



# The Crane

Volume 64 Number 5 May – June 2023

## FIELD TRIPS

*The Crane* lists all finalized trips as of publication date but please visit our [website](#) and our [Facebook](#) page often for any additional field trips or changes to trips listed below.

**Saturday May 6th, 2023, 8:00 a.m. [O'Leno State Park](#)  
410 SE O'leno Park Rd, High Springs, FL 32643**

With Spring migration dwindling down, our best bet to catch a few more migrants still within Alachua County is to go north. Meet trip leader José Miguel Ponciano at the parking lot closest to the famous suspension bridge. We will walk over the yellow trail and a bit more, probably between 2-3 miles. Get ready to actually see some Bachman's Sparrows in full breeding mode, Hooded Warblers, Acadian Flycatchers and hopefully much more – you never know what's around the corner in that trail! Restrooms on site. Park entrance fee \$5.00 or a FL State Park pass. Difficulty: 3.

**Saturday May 13th, 2023, 8:00 a.m. [Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve](#)  
505 Guana River Rd, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.**

This was for many years an AAS destination to watch Peregrine Falcons during Fall migration. Despite being at the tail end of Spring migration, Florida's Atlantic Coast promises us to get a much better acquaintance with birds. Meet the trip leader (to be announced) in the GTMNERR parking lot off AIA and we will walk over to the hawk-watching platform at the north end of the park. During the second half of the morning, we'll walk a woodland trail in search of passerines. Restrooms on site. Park entrance fee \$3.00 per vehicle. Difficulty: 2-3.

**Saturday, May 27th, 2023, 8:00 a.m. [Poe Springs County Park](#), 28800 NW 182nd Ave (Poe Springs Road / NE CR 340), High Springs, FL 32643**

After paying your admission fee (\$6 per vehicle, CASH ONLY) at the entrance kiosk, take your first right and go all the way down to the last parking lot. Make a left there and go all the way down and park. Trip leader Tim Hardin will be waiting there at 8:00 am. Poe Springs is a lovely Alachua County park located on the bank of the Santa Fe River. This park can be one of the better warbler spots in the county during fall migration, but can also be impressive during our brief spring migration period. No guarantees, but hard to find in-county warblers such as Canada, Golden-winged, Kentucky, and Cerulean Warblers have been recorded here, as well as Northern Waterthrush. It can be a bit muddy in places, so waterproof footwear or old shoes are recommended. Restrooms on site. Difficulty: 2.

### Inside this issue:

Evening Program	<a href="#">p. 2</a>
The 20th (!) June Challenge	<a href="#">p. 3</a>
College Intern Reports	<a href="#">p. 4</a>
Spring Loon Migration Recap	<a href="#">p. 7</a>
Conservation News	<a href="#">p. 8</a>
High School Scholarships Awarded	<a href="#">p. 10</a>
Young Birders Club Event	<a href="#">p. 11</a>

**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 .....	Tim Hardin
Education .....	Kate Hellgren
Birding Class.....	Gary Gossman
Banding Lab.....	Jonathan Varol
Festivals .....	Eric Amundson
Conservation .....	Bob Simons
Editor/Ads .....	Karen Brown
AAS Website .....	<a href="http://AlachuaAudubon.org">AlachuaAudubon.org</a>
Facebook .....	<a href="https://facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/">facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/</a>
Instagram .....	<a href="https://@alachuaaudubon">@alachuaaudubon</a>
Contact us at .....	<a href="mailto:contact@AlachuaAudubon.org">contact@AlachuaAudubon.org</a>

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

Submissions to **The Crane** are welcomed. Deadline for the July – August issue: June 15th. For advertising information, contact the editor at [Contact@AlachuaAudubonMembership.org](mailto:Contact@AlachuaAudubonMembership.org)

Annual subscription to **The Crane** is included in National Audubon and/or Alachua Audubon membership. See the back page for more information.

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.

Alachua Audubon offers all our neighbors respect, inclusion, and opportunities to participate and be heard in our organization. Please read the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement on our website [here](#). Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

## Audubon Evening Program

Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 7:00 PM on Zoom  
**History, current status, and possible futures for American Flamingos in Florida**

Through the 19th century, large flocks of American Flamingos were noted by naturalists visiting South Florida. Yet by the start of the 20th century, the flamingos had disappeared, the victims of unregulated hunting for food and for the emerging plume trade. In the early 20th century, several wealthy industrialists imported flamingos into Florida to inhabit private ponds on their estates, and some birds escaped into natural areas. With wild flocks lost and escaped captive birds on the loose, ornithologists and wildlife biologists speculated through the 20th and 21st century about the origins of flamingos in Florida: Are they the last wild birds surviving in remote areas? Escaped individuals of just one more introduced species finding a home in Florida's warm climate? Or are they birds from outside Florida reclaiming habitats where they once lived before hunting drove them extinct? Dr. Whitfield will clarify the history of the species in Florida, address cutting-edge science by Zoo Miami's conservation team and partners to identify the origins of the birds, and highlight efforts to help this species recover in Florida's natural areas.



