



The Crane

Volume 66 Number 4 March – April 2025

FIELD TRIPS

Note: For the most current information on field trips and other events, please check our website calendar and/or our Facebook page.

Items to consider carrying on any field trip: water, binoculars (a must), insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, sturdy shoes, rain gear, camera, and contact information in case of emergency.

Hogtown Creek Headwaters , Sunday, March 9th, 10 am to 12 pm, 1500 NW 45th Ave., Gainesville
Meet trip leader Danielle Zukowski in the parking lot. This land was previously a dairy farm that was purchased by Home Depot. Part of the property was preserved into a park by the City of Gainesville with funds from the Florida Communities Trust and a donation from Home Depot. The farmhouse was renovated into a nature center using funds from Wild Spaces Public Places.

We will walk the paved trail surrounding the playground/pavilion to the looped nature trail through fern-covered wetlands and mixed upland forest and then head back to the nature center. We can take time to explore the nature center and see what birds are visiting the feeders. Birders of all ability levels and non-members are always welcome. Difficulty: 1: level terrain; one mile or less.

Boulware Springs, Saturday, March 29th, 8 am to 11 am, 3300 SE 15th St., Gainesville

Meet Andy Kratter at Boulware Springs Park. Enter at the first (northernmost) of the two entrances to the park and meet in the parking lot. From there we

will stroll westward into the restored wooded area where we will look and listen for Bachman's Sparrows, Northern Bobwhites, Red-headed Woodpeckers, various sparrows, and other avian targets. We will also watch for migrating loons and learn about this fascinating migration pattern from the loon migration expert, Andy Kratter. Difficulty 2: greater than one mile.

Blues Creek Ravine Preserve, Sunday, March 23rd, 8 am to 11 am

Meet trip leader Maggie Paxson at the parking area on the shoulder of NW 71st Street off Millhopper Road at this GPS pin location: 29°43'05.3"N 82°25'04.9"W. The trailhead is located 6710 NW 69th Avenue and can be accessed by foot from 71st St.

Managed and conserved in 2002 by Alachua Conservation Trust, Blues Creek Ravine Preserve is located on 160 acres of well-managed upland deciduous hammock. Covering most of the Blues Creek drainage basin and floodplain, the preserve contains interesting geology formed by the creek and its multiple tributaries.

We will hike the northern side of the orange

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loop, then cross the ravine to hike the entirety of the blue loop for a total distance of approximately 1.5 miles. This location boasts 119 unique species records on eBird, and can be particularly productive during migration, when less common migrant warblers, thrushes, and grosbeaks are often reported.

The trail can be uneven with roots crossing the path, and crossing the ravine will involve going down a steep (but short) stretch of trail and across a bridge. Difficulty: 2 due to uneven ground and distance.

Cedar Key, Saturday, April 26th, 6:30 am to noon

Meet field trip leaders Maggie Paxson and Tim Hardin at the Target parking lot on Archer Road where we will carpool to Cedar Key. This quaint coastal town always yields a large diversity of birds and can be especially exciting during spring migration. Likely birding locations at Cedar Key will be the Trestle Trail, cemetery, museum, downtown park, Number 3 Bridge, and Shell Mound. A scope will be especially useful for shorebirds and distant waterbirds.

Bathrooms can be limited in Cedar Key, but our third stop has clean public restrooms, and water fountains for filling bottles. Most of our stops are within a 10 minute drive of the park. Feel free to peel off and join back up if needed.

Much of the day will be in direct sun, though we have scheduled the trip to give us shady breaks in between. Trails are easy and dry. Bring lunch, snacks and water or take advantage of one of the recently re-opened restaurants.

Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve, Sunday, April 27th, 8 am to 11 am, County Road 325, Hawthorne

Meet trip leader Michael Drummond at the Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve on CR-325. We hope to see Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Red-headed Woodpecker, and others, but they won't be our primary quarry; we'll be looking at everything – trees, wildflowers, insects, reptiles, whatever we find. Drive east on Hawthorne Rd. to CR-325, then right on CR-325 for 2.3 miles.

Difficulty: 2-3 pending trail conditions; trail may be wet depending on the amount of rainfall.

