techniques to map out the environment. I'm interested in forest ecology and learning more about how bird behavior correlates to ecosystem health. I grew up in the northwestern corner of the Florida Panhandle, in a small town near Pensacola known for its beautiful beaches.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

I spent a lot of my time near the ocean as a child and loved to birdwatch before I even knew the names of the species I saw: great blue herons stalking prey in the tide pools, sanderlings being chased by the waves, red winged blackbirds grasping onto the tall marsh grasses. I think the shoreline and wetland areas are great places for beginner birders since the birds tend to be much easier to see.

3. What are you looking forward to accomplishing as a CLI intern?

I'd really like to learn more about internship and career opportunities in the conservation field, so that I can better prepare for my own career path after graduation. I hope to attend more Audubon field trips to advance my bird identification skills, especially with recognizing bird species by the sounds they make. With the project component of the CLI program, I hope to conduct research that focuses on surveying bird behavior in local ecosystems and mapping out my results using GIS.



LIEL SHACHR, CLI INTERN

1. Tell us about yourself.

I am from Weeki Wachee, Florida and a freshman at UF studying Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. I got involved with the Audubon Society through my hometown's chapter that connected me with the CLI program. My career interests right now are in environmental and animal law/policy.

2. What sparked your interest in birds? Any "spark" bird and why?

I actually had my own bird watching club when I was a kid, but it was really just me walking around my backyard with little kid binoculars! I recently got to experience my first birding event since joining the program which has sparked my interest in birds again.

3. What are you hoping to accomplish as a CLI intern?

I look forward to spreading information about conservation efforts and connecting more college students to the Audubon Society. I hope that for my end of the year project, I can host some event that brings college students and experienced birders together to learn from each other as well as make a positive impact on the local wildlife and environment. I'm really interested in event coordinating as I get to collaborate and involve people with a good cause, so I think I will be able to accomplish that as a CLI intern with the help of my mentor.



Cub Scouts Go Birding at Sweetwater Wetlands Park



Cub Scout den leader Elizabeth Williamson recently contacted AAS to ask if she could bring her first grade scouts to one of our weekend field trips. We suggested that the kids would have a better experience on a trip of their own. Board member Meredith Kite, CLI Intern Colleen McDonough (see [page 10](#)), and Emily Schwartz met the scouts at Sweetwater Wetlands Park on a late afternoon. Each was provided with a pair of loaner binoculars. They were also given a copy of our Backyard Bird ID chart to take home. Hopefully this trip will spawn some enthusiastic future birders!

Taking Kids to Nature Parks

In June, the Alachua Audubon Board voted to partner with the Friends of Nature Parks and the Gainesville Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to support the cost of buses to transport elementary school students to Morningside Nature Center and Sweetwater Wetlands Park for nature-related programs. One of the largest barriers that schools face in providing field trips for students is the cost of transportation. We are pleased to report that three Title 1 schools (>40% of children qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch) that have a diverse student group with many children with English as a second language are signed up so far:

- Rawlings Elementary 4th graders are going to Morningside Nature Center in February, including a child in a wheelchair who requires a special needs bus.
- Littlewood Elementary 4th graders are going to Sweetwater Wetlands Park in December. Littlewood 3rd graders will travel to Morningside.
- Parker Elementary students are going to Morningside in December.

It is the support of our members that allows us to fund projects like this, so we thank all our member and those of you who have made donations to Alachua Audubon Society!

By Anne Casella



College Student?

Check out the GREBEs—the University of Florida Audubon Campus Chapter focused on teaching college students about the importance and beauty of the avian world. Our mission is to guide students in bird identification, explain the role of birds in daily ecosystem functions, and emphasize how to conserve them through local birding trips, community outreach, lectures from professionals in ornithology, and hands-on field experience such as banding workshops. UF and Santa Fe College students are eligible to join. Contact them via email at grebeuf@gmail.com.

Conservation News

This is an open letter to the Alachua County Commission from the Board of the Alachua Audubon Society representing its 1000+ members on the subject of the proposed development of the Lee Property on the Hickory Sink Strategic Ecosystem. We strongly support the recommendations of the county staff regarding adhering to the County Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the rules for implementing development on this strategic ecosystem.