Dr. Steven Whitfield is a conservation biologist at Zoo Miami, where he leads conservation research projects with rare and endangered species- including Gopher Tortoises in South Florida, amphibians in Central America, and American Flamingos in Florida. Since joining Zoo Miami's conservation team in 2015, Dr. Whitfield has been working to build a scientific basis for the conservation and recovery of Florida's iconic flamingos, more than a century after the last large flocks of wild birds were devastated by hunting in the late 1800s.

Dr. Whitfield holds a PhD in biology from Florida International University and has 20 plus years of experience conducting conservation fieldwork in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Join the Zoom Meeting:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82863391636>  
 Meeting ID: 828 6339 1636

*To receive a reminder prior to each program, please send an email to [programs@alachuaaudubon.org](mailto:programs@alachuaaudubon.org).*

*To view past programs online, visit the [Programs](#) page of our website at [alachuaaudubon.org/programs/](http://alachuaaudubon.org/programs/) or visit our [YouTube Channel](#).*

---

## The Twentieth (!) June Challenge

The World Series. The Super Bowl. The NBA Finals. All very nice in their way, of course. But is there anything on the American sporting scene to compare with The June Challenge? Any contest in which the competition is so keen, the conditions so exacting, the excitement so palpable, the trophy so honking huge? I think not.

And yet is there any other contest that so happily welcomes the novice? Only two things are needed to take part in The June Challenge: a pair of binoculars and an enthusiasm for birds. Well okay, three: a tolerance for high summer temperatures is actually pretty useful. But that's it. You're in. Let's go!

So. What is The June Challenge, exactly? It's a fun and friendly competition to find out who can see the largest number of bird species in Alachua County during the month of June – with an emphasis on the “fun and friendly” part. As with all competitions, there are rules: (1) Only birds seen in Alachua County during June may be counted. (2) Heard birds do not count; you've got to SEE those Chuck-will's-widows and Eastern Screech-Owls. So don't trust eBird with your June Challenge list, since it lists heard birds the same as seen ones. (3) You are free to put Muscovy Ducks and retention-pond Mallards on your list, but no other domestic birds. The Whooping Crane at Cones Dike and the Gray headed Swamphen at Sweetwater Wetlands Park are both countable. (4) Email your list to me at [rexrowan@gmail.com](mailto:rexrowan@gmail.com) by midnight on Friday, June 30th. We'll have a party shortly afterward to hand out prizes and have a good time.

That's simple, isn't it? Now here are a few tips to increase your chances of success: Do as much birding as possible during the first few days of the month. You're more likely to see lingering spring migrants that way. Purple Martins, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and Orchard Orioles may complete their nesting and leave before the month's end, so get them early too. But don't neglect the last few days of the month either, because they've produced early fall-migrant Louisiana Waterthrushes, Black-and-white Warblers, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. Make several visits to Newnans Lake and other large bodies of water to scan for gulls, terns, and pelicans, which may come and go on a daily basis. Go to Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve for Bachman's Sparrow; San Felasco Hammock for Hooded Warbler; and Sweetwater Wetlands Park for Least Bittern, Limpkin, Purple Gallinule, and Gray-headed Swamphen. There are over 100 species possible here in June (the record is 129). The first and last few hours of daylight are best. Birds tend to sing early in the morning.

As usual I'll be leading kickoff field trips to get this, the 20<sup>th</sup> (!) annual June Challenge, underway. On Thursday, June 1st, we'll meet at 6:00 a.m. – earlier if you can stand it – in the parking corral at Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve on County Road 325, 2.3 miles south of Hawthorne Road. For you working stiffs, we'll repeat it Saturday the 3rd. On each day we'll visit two or three other sites after Longleaf, and head home around lunchtime with 50-60 species.