April 21 - 25, 2025; High Island, TX

Join Alachua Audubon on this first out-of-state AAS birding field trip to the renowned High Island, TX on the upper Texas coast during the peak of spring migration. Any eastern species of warbler, vireo, thrush, grosbeak, tanager, flycatcher, bunting, and oriole can be seen at one of the wooded "islands" that High Island is famous for, as well as western rarities. We will visit Smith Oaks Sanctuary, Boy Scout Woods, Eubanks Woods, Hooks Woods and other local hotspots in search of those spring migrants. We will also visit nearby Bolivar Flats, one of Texas' most famous shorebird locations where thousands of shorebirds, terns, gulls, and other water birds congregate. Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge will also be on the birding itinerary where we will look for more waterbirds and spring migrants. This is a trip where birding can be great to overwhelming depending on weather conditions and location.

If you are interested in attending this 5-day field trip, you should make your own travel and lodging reservations. Several AAS members have already reserved an Airbnb in Crystal Beach, TX, that is a short drive to High Island and very close to Bolivar Flats. The rates are affordable during this coastal off-season period. We plan to fly to and from Houston on the 21st and 25th. Birding the High Island area will begin during the afternoon of the 21st; occur all day on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th; and during the morning of the 25th. For additional information and a description of the birding locations, please contact Debbie Segal at debbie.segal@gmail.com.



*Long-billed Curlew.
Photo by Debbie
Segal.*

NeighborWood Watch

Around the world, there is a growing movement to preserve dead wood habitats in urban landscapes. From “habitat snags” to “wildlife trees” and “woodpecker poles” to small stumps or even sleepy piles of logs, there are many ways you can incorporate dead wood into your landscape

Katy Deitz, a PhD student in the Plant Pathology department, and Ben Schwartz with the UF Forest Entomology Lab, have launched a local conservation campaign, "The NeighborWood Watch", about preserving dead wood and habitat snags in Florida's urban landscapes. With input from AAS President Debbie Segal and board member Eric Amundson and his wife, Sherri, they recently completed a short video about maintaining woody habitats for woodpeckers and other birds. You can watch that video [here](#). You can join the movement and learn more about promoting biodiversity with dead wood by visiting their website [here](#).

(Pileated Woodpecker photo by Susan Ambrosino-Clontz)



FLMNH Ornithology Collection

Last fall Dr. Andy Kratter, local ornithologist and collections manager at the Florida Museum of Natural History, invited a small group from AAS to visit the museum's ornithology collection. The skeleton collection is estimated to be the fifth largest in the world with ~3,000 species. A focus of this trip was to view the skins* of fall warblers and flycatchers. Many of us were excited to see rare extinct species including Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, Passenger Pigeons, Dusky Seaside Sparrows, Bachman's Warbler, and Carolina Parakeets.

See the museum website on birds [here](#) to learn more and to inquire about viewing. There you can also browse the Bird Skin and Skeleton Database.

*A bird skin is a specially prepared specimen used for scientific research and education.

By Danielle Zukowski



Collections manager Andy Kratter with an Andean Condor wing.



Warbler skins.

Photos courtesy of Dottie Dreyer and Taylor Zeglam.

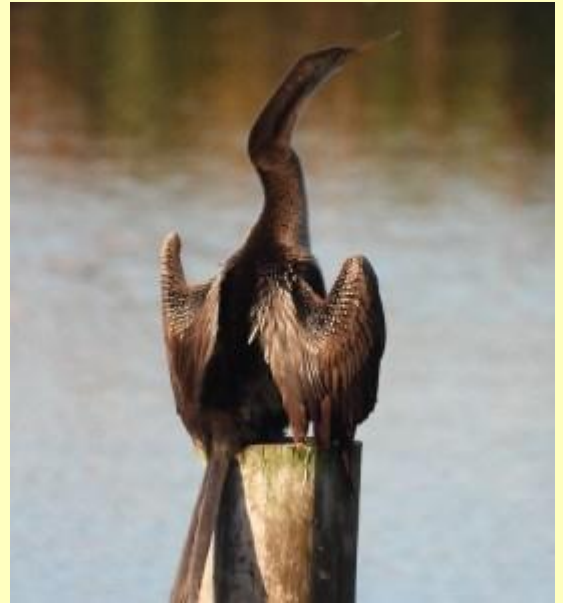
Evening Programs

Our popular evening programs are once again meeting in person! Our new venue is Cypress & Grove Brewing at 1001 NW 4th Street, Gainesville. Please join us!