Dear Commissioners,

This property is one of 47 properties that were identified by the Alachua County Ecological Inventory project that was completed in November of 1996. These 47 properties were selected based on an evaluation of their significance for wildlife and native ecosystem conservation, and for their importance relating to surface water flows, groundwater recharge, and aquifer recharge.

The Alachua County Commission then designated each of these properties as strategic ecosystems and included rules in the county's comprehensive plan regarding future real estate development of these properties.

The values associated with the Hickory Sink Strategic Ecosystem as it exists on the Lee Property include aquifer recharge, protection of the aquifer water quality, habitat for endangered species, habitat for many more common wildlife species, and a potentially restorable upland longleaf pine ecosystem of a kind that has become imperiled.

This last bit, the potential restoration of a now rare upland longleaf pine ecosystem, is the most promising aspect of this property. The kind of upland longleaf pine forest that was once dominant over millions of acres in the coastal plain of the Carolinas, central and southwest Georgia, central Alabama, the red hills area of the Florida panhandle, and western Alachua and Marion Counties is now almost entirely gone due to conversion to agricultural and to real estate development. This forest had a unique set of species mixed in with the longleaf pine of the overstory and the wiregrass of the ground cover, including southern red oak, mockernut hickory, post oak, chinquapin, poppy mallow, and many others.

The restoration to this forest type of a large central area of the Hickory Sink Strategic Ecosystem on the west side of Parker Road is possible and would provide a unique and valuable ecosystem that has become vanishingly scarce. The main qualifiers for accomplishing this are that the area would need to be burned with prescribed fires on a frequent schedule and this commitment to management would need to be maintained for a long time into the future.

Please do not weaken the staff recommendations.

Sincerely,
Robert W. Simons
Alachua Audubon Society
Conservation Committee

Note: This letter was sent to the Alachua County Commission on September 19, 2022. See the site drawing on the following page.

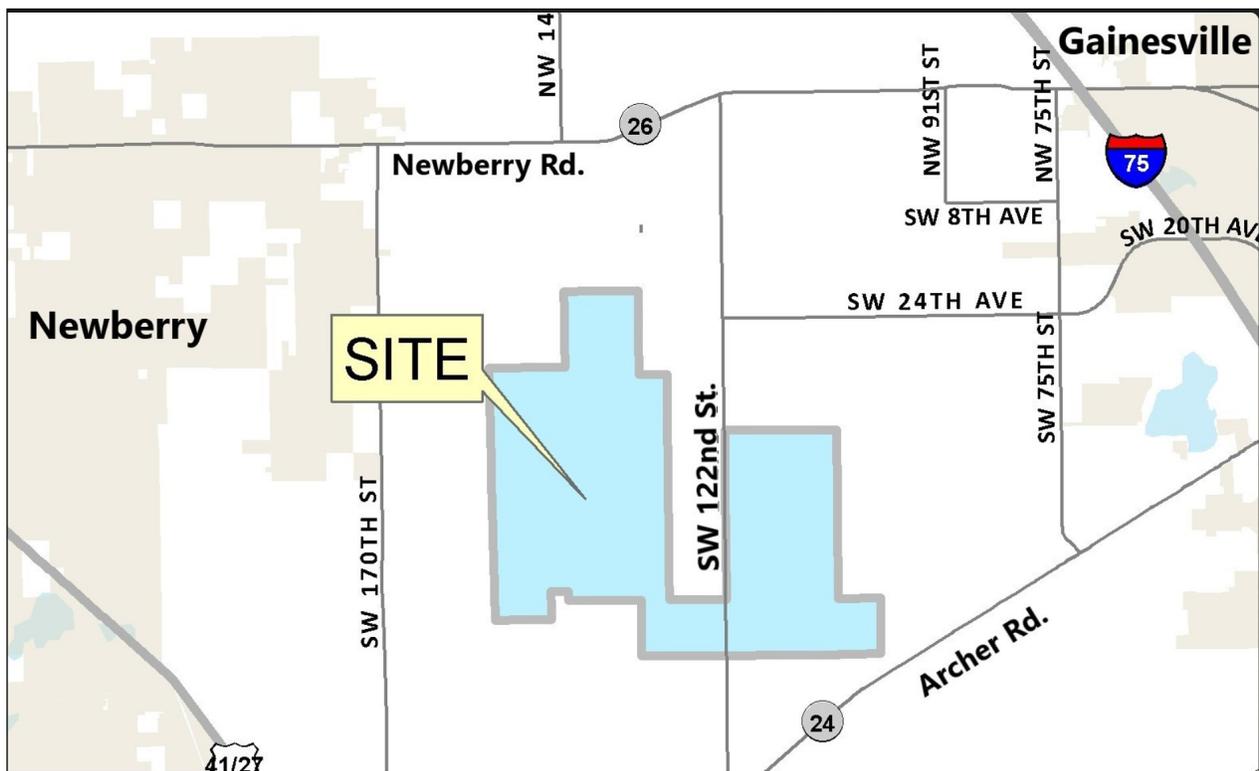
AAS Board Members Attend County Commissioners Meeting