There will be field trips to other locations – including Watermelon Pond to see the county's only known Burrowing Owls at close range – on subsequent Saturdays. Sounds like fun, right? I'll be sending out email bulletins during the month to keep everyone up to date on what's being seen and where. If you'd like to be on the mailing list, contact me at [rexrowan@gmail.com](mailto:rexrowan@gmail.com). Emails will commence in late May, continue through June, and end in early July.

I would particularly like to emphasize that this will be the twentieth June Challenge, the twentieth year in a row that Alachua County's birders have turned out for this exhilarating scavenger hunt. The idea originated one late-winter day in 2004 when Bob Carroll, Becky Enneis, and I were looking for sparrows in the grassy uplands around San Felasco Hammock's Lee Pond. Becky wondered aloud about the absence of Audubon birding activities during summer. She even quoted the AAS web site's birding calendar (which, to my shame, I had written), which advised that, during June, “Stay inside. There's nothing going on.” Becky didn't want to stay inside. She wanted to go birding. And right then and there she came up with the idea for the June Challenge. In late May we issued a come-one-come-all invitation to the local birding community by way of email. A few people enlisted, but not many. However more people joined in 2005, and still more in 2006, and at some point other Florida counties began to join in, as well as random counties throughout the country (all three counties in Delaware!). By now it's an Alachua County institution, and it's certainly been well established that “Stay inside” is very bad advice and that

*[Continued on page 12](#)*



---

## AAS College Intern Reports

### Kassandra Camejo

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Student

Being an intern at the bird banding lab was such a rewarding experience! It was very much worth the early wake up times to work with such amazing birds. I always enjoyed seeing re-captured birds and thinking about their long journeys during migration. One of my favorite memories was the first cardinal I banded and the bites that followed. I personally was a fan of the bitey Northern Cardinals and escape-artist Carolina Wrens! I also enjoyed the days when we had groups visiting us. It was great to talk to other bird enthusiasts and teach them about what we do at the banding lab. I am so grateful to Jonathan Varol, Felicia Lee, and Dr. Katie Sieving for their patience while teaching us. Watching them speak professionally about what we do at the banding lab in front of an audience and seeing how they teach others has been a great learning experience. I feel that I have come away from this opportunity having learned so much more about Florida birds and wildlife education.

In addition to the banding lab, my second project was kestrel nest-box monitoring with Eric Amundson. This was such a unique experience! We used pole cameras to look into nest boxes and observe how they were being used by the kestrels. I had never used a pole camera before, so it was fun to learn how to use it.



### Olivia Wulfekuhl

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Student

My time at the Prairie Creek Banding Lab genuinely changed my outlook on both birding and birds. Going into this internship, I knew what I thought was a good amount of information about birds: their calls, what they look like, where they live. Very quickly I realized I had known a fraction of what was actually out there. Once I had learned a certain call or a certain bird I had never even heard of, I started seeing them everywhere.

This internship has offered me a connection to a world that I absolutely adore. I love the people who love to bird, the companionship in rolling out of bed at 4 or 5 am and wandering around in the dark woods in search of a bird or to set up mist nets or being bitten by a particularly feisty bird. There were quiet moments between the net checks at Prairie Creek when people would swap their own bird stories or talk about different studies that gave me a sense of belonging and I have never been so grateful for it. The moments at Prairie Creek were not ones I had ever experienced before; I had never seen a group of people become so overcome in quiet awe at a particularly beautiful Yellow-rumped Warbler or watch in appreciation as one Carolina Chickadee waited for his mate to be released. At the banding lab I learned how to maneuver the stresses of extracting a bird in a timely fashion even if it was incredibly complicated, as well as how to band birds in front of an audience.

I tested my binocular skills by Common Loon watching with Dr. Andrew Kratter. Out in Fred Cone Park we chatted about birds and watched the resident ospreys build their nest all while scanning the horizons for a flash of a loon, often only for a few seconds. I like to think my bird-focused sight and the skill of tracking a bird with



---

binoculars have improved tremendously over the course of two weeks while the loons migrated. Those sometimes-brisk mornings gave me time to talk with someone I admire greatly all while getting the opportunity to watch these incredible birds fly north to breed.

This internship was so much more than I could've hoped and for that I am eternally grateful. I have gained so many experiences and skills in what feels like such a short time, and I am sad that it has come to an end but grateful that I got to experience it. Thank you so much to the Alachua Audubon Society for giving me this opportunity; it is not one I will forget.

### **Lauren Dawson-Scully**

A Biology major specializing in Natural Sciences at UF

My time as an intern with the Alachua Audubon Society was invaluable. Not only did I learn so much about avian biology, but I also got to be a part of a friendly, enthusiastic community of people passionate about ecology. I learned many skills while working in the Prairie Creek Banding Lab such as banding, extracting, and safely handling wild birds. I am extremely grateful I got the opportunity to learn these skills as they will be useful in my future as a biologist.