Debbie Segal presents *Sweetwater Wetlands Park – A Triple Crown Winner for Birds, Birders, and the Environment!* Thursday, March 20th, 2025, 6:45 – 8:15 pm, at Cypress and Grove Brewing

The ecological, recreational, and ecotourism benefits of GRU's Sweetwater Wetlands Park are wide-ranging and represent a triple crown winner for water quality, wildlife, and visitors. Because of Sweetwater's many community-wide benefits, GRU has decided to construct a second treatment wetland, one that will be located on the west side of Gainesville and will be designed to recharge the Floridan Aquifer with cleaner water. Join Debbie Segal for this informative presentation and learn how Sweetwater Wetlands Park and other constructed treatment wetlands successfully and inconspicuously clean water bodies, and about GRU's plans for a new system – the Groundwater Recharge Wetland.

Debbie Segal is a retired environmental scientist who worked in the field of wetlands ecology, soil science, and environmental permitting for over 25 years. While working with Wetland Solutions, Inc., she helped design and permit Sweetwater Wetlands Park. She serves on the quarterly Sweetwater stakeholder committee and leads a monthly bird walk at Sweetwater. Debbie is also president of the Alachua Audubon Society.



Anhinga. Photo by Debbie Segal.

AAS Board Positions and Volunteer Needs

Alachua Audubon is actively involved in a multitude of different conservation-related projects and activities, all accomplished through our all-volunteer slate of highly engaged board members and other volunteers. To continue our mission, which 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,”* we need to fill a few board and volunteer positions. Do you have the desire and skill set to contribute locally to our conservation-focused organization? Or do you know someone who might be interested in filling one of the positions listed below?

Treasurer – AAS is proud to be fiscally sound and capable of funding important local conservation-based projects. We are looking for someone with accounting and/or CPA skills, and ideally QuickBooks experience who will manage AAS's organizational finances. Tasks include overall financial oversight, classify deposits and expenses in QuickBooks, produce monthly financial reports, reconcile bank statements, make deposits, pay bills, and other financially-related tasks. This board position could pair nicely with a CPA who desires professional volunteer hours.

Festival Attendance Organizer – AAS's attendance at local nature-based festivals is an excellent opportunity to introduce local residents to the magical world of birds and conservation. We strive to attend three spring and three fall festivals to exhibit educational material and interact with curious and friendly visitors. We have a Festival Liaison board position open for someone who will coordinate our festival attendance with festival organizers,

represent AAS at local festivals, and organize volunteers to assist with the AAS festival booth. AAS has a newly created Volunteer Coordinator who will assist the Festival Liaison board member with volunteer recruitment.

Newsletter Editor-in-Training – Alachua Audubon is fortunate to have a talented and engaged newsletter editor who would eventually like to pass the torch to someone else. Therefore, AAS is recruiting a board member who would enjoy dabbling in various AAS-based initiatives while learning the organizational operations, with the goal of transitioning to the Newsletter Editor within a year or so. Six newsletters are produced each year.

Website WordPress – AAS continues to count our volunteer blessings with a webmaster who maintains the technical operations of the AAS website. However, we are recruiting a board member who is skilled in Word-Press and can frequently update the website with timely announcements and calendar posts.

Board Member Responsibilities – AAS is a committee-based organization where each volunteer board member participates on one or more committees and typically spends a few to several hours per month on AAS activities. Board meetings are typically held on the second Wednesday of each month, with an in-person or Zoom attendance option. A half-day planning meeting is held on a weekend in June where the upcoming fiscal year's projects and budgets are decided.

An AAS board member's tenure lasts for as long as the experience is personally rewarding and can range from a few years to a decade or more. (The longest reigning AAS board member was Bob Simons, with over five decades of service on the AAS board!) The list of AAS committees below demonstrates the many important services that Alachua Audubon provides to our local community. Although we are recruiting for four specific positions, new board members are welcome to serve on any additional committees as noted below.

