



The Crane

Volume 55 Number 6 July—Aug. 2014

The June Challenge Edition of the Crane Newsletter

Kicking Off the June Challenge

In Alachua County, the June Challenge (JC) is a month-long birding competition that culminates in a terrific party highlighted by some nice prizes, a big, honking trophy, and lots of beer. I really love the whole experience so I eagerly awaited the first of the month and our annual kick-off field trip, typically led by Rex Rowan. Then I got a note from Rex. He would be out of town on that day and asked if I would lead the trip to kick off the JC. My immediate reaction was, "I can do that! I've led many field trips. This one should be easy and fun." Well, it was fun. And successful. Easy? You can decide.

The plan was to start out at 6:30 AM at Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve for a few target birds, head to Powers Park to see what was around Newnan's Lake, and then meet up with another group at Paynes Prairie by 8:00. Yeah, right.

Twenty-seven people showed up in the parking lot at Longleaf. The early arrivals were treated to an aerial display by Common Nighthawks who swooped and buzzed over our heads. It was our first target species of the day and it came right to us. Great start. We walked into the park a bit and soon hear a singing Bachman's Sparrow, our second target. I turned to the group to point to the bird and realized that they stretched out over 100 feet behind me, chatting merrily and greeting old friends. I shushed, I waved, I pointed ... the bird was perched in the open at eye level only 30 feet from the trail. You could never get a better - or easier look at a Bachman's Sparrow in your life. Of course, it flew off as the folks in the back of the line were just reaching the spot and several missed it.

We continued along the trail to another Bachman's site, and while we heard one singing, we couldn't locate it. A distant look at a Blue Grosbeak was a nice consolation prize. At another spot I heard a Pine Warbler's dry trill. We found him easily and, in the same spot, added Brown-headed Nuthatch and Great-crested Flycatcher. Then I realized it was already 7:30 and we were a long way and one additional stop away from Paynes Prairie.

We had three targets at Powers Park: Yellow-throated and Prothonotary Warblers and Limpkin. The Yellow-throated was easy. Right above our heads, it sang a greeting to the new morning while dancing from limb to limb in search of breakfast. The Limpkin was easy; two were perched in the open near the fishing pier. The Prothonotary was not so easy. We heard it, but only some of the 27 birders actually saw it. Since the JC is all about seeing birds - without disturbing habitat - that was a dip for the rest.

By this time the group was spread all over the park from the pier to the bathrooms. I walked about waving and calling out, "We need to get to the prairie while it's still cool enough for a long walk. Let's go." We did ... eventually.

Timing is everything in birding. When we reached the La Chua Trail parking lot, the first thing we heard was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. I played a Cuckoo song for just a few seconds and it flew to us. If you're a birder with any experience with cuckoos, you know how hard they can be to see in a tree. They pick a spot, never in the open, often high up, and don't move. At all. Getting 27 sets of eyes on the bird was really tough. Then I realized that several people had already started down the trail. Should I go get them or stay here and *(continued on Page 3)*

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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 sustainable use of natural resources.

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**Deadline for
Sept—Oct Crane:
Aug. 15th**



What we mortal birders are allowed to see of spring migration depends much on the inscrutable whims of the weather gods. When skies are clear and winds blow from the south, the vast majority of our feathered friends pass unseen overhead, hastening toward genetic destiny. But if winds are contrary and storm

fronts bear down from the north, trans-gulf migrants will make landfall at first opportunity, and for many that would be Florida. Exhausted and starving, they remain only long enough to consume sufficient calories to finish the journey. It's during these brief periods of migratory disruption, which birders call "fallouts", that the incredible scope and scale of migration can be briefly glimpsed. The most dramatic places to experience fallouts are in coastal locations such as Cedar Key and Ft. DeSoto, but even as far inland as Gainesville it's possible to see large numbers and varieties of migrant birds.

Between the middle and end of April we had two back-to-back cold fronts bringing north and northwest winds for several days, resulting in a slow, extended fallout. During those two weeks we had more reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Scarlet Tanagers than we could keep up with. Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks were "thicker than fleas", and warblers were plentiful. The westerly tilt of winds at times brought us some warblers that we don't usually see in spring. On April 19th, Ryan Terrill and Jessica Oswald spotted a Blackburnian Warbler along the Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail. The same day Matt O'Sullivan found a Nashville Warbler at Loblolly. Over the next few days we had three different Cerulean Warblers reported individually by Bob Hargrave in La Crosse, Jonathan Mays near the north rim of Paynes Prairie, and Andy Kratter from Evergreen Cemetery. Adam and Gina Kent, birding Bolen Bluff April 26th, found a Swainson's Warbler, and Samuel Ewing noted a Magnolia Warbler May 3rd in his yard. Thrush migration is usually poor here in spring, but as with the warblers, this year was different. There were several reports of Veeries and Swainson's Thrushes from San Felasco Hammock, and on April 23rd, the Ewing family were dealt a "Thrush Flush" as they were able to find all three possible *Catharus* thrush species (Veery, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked) plus several Wood Thrushes along the Hogtown Creek Greenway.

As spring migration gave way to breeding season, the focus of many turned to the June Challenge, an organized competition to find as many species as possible during that month. The annual event usually results in a number of surprises, and one was the discovery of a pair of American Robins by Geoff Parks in his Gainesville neighborhood. There are only a few

(continued on Page 5)

June Challenge (*continued from Page 1*)

help people locate it? The dilemma was solved when the bird abruptly flew away. Also, a singing Summer Tanager put on a little show for us before it too disappeared.