I also truly enjoyed my time working with Eric Amundson and his team on the Kestrel Monitoring Project. I was able to help in many ways and learn many new skills such as how to build the kestrel boxes and how to monitor boxes using a pole camera.

This internship exposed me to so many cool research projects and showed me that the opportunities to study birds are endless. I am so appreciative I got this opportunity and highly recommend this internship to anyone who wants to learn more about birds!



### **Jesus Rodriguez**

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Student at UF

I had an amazing time as an AAS intern this Spring 2023 semester. As an intern, I had the opportunity to get valuable hands-on experience extracting, handling, and banding birds. I was also able to assist with public outreach to educate others on the work being done at the Prairie Creek Banding Lab. One of my favorite moments during the internship was extracting my first bird, which ended up being an adorable Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher. Additionally, being able to work on the Prothonotary Warbler Nest Box Monitoring Project has given me the chance to learn and develop some very useful field-related skills. I enjoyed getting to know the other interns as well as everyone involved with the Alachua Audubon Society and hope to continue to be involved in some capacity. Overall, this was a great experience and I highly recommend this internship to anyone who is looking to gain experience in the field of conservation!





---

## Student Completes One-Year Audubon Initiative

*The Conservation Leadership Initiative is a one-year experience, offering opportunities for student applicants to become engaged in their local Audubon chapter and Florida Audubon networks. Study topics and experiences include Audubon Florida's Community Science Initiatives, sustainability partners, hands-on restoration and conservation projects, advocacy, and more. Students learn about conservation career options, 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 mentor. To learn more about the program, visit [Conservation Leadership Initiative \(CLI\) | Audubon Florida](#).*

*Two 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, and 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.*

### Liel Shachr

UF Freshman majoring in Environmental Science

I had the amazing opportunity of being one of the chosen students for the Conservation Leadership Initiative experiential learning program through Audubon Florida! This experience has helped me to develop my skills and passions immensely. The CLI program paired me with a mentor in the field, Alachua Audubon board member Gary Gossman. He helped guide me this year and provided me with advice to drive me in the right direction on my career path. I also had the opportunity to go to several birding classes with him and his students. This was a great way to see what Audubon is all about and see the beautiful array of birds that make up Florida's biodiversity. I was able to pick up techniques such as bird identification.

This year, I worked on my main conservation project, which was assisting Zachery Holmes with the Prothonotary Warbler Nest Box Monitoring project. It was an absolute thrill to work with Zach, learn necessary skills, and have an overall wonderful experience. I was also able to attend the CLI Spring Break Alternative, where we worked with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserve team for three days. Having the opportunity to see scientists and conservationists out in the field, while forging friendships with the other students, was one of my program highlights.

The CLI program has given me such amazing opportunities to grow as a leader and scientist. I have gained insight, skills, and connections. Most importantly, I have met many amazing people throughout this program that I will be staying in touch with.



---

**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.**

## Recap of 2023 Spring Loon Migration in North-Central Florida.

In March 2003, I began censusing the spring migration of Common Loons in Gainesville, Florida, as they crossed the Florida Peninsula. Before that, a number of local birders gathered anecdotal observations suggesting that the passage of loons overhead in Gainesville was a recurrent phenomenon on spring mornings. To better understand this migration, I established a dedicated site with good views of the sky (Pine Grove Cemetery in southeast Gainesville) and a morning routine of sky-watching that fit my schedule when they passed (45 minutes to two hours after sunrise). After a few years of censusing, I noticed that loons do not cross Peninsular Florida in any sort of regular, even progression. I would have an excellent day or two (back then 50+ loons counted) and then a period of several days with very few to no loons.