Please contact AAS [here](#) if you would like more information on any of the above listed board positions.

AAS Committees

Conservation and Science

Kestrel Monitoring Program
Native Plant Garden
Purple Martin Program
Proposed Developments and Local Issues
Sweetwater Wetlands Park Stakeholder
Committee
Eagle Watch

Field Trips

Weekend Field Trips
Birds and Brew
Santa Fe College Birding Class
SWP Wednesday Bird Walks
Bird Rambles
The Flock

Education and Outreach

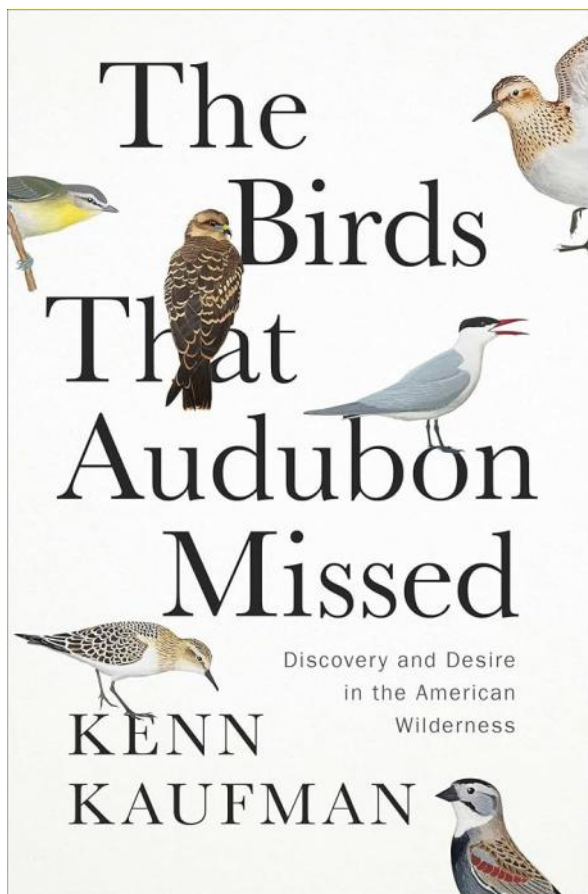
K through High School Programs
4th Grade Nature Parks Bussing
High School Scholarships
Young Birders Club
Internship Program
GREBE (UF Student Audubon Chapter) Liaison
Festivals — Open
Evening Programs
Backyard Bird Tour
Volunteer Coordinator

Communications

Newsletter — Open Trainee Position
Website Updates — Open
Other Social Media (FB, IG)
Personalized Correspondence

Operations

Treasurer — open
Proposals
Documents (Annual Report, Manuals)
Membership
Board Recruitment



Book Review

*The Birds That Audubon Missed:
Discovery and Desire in the American
Wilderness*

by Kenn Kaufman

Kenn Kaufman is known for his field guides and illustrations to help identify birds. Throughout his work as a naturalist, he began to wonder about the discovery of birds and was surprised to learn about some of the common species that were missed by John James Audubon, Alexander Wilson, and their contemporaries. This work is a blend of an art project – Audubonesque renditions of the missed species – and art/natural history with captivating tales about the discoveries of birds, the development of taxonomy, collaboration and rivalry, missed birds, and even made-up birds!

By Danielle Zukowski

Note: Three electronic versions of this book are available at the [Alachua County Library](#).

Sign up for The Advocate Newsletter

Stay up-to-date on the
legislative session to learn
when you can use your
voice for birds!

Visit fl.audubon.org/advocate to sign up

 Audubon | FLORIDA



SCAN TO SIGN UP

Southeast Arizona Birding Festival

Who doesn't know the thrill of seeing a new life bird? How about 5 or 10 new life birds over the course of a long weekend? One way to significantly increase the odds of that is to attend a birding festival in a different part of the country. Several AAS members have expressed interest in attending the Southeast Arizona Birding festival in Tucson August 6-10. Some of the Sonoran Desert specialties include the Elegant Trogon, the Five-striped Sparrow, the Red-faced Warbler and literally dozens of others. Tucson is also home to 13 different species of hummingbirds. At the 2024 festival 227 different species of birds were seen!