Three members of the Alachua Audubon Society board of directors – Eric Amundson, Kayla Ehrlich (pictured) and Pratibha Singh – voiced their concerns about the potential environmental impacts of the proposed 4,000-acre Lee property development at the County Commission meeting on September 20th. The four-hour meeting included presentations from county staff, CHW Consultants, UF, and members of the public.



The Lee family property straddles both sides of Parker Road in southwest Alachua County just west of Haile Plantation. As Bob Simons explains in his letter to the County Commission (see facing page) this property is designated as the Hickory Sink Strategic Ecosystem due to its important environmental features including aquifer recharge, protection of aquifer water quality, habitat for endangered and other wild-life species, and it's potential to be restored as longleaf pine habitat, one of the most imperiled plant communities in Florida. The next County Commission meeting where the Lee Property development will be discussed will likely be in December 2022.

By Pratibha Singh



Would you like to partner with Alachua Audubon and support specific programs?

If so, here are some suggestions.

Donate a New or Used Pair of Binoculars to the GHS birding club and help us introduce more high school students to birding. Binoculars cost approximately \$125, however, your extra set of used binoculars will be gladly accepted. If you would like to help, please send an email to Contact@AlachuaAudubon.org.

Sponsor a College Intern – AAS provides valuable internship experiences to college students who learn and practice mist-netting, bird banding, nest box monitoring, and more. Interns receive a \$400 scholarship at the completion of their program. Consider contributing to the AAS college internship fund with any amount.

Contribute to the Bird Banding Lab – We are continually improving and expanding this facility. Any donation to this important project is greatly appreciated. *Donors will be treated to a tour of the Bird Banding Lab.*

To donate any amount, scroll down to the **Donate** button on our [Membership Page](#), choose or enter an amount, and add a note (the note option is available once you are logged in to PayPal) stating the program to which you are donating. You may also send a check and a note to AAS at the address on the last page of this newsletter. Please send an email to AlachuaAudubonTreasurer@gmail.com if you would like assistance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alachua Audubon Society

Alachua Audubon Society, Inc. is one of more than 40 Audubon chapters in Florida and is chartered by the National Audubon Society and Audubon Florida. We are a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization.



Follow us on [Facebook!](#)



Check us out on Instagram
[@alachuaaudubon](#)

Alachua County LIBRARY District

BORROW A BIRDING KIT!

Spot eagles, cranes, and wrens with a Birding Kit created by your library and the Alachua Audubon Society.

Each backpack contains:

- Binoculars
- Local resource guide
- Birding field guide book

Reserve a kit online for pick up at your preferred library branch. Kits check out for 14 days.

www.aclib.us/birdingkits

Monthly Birds and Brews

The AAS Birds and Brews event continues to be popular with both new and experienced birders. Meet the first Sunday afternoon of the month at [First Magnitude Brewery](#), 1220 SE Veitch St. Arrive early as parking can be scarce. There will be an Alachua Audubon table set up and **loaner binoculars will be available**. It is a lovely time of day for a leisurely stroll around the Depot Park ponds to look for birds. Then we'll return to First Magnitude for an optional brew and conversation.