*Common Loon. Photo by Tedd Greenwald.*

Fast-forward 20 years of loon-watching, and using a citizen scientist approach, we now have had six to eight loon-counting stations staffed by Gainesville's army of birders and ornithologists for the past four years. This has given us a lot more data to analyze, but the same boom or pattern of migrating loons is evident. For instance, in 2022 an amazing 622 loons, 32% of the season's total, was seen on a single day. But nothing captured this pattern

*If inclement weather forces them down, they are utterly dependent on having an open body of water at least 100 yards long to regain flight. They cannot regain flight if they are grounded on land.*

better than the 2023 loon season. Starting on March 15<sup>th</sup>, the first week of counting was rather anemic, with 133 total loons; the previous three years all were above 300 by March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The second week continued slowly, and by March 28<sup>th</sup> the count total (445 loons) was far behind the totals in 2020-2022 (all 560+). And then we hit

March 29<sup>th</sup> and we threw out all the old records. On this one day, an unbelievable 1006 loons were counted flying over Alachua and northern Marion counties at five stations. This number would have been even higher if yours truly wasn't home in bed sick. This front of loon passage was not evenly distributed across our survey area; the three southernmost stations (Micanopy, Barr Hammock, and Powers Park) each had over 200 loons, the northern two (Walmart on NW 43rd Ave and GNV Airport) saw far fewer (79 and 39 respectively). The two following days also had decent showings (119 and 108 loons on March 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, respectively). Once we hit April, however, the remaining 16 days of the season were rather slow, with just one more day topping 100 loons, and 11 days had fewer than 25 loons.

The total number of loons recorded in the 2023 season was 2212 loons, our second-best year (we had 2322 in 2021). The seasonal totals of loons have been remarkably consistent

across the four years of the citizen scientist years: in addition to the two years mentioned above, we had 2154 in 2020, and 2183 in 2022. Given the similar results across years, one may expect that our effort would be even. Our effort, however, has not been nearly so even across these four years. This year we had 126 station-days staffed (of 200 possible, excluding rain/fog days); in the Covid-plagued 2020, when no one was going to work, we had 196 station-days; in 2021 we had 110 station-days, and in 2022 we had 92 station-days. As a result, the average number of loons seen per station-day went from a low of 11.16 in 2020 to a high of 24.85 in 2022. This year we saw an average of 17.36 loons/day at each station. One interesting pattern found this year was that the number of loons passing in the first half of the season (through March 31<sup>st</sup>) was much greater at the three southernmost stations (average of 41 loons/day/station) than at the northern three stations (average of 17 loons/day/station; however, from April 1<sup>st</sup> onwards, the opposite pattern emerged – the northern stations had higher rate of passage (12 loons/day/station) vs. the southern stations (5 loons/day/station). This pattern holds true

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Loons</u>	<u>Station Days</u>
2023	2212	126
2022	2183	92
2021	2322	110
2020	2154	196

---

through all four years of the expanded study: loons pass the southern stations at a higher rate than the northern stations in March, while they pass the northern stations at a higher rate in April.

When I first noticed the boom or bust pattern of loon flights, I figured these pulses were weather-related and that most loons chose to fly only when conditions were optimal (presumably clear skies and southwest tailwinds). Several more years of survey revealed that there was more to the equation than just weather, as these peak days seem to occur across a variety of weather and wind conditions, excepting rain, fog, or strong northeast head winds. One noticeable pattern is that most of these big days of loon migration have very few loons flying during the preceding two or more days. The big days are then followed by one or more higher than average days as well. These days preceding big days are often foggy, a common weather pattern when high pressure stalls over the southeast United States, and no cold fronts push through.

Loons tend to be social migrators. Overland flights are perilous undertakings for loons. To mitigate against catastrophe, loons probably are more secure if they are flying with other loons in a dispersed flock. In a similar study at St. Marks NWR south of Tallahassee, northbound flocks of loons coming off the Gulf of Mexico regularly vocalize with one another and will abort their migrations if they sense inclement weather ahead, and reverse course and go back to the Gulf. At our study in Gainesville, the loons, already an hour or so inland and halfway across the Peninsula, are committed to making it across and almost never reverse course or vocalize. In 2023 at our Gainesville sites, 92% of the flocks had two or more loons; 74% of the flocks had five or more loons. On the big day (March 29<sup>th</sup>), Scott Robinson's team saw one flock of 108 loons that stretched across the sky. Nonetheless, 170 loons undertook this journey by themselves.

Some interesting geographical and temporal patterns are beginning to emerge from this great data set. Determining the causal reasons for these patterns will be our next challenge. I wish to thank all the observers who joined me for this great effort and hope that you do it again next year!

Observers: Scott Robinson, Gina Kent, Adam Kent, Rex Rowan, Maggie Paxson, Laura Gaudette, Sydney Wade, Jose-Miguel Ponciano, Andres Leon, Adam Zions, Mary Ellen Flowers, Tedd Greenwald, Peter Polshek, Debbie Segal, Olivia Wulfekuhl, Giana Arcuri, Eric Link, Meredith Kite, Patricia Moon Tapper, Linda Hensley.