Don't let Tucson in August put you off because the city is ringed by four mountain ranges – Santa Catalina, Santa Rita, Rincon and Tucson – and in the cool mountains is where the best birding occurs.

If interested, send an email to contact@AlachuaAudubon.org and your name will be put on a list and more details will be sent as they become available. Registration opens April 29th. In the meantime, check out the website [here](#) and read all about the awesome field trips from this year's festival including those to see desert creatures of the night.

By Cyndi Baker

UF Osprey Cam is Live!

Hello Osprey fans! It looks like Stella has found another mate! If you recall, Talon disappeared during the middle of raising chicks last year and one chick named Talon Jr was successfully raised by Stella.

Stella's new mate has been bringing fish to her and courtship is underway. Keep watching to see what happens . . . Send an email to hostetm@ufl.edu if you have questions or want to share what you saw on camera (you can send me photos!). I estimate that we will see the first egg sometime in the first part of April. But who knows? This is Nature after all!

Osprey cam is brought to you by UF's [Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation](#). The nest is located on top of a pole at the Southwest Recreation Center ballfields on the UF campus.

Nesting pairs of ospreys have been coming to this site for several years. This is a wild osprey nest and anything can happen. While we hope that the osprey pair lay eggs, and that all the chicks hatch and grow up healthy and successfully fledge, things like sibling rivalry, predators, and natural disaster can affect the osprey family and may be difficult to watch.

By Mark Hostetler

Bird Watching Class Offered

Develop your skills in identifying the birds in our region. Whether you are a beginner or have some experience in birding, **Introduction to Birds and Birding** will increase your knowledge. Santa Fe College Community Education partners with Alachua Audubon to offer this bird watching course on consecutive Saturday mornings from March 29 through April 19. The course consists of 4 field trips to local natural areas, guided by experienced birders. Field trips begin at 8:30 AM and last 2-2.5 hours. Register online at the [Santa Fe College Community Education website](#). For assistance, call 352-395-5193 and mention the course name above. Course Fee: \$49.00.

Note: Must be at least 18 yrs old to register.

Bring binoculars.

Please register early as this class fills quickly.



*Red-headed Woodpecker.
Photo by Deena Mickelson.*

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
43RD CONFERENCE
GAINESVILLE | APRIL 2-6, 2025



Registration is now open!

visit fnps.org/conference

Florida Native Plant Society's
43rd Conference — "Seeds For Tomorrow"
April 2-6, 2025 at the UF Hilton,
1714 SW 34th St, Gainesville

Our highly anticipated return to an in-person conference is now here!

- [4 amazing featured speakers](#) to start and end each day
- [3 tracks of sessions](#) featuring experts presenting on Current Events, Conservation, and Research
- 2 days of [31 field trips](#) across the region
- [Interesting workshops](#)
- Exhibitors, [Native plant vendors](#), and Silent Auction
- Networking and community building

Schedule at a glance:

Wednesday, April 2nd - onsite registration opens, Welcome Social.

Thursday, April 3rd - field trips, workshops, leadership meetings, evening social.

Friday, April 4th - speakers, plant sale/vendors, silent auction, plant ID contest, banquet.

Saturday, April 5th - speakers, plant sale/vendors, silent auction closes, evening social.

Sunday, April 6th - field trips.

[Click here for more details!](#)

Backyard Birding Tour a Success!

Alachua Audubon extends our gratitude to the many people who made the Backyard Birding Tour a success! Thank you, first of all, to **Tonya Becker** and **Danielle Zukowski** for the immense job of organizing this event. Thanks also to **Glenn and Carol Israel, Sherri and Eric Amundson, Mala Lyer, Karen Brown, Tim Hardin**, and a private homeowner for welcoming over 200 visitors to your homes to share your gardens, your feeders, your birdbaths, your knowledge, and your birds! Thank you to the many volunteers including **Felicia Lee, George Becker, Glenn Price, Lloyd Davis, Gary Gossman, Maggie Paxson, Ellen Frattino, Olivia Spinola, Barbara Brock, Cynthia McGee Dunphy, Dottie Dreyer, Mary Ellen Flowers, Tedd Greenwald, Eileen Ahlquist, Adam Zions, Brynn Fricke, John Charbonnet, Noah Gorme, Kayla Bain, Jon and Suzi Graham, and Debbie Segal**. Thank you to **Wild Birds Unlimited** for selling tickets, assisting participants, promoting the event, and your donations to the homeowners. Lastly, **thank you to all the participants** who visited these homes to learn how to attract birds to your yard, plant for wildlife, and protect birds—over \$3,600 was raised to support our conservation and education initiatives!