All birding skill levels are welcome!

Next event: Sunday, November 6th at 4:15 p.m.





Native plant restoration
Biological Monitoring
Invasive/exotic plant surveys & control
Tree surveys & hazard tree evaluation

Erick D. Smith
erick@kestreleco.com

(352) 380-0648

Certified Arborist FL 5376A

Michael Meisenburg
michael@kestreleco.com

(352) 339-0701

www.kestreleco.com

Wild Birds Unlimited®

Your Backyard Birdfeeding Specialist®

Birdseed · Feeders · Nesting Boxes · Nature Gifts · Optics

4212 NW 16th Blvd Gainesville

352-381-1997

gainesville.wbu.com

wbugainesville@gmail.com

Mon-Sat 10-6 Sun 11-4



Blue Highway
a pizzeria
Eat well, live well...

Tioga • Micanopy • Ocala • www.BlueHighwayPizza.com

The Great Frame Up®

WHERE PICTURE FRAMING IS AN ART.®



Visit our website for special offers!

4144 NW 16th Blvd. | 352-373-5400
gainesville.thegreatframeup.com

**Boutique Lodging & Events
in Historic Gainesville**

625 E UNIVERSITY AVE 352-373-6760
La Chua Cottage, Jimmy Ho Photography

**Sweetwater Branch
Inn**
LODGING & EVENTS
CIRCA 1885
Distinctly Gainesville

SWEETWATERINN.COM



A LOVE FOR THE EARTH, ANIMALS, AND REAL ESTATE

I donate to conservation and animal care organizations after every closing



H. "Buz" Bireline, REALTOR®

BuzBireline@BosshardtRealty.com

804.564.2373

The Energy of Excellence

TIDE WATER TOURS

from Cedar Key

For the ultimate birding experience
by boat to remote coastal marshes or
near shore islands

Call or check out our website:
352-543-9523
tidewatertours.com

selvaverde.com

EXPLORE Selva Verde Lodge & Reserve

500 acres of vibrant tropical nature
in the heart of Sarapiquí, Costa Rica!

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

The Crane
Nov – Dec 2022

Join Alachua Audubon! Membership Application

Benefits of membership include expert-led field trips, programs for adults and youth, *The Crane* bi-monthly newsletter, conservation advocacy with local & state legislators, & more.

Gift Memberships Available!

Annual Membership Levels

Choosing a higher level provides additional support for your local chapter.

Student	\$10	Individual	\$25
Family	\$35	Limpkin	\$50
Purple Gallinule			\$100
Swallow-tailed Kite			\$250
Sandhill Crane			\$500
Whooping Crane*			\$1,000

(*bestows lifetime membership)

Sliding scale membership fees are welcome.

Simply send what you can afford.

Join online with PayPal

www.alachuaaudubon.org/membership/

or send your application and check payable to

Alachua Audubon Society

to: PO Box 140464, Gainesville, FL 32614-0464

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

The Crane is distributed via email. Your email address will not be shared with other organizations.

Alachua Audubon (AAS) is an official chapter of **National Audubon** and **Audubon Florida**. If you belong to National Audubon and live in our area, you are automatically a member of AAS.

To join National Audubon, please go to AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership where you will be directed to their membership page.

Alachua Audubon is a 501(c)3 organization.

Audubon Membership Explained

To join Audubon at the local level, please visit the AAS website where you may use PayPal to pay by credit card. You may also complete the membership form to the left, or print a form at [Alachua Audubon.org/Membership](http://AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership). Choose the membership level that is appropriate for you. Mail the completed form with your check, payable to **Alachua Audubon Society**, to the address provided.

To join Audubon at the National level, go to AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership where you will be directed to the NAS membership page. Your introductory membership will be credited to our local chapter and you will become an annual member of the **National Audubon Society**, **Audubon Florida** and **Alachua Audubon**, with one-year subscriptions to National *Audubon* magazine, *Audubon Florida Naturalist* magazine, and Alachua Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Crane*.

Please send any questions to AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com