By Andy Kratter

*Dr. Andrew Kratter is the Collections Manager in Ornithology at the Florida Museum of Natural History.*

---

## Conservation News

### AAS Joins GRU Stakeholders Group

Gainesville Regional Utilities is forming a Stakeholders Group to provide input for its 2023 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). The 2023 IRP will be a comprehensive strategy for meeting the electric energy needs of GRU customers and will be instrumental in guiding GRU's investments in existing and new power generation facilities and energy conservation in the coming years. GRU has invited a number of local community groups with a variety of perspectives to participate. AAS is pleased to be invited to be a member of this group. Long-time Alachua Audubon member and former president Helen Warren has agreed to serve as the AAS representative on this group. As a former City Commissioner and a passionate advocate for addressing climate change, she is ideally suited to represent the interests of the AAS membership and advocate for the environment during discussions about the IRP.

### AAS Weighs In on City Tree Removal Procedures

Alachua Audubon recently wrote to the Gainesville City Commission to protest a change in procedures for notifying the public when planning to remove large trees. For the past decade, when the Department of Public Works planned to remove large trees, they were required by Chapter 30 of the Land Development Code to notify the public and offer an opportunity to request a hearing by the Tree Appeals Board--three volunteer experts in arboriculture (the science of managing urban trees). A rotting tree poses real dangers. The Board decides the best action—preserve the tree, remove it, or some compromise (perhaps pruning). The goal is to preserve large trees that are structurally sound and to remove those that threaten public safety. The Department of Public Works recently decided that their work is bound only by Chapter 23 of the Code: "Streets, Sidewalks, and other Public Places".



This chapter contains no provisions regarding the urban forest. The new interpretation makes Public Works exempt from requirements that protect and preserve the trees. The Alachua Audubon Conservation Committee sent the following letter to the City Commission expressing our concern over the change in approach.

“The Alachua Audubon Society is concerned about the failure of the city and its Department of Public Works to observe its ordinances in the Land Development Code regarding the removal of trees on SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. For the past decade the city has protected its urban forest and listened to citizens’ concerns related to management of the forest as is required in Chapter 30 of the Code. The Department of Public Works appears to have decided that it is no longer required to adhere to this chapter in the code. While there may be very sound reasons why the trees on SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue need to be removed, it is troubling that the city is not observing the ordinances that it put in place for citizen input into these decisions. Please do not overturn the rights of the people to be heard on important issues. Thank you for your consideration of our views in regard to this project.”

Since this article was written, the City Commission has announced that they plan to save the tree on SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The sidewalk will be widened, the tree’s roots trimmed and the sidewalk and the street that have buckled due to the tree roots will be repaired.

### Snail Kite Mortality on US Hwy 441

An Alachua Audubon member recently contacted AAS to express concern about mortality of Snail Kites where US Hwy 441 crosses Paynes Prairie. We contacted Caroline Poli, a Snail Kite researcher at UF, to get her perspective. We thought it important to share her information with our members:

“First, it is extremely important for anyone who finds a dead Snail Kite to document it, no matter where the bird is found. The finder should take clear photos and record the exact location (a google pin is sufficient), date, time, and observer. Tyler Beck is the Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator at FWC and he should be notified immediately in case the carcass needs to be collected ([Tyler.Beck@MyFWC.com](mailto:Tyler.Beck@MyFWC.com)). Our team searched the 441 corridor recently and found dead birds that initially looked like kites but turned out to be limpkins. While this is not good for limpkins, it emphasizes the need for observers to document their finds well.

Second and more generally, the kite monitoring team has long been interested in the risks that Snail Kites incur when they cross roads, which they frequently do across their range. It is possible to test whether (for instance) causeway design, height, or proximity to kite nesting habitat is linked to Snail Kite mortality. With a good study design, it's also possible to test whether reducing the speed limit, posting signs, or placing deterrent devices can reduce bird collisions with vehicles. Naturally, these sorts of studies take time and effort to do well.”

By Anne Casella

### Are Birds Hitting Your Windows?

A staggering number of birds are killed by collisions with windows every day. This is having a grave impact on bird populations nationally. Follow these links for solutions and suggestions on how to prevent such needless deaths. Methods range from simple, inexpensive do-it-yourself projects to affordable and attractive window treatments you can purchase.