Wild turkey photographed by Cynthia McGee Dunphy at the home of Eric and Sherri Amundson.

**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



**Florida Young
Birders Club**



The Florida Young Birders Club is welcoming people ages 9 - 17 in Florida who have an interest in birds or birding. We have active chapters in Tampa Bay, Orlando, and St. Augustine plus new chapters forming in Sarasota, Charlotte Harbor and Gainesville.

Our club offers:

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



**Scan the code
to join!**







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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, April 6th, at 5:45 p.m.





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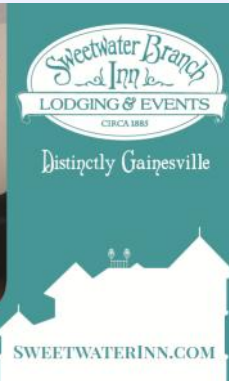
Check out the Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society [here](#). Meetings take place on third Wednesdays – September through May (excluding December) – 7:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at 4225 NW 34th Street, Gainesville in Phillips Hall. The public is welcome to attend. Join their chapter to attend monthly field trips.



**Boutique Lodging & Events
in Historic Gainesville**

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La China Cottage, Jimmy Ho Photography



While we do not send frequent requests for donations via email or paper mail, we do appreciate donations any time of the year. We are an all-volunteer organization and all donations are used to fund our many community projects. Donations may be made by individuals, families, on behalf of others, or as bequests. Please use our donate button [here](#), or send a check to AAS, PO Box 140464, Gainesville 32614-0464. For questions, please send an email to contact@AlachuaAudubon.org.



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Join Alachua Audubon!

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

Gift Memberships Available!

Annual Membership Levels

Choosing a higher level provides additional support for our conservation & education efforts.

Student	\$10	Individual	\$25
Family	\$35	Limpkin	\$50
Purple Gallinule			\$100
Swallow-tailed Kite			\$250
Sandhill Crane			\$500
Whooping Crane (<i>lifetime membership</i>)			\$1,000

Sliding scale memberships welcome. Send what you can afford.

DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS APPRECIATED. DONATE [HERE](#).

Join online with PayPal at AlachuaAudubon.org/join/ or send your application (print from the website) and check payable to **Alachua Audubon Society** to PO Box 140464, Gainesville, FL 32614-0464. Include your name, address and 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 this area, you are automatically a member of AAS.

To join National Audubon, please go to AlachuaAudubon.org/Join/ where you will be directed to their 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](#), [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*. To **renew** your National membership, click [here](#).

Please send any membership questions to AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com

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.

Alachua Audubon is a 501(c)3 organization. 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 their website at fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources. The state registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.

Alachua Audubon Society Board of Directors

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Felicia Lee, Youth Education, Birds & Brews
Karen Brown, Membership, Editor, Website
Tim Hardin, Field Trips, Recruitment
Eric Amundson, Kestrel Nest Box Project
Gary Gossman, Birding Class, Finance, Proposals
Adam Zions, Conservation, Proposals
Ellen Frattino, Festivals
Renee Slaw, Field Trips, Social Media
Danielle Zukowski, Field Trips, Backyard Bird Tour
Tonya Becker, Field Trips, Backyard Bird Tour
Glenn Israel, Evening Programs, College Internship Program

AAS Website AlachuaAudubon.org
Facebook facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/
Instagram @alachuaaudubon
Contact us at contact@AlachuaAudubon.org



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.

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.

Submissions to ***The Crane*** are welcomed.
Deadline for the May – June issue: April 15th.
For advertising information, contact the editor at Contact@AlachuaAudubon.org