[Acopian BirdSavers](#)

[Stop Birds Hitting Windows](#)

[Glass Collision Solutions](#)

Alachua Audubon board member Eric Amundson has installed window treatments at his home with great success. He is available to speak with you about these methods. Send an email to:

[contact@AlachuaAudubon.org](mailto:contact@AlachuaAudubon.org)



*Ovenbird killed by window collision.*

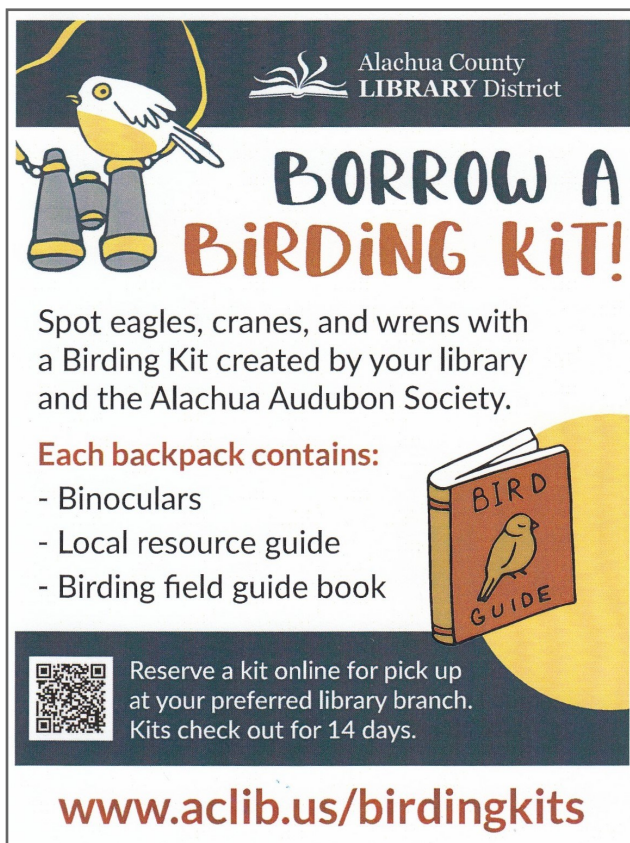
## John Hintermister High School Scholarships Awarded

Alachua Audubon is pleased to recognize two outstanding seniors with the John Hintermister Scholarship award for 2023.

**Kaitlyn Eubanks** is a senior at PK Yonge who will be attending Florida Gulf Coast University next year to major in environmental science and forensic science with a minor in Anthropology. She hopes to pursue a career in wildlife crime at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, the National Park Service Investigative Branch, or an international conservation organization. For her senior capstone research project, she conducted a study on the effects of conservation vs. development on barrier islands. Kaitlyn has been active in 4-H since 2010, serving in many leadership roles and has been a member of the Forest Ecology Team for 10 years and the Envirothon Team for the past year. She represented Florida at the 2022 National 4-H Forestry Invitational, placing third. She teaches environmental science lessons to a 4-H group in Micanopy and helped design, install and maintain a pollinator garden at PK Yonge. She has also participated in the Christmas Bird Count and with invasive species removal projects.

**Simona German** is a senior at Gainesville High in the Cambridge program who plans to attend college on a pre-med track. She has been a member of the GHS birding club and has served as President of the Earth Club for which she led volunteer beautification and maintenance projects at animal sanctuaries and butterfly gardens. She has attended the North Carolina Outward Bound Trail School. She is an accomplished clarinetist and has played in the Florida All State Band. She was a first-place winner in the Piano Sonata Festival – Foundation for the Promotion of Music Clubs in 2019 and 2020, placed first in the Piano Quartet & Clarinet Solo – Florida Federation of Music Clubs State Competition in 2020, received superior ratings in Clarinet Music Performance Assessment from the Florida Bandmasters Association in 2019-2020 and was the Lead Principle Clarinet in the Alachua County youth orchestra.

By Anne Casella




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](http://www.aclib.us/birdingkits)





## Florida Young Birders Club

The Florida Young Birders Club is welcoming people aged 9 - 17 in Florida who have an interest in birds or birding. We have chapters in the Tampa Bay Area, Orlando, and St. Augustine, with more chapters being formed in other parts of the state.

**Our club offers:**

- Monthly field outings
- Monthly virtual guest speaker events
- A chance to communicate with other young birders in a secure space
- Member discount on Vortex optics





---

## Young Birders Club Event at Sweetwater Wetlands Park



*Photo by Kathy Rigling.*

Bright and early on a Saturday morning, a group of birders hailing from across the state of Florida gathered together in Alachua County. However, this was far from a typical birding excursion. This group of dedicated and passionate birders consisted almost entirely of Florida Young Birders Club members, ranging in age from 9 to 17.

The Florida Young Birders Club (FYBC) was established to educate and empower young bird enthusiasts and conservation leaders. Members are invited to attend monthly field trips to birding hotspots across the state. The FYBC also affords young people the opportunity to participate in exciting projects and activities, such as American Kestrel nest box construction and bird banding demonstrations.

On Saturday, April 22, the FYBC arrived in Sweetwater Wetlands Park, one of Gainesville's most productive birding areas. Equipped with binoculars, field guides, and a sense of adventure, the young birders explored Sweetwater's many trails and boardwalks. By the end of the three-hour trip, the group had observed 55 bird species, including some very active Bobolinks, a King Rail, and a Short-Tailed Hawk.

Aside from spotting so many incredible species, it was truly wonderful to see youth so engaged with birding. Each attendee was skilled, knowledgeable and, most importantly, passionate about birds and the environment. The FYBC and its members demonstrate that birding is a hobby that can and should be enjoyed by people of all ages. I have no doubt that these young birders will be instrumental in inspiring the next generation to appreciate and protect the birds that we share this planet with.

By Bella Gonzalez



*Continued from page 3*

“There’s nothing going on” is an outright lie. In fact there’s a lot going on, and we hope you’ll join us to discover just how much fun it can be to witness it all in the company of your fellow birders.

Good luck to all of you who decide to participate! Let me know when you see an unexpected bird so I can pass the word. Don’t keep it a secret – it’s a friendly competition, after all, based on our shared enthusiasm for birding rather than a desire to come in first (although there is that honking huge trophy). ➡

Good luck!

By Rex Rowan

***Be sure to check out the following!***

Follow [AAS on Facebook!](#)

Follow [AAS on Instagram!](#)

[View AAS programs on YouTube!](#)

[Alachua County Birding on Facebook](#)

[Alachua County Rare Bird Alert on Facebook](#)



## 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)

## 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, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 p.m.







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

Erick D. Smith  
[erick@kestreleco.com](mailto:erick@kestreleco.com)

(352) 380-0648

Certified Arborist FL 5376A

Michael Meisenburg  
[michael@kestreleco.com](mailto:michael@kestreleco.com)

(352) 339-0701

[www.kestreleco.com](http://www.kestreleco.com)

# Wild Birds Unlimited®

Your Backyard Birdfeeding Specialist®

Birdseed · Feeders · Nesting Boxes · Nature Gifts · Optics

4212 NW 16<sup>th</sup> Blvd Gainesville  
352-381-1997

[gainesville.wbu.com](http://gainesville.wbu.com)  
[wbugainesville@gmail.com](mailto:wbugainesville@gmail.com)

Mon-Sat 10-6 Sun 11-4

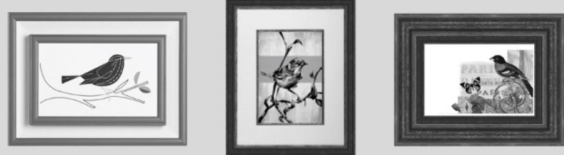


**Blue Highway**  
a pizzeria  
*Eat well, live well...*

Tioga • Micanopy • Ocala • [www.BlueHighwayPizza.com](http://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](http://gainesville.thegreatframeup.com)



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

Boutique Lodging & Events  
in Historic Gainesville

625 E UNIVERSITY AVE 352-373-6760

La Chua Cottage, Jimmy Ho Photography

[SWEETWATERINN.COM](http://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](mailto: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](http://tidewatertours.com)

[selvaverde.com](http://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](http://AlachuaAudubon.org)

*The Crane*  
May – June 2023

### 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/join/](http://www.alachuaaudubon.org/join/)

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/Join/](http://AlachuaAudubon.org/Join/) 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](http://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 [AlachuaAudubon.org/Join/](http://AlachuaAudubon.org/Join/). 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 [this link](http://this link) where you will be directed to the NAS membership page. A portion of your introductory membership will be credited to our local chapter and you will become an annual member of the [National Audubon Society](http://National Audubon Society), [Audubon Florida](http://Audubon Florida) and [Alachua Audubon](http://Alachua Audubon), with one-year subscriptions to *National Audubon* magazine, [Audubon Florida Naturalist](http://Audubon Florida Naturalist) magazine, and Alachua Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Crane*. To **renew** your National membership, click [here](http://here).

Please send any questions to [AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com](mailto:AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com)

*A copy of our official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free (800-435-7352) or visiting the department's website at [fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources](http://fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources). The state registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.*