Once on Paynes Prairie, I realized my hope of getting the group together was long gone. A few had taken off in their own direction. They missed the cuckoo and tanager, but were rewarded with a Yellow-breasted Chat which the rest of us dipped on later in the day. At first things were a little slow as we strolled along the boardwalk. We saw the usual waders and Common Gallinules, but nothing out of the ordinary except a Black-crowned Night-Heron perched across the water from us. Then we made the turn onto Sweetwater Dike and things got better very quickly. A couple of singing Orchard Orioles gave us great looks, and even seemed to follow us down the trail for a while. Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings flew back and forth across our path for the next hour. At least three Least Bitterns darted low across the ponds. Several Purple Gallinules thrilled all of us and provided lifers for some of the younger birders. Next I got the best look of my life at a King Rail that stood in the open and preened while ignoring us. Then we found a juvenile Pied-billed Grebe. That's a terrific find for June in Alachua County. Many years go by without a Pied-billed being recorded on anyone's JC checklist. Then the cute factor went into overdrive. We found a momma Purple Gallinule with at least three chicks following close behind her. A bit later a couple of noisy male Common Yellowthroats popped up near us. Gorgeous bird! And why isn't it called the Masked Warbler?

The field trip ended around 1:00 PM after a very successful morning. But I wasn't done yet! After a quick lunch in the parking lot (thank God for air conditioning in cars!), I drove out to Hague Dairy. I arrived as the rain started falling, so I was confined to my van. I picked off a few easy "farm birds" (Rock Pigeon, House Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird)

and then turned to Cellon Creek Boulevard. A short, slow drive produced Eastern Meadowlarks, Eastern Kingbirds, and Rough-winged Swallows. Usually this is a great spot for American Kestrel and Northern Bobwhite, but neither were seen. I heard a Bobwhite, but with the rain I had no chance of seeing it.

Next I drove through the charming little city of Alachua and checked the wires for White-winged Doves. No luck, but there were a few Eastern Bluebirds. By checking various feeders I found Brown Thrasher, Tufted Titmouse, Downy Woodpecker. Through all of this time, the rain fell in sheets, scouring the streets and keeping the birds hunkered down where I couldn't see many of them.

A Moe's burrito made for a good dinner before I drove out to a cemetery in Newberry. Last year I found Northern Flickers and an Eastern Wood-Pewee here, but once again, the rain was an obstacle. By now it was beginning to get dark and I had one more stop to make. I drove to Watermelon Pond Road to a spot that has never failed to produce a Chuck-will's-widow for me in June. I parked and lowered my window to listen. I immediately raised my window and searched for a towel to clean my glasses and wipe rain off the door and my shoulder. I opened the opposite window and listened. Nothing. So, I thought, why not play a Chuck's call for a few seconds and see if anything responds. Almost instantly, a Chuck flew out from a low perch in a nearby tree, crossed right in front of my windshield, and disappeared into the night. Yes! It had been a challenging day, with long walks in unrelenting sun and then driving rain in the latter part of the day, but it had also been quite successful. I scored 72 species for the day, found many of my target birds, and successfully herded the cats ... ah ... the field trip participants through three different parks. I'd call that a winner of a day and a great start to the 2014 June Challenge.

By Bob Carroll

<http://bobsgonebirding.blogspot.com>

Swallow-tailed Kite Celebration

Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) held a celebration on May 10th at Prairie Creek Lodge to honor the Swallow-tailed Kite and to raise funds for the Swallow-tailed Kite satellite tracking project. The event included a silent art auction, a live bird exhibit, field trapping demonstrations, presentations on current bird tracking research, and a tree climbing demonstration. Shown in the photograph below is ARCI's Gina Kent demonstrating her tree climbing techniques. Gina also sang a bird-tracking themed song in her quartet at the celebration — she is pretty darned versatile.



Photograph taken by Glenn Price.

Speakers' Corner

Wednesday, September 17, 2014—Millhopper Library (3145 NW 43rd St.). Social time at 6:30 p.m. followed by program at 7:00 p.m. *Research and Discovery in South Florida's Mangroves: Unlocking the Secret of the Mangrove Cuckoo.* Presented by Rachel Mullin of Ecostudies. Ecostudies has been studying the ecology and life history of Mangrove Cuckoos at J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge since 2012. Using miniature radio-transmitters, they are tracking individuals throughout the year so as to better understand their habitat requirements and seasonal movements.

New Additions to AAS Board

AAS welcomes Anne Casella as the new President of the board of Alachua Audubon. Anne replaces Helen Warren, who stepped down from her role as President to serve as one of Gainesville's newest City Commissioners. Thank you Anne for becoming our new President. Felicia Lee will begin serving as the new Secretary of AAS. And Sharon Kuchinski will serve as the newest AAS board member. Returning board members include Scott Flamand (Vice President), Dotty Robbins (Treasurer), Bob Carroll, Joni Ellis, Barbara Fennelly, John Hintermister, Mike Manetz, Jonathan Mays, Geoff Parks, Rex Rowan, Emily Schwartz, Debbie Segal, Barbara Shea, and Bob Simons.

Songbird Stamps at the Post Office

Have you seen the new collection of Songbird stamps that are now available at the Post Office? The collection of 20, first-class Forever Stamps feature Mountain Bluebird, Western Tanager, Painted Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, and Evening Grosbeak.

Haven Hospice Bird Seed Project

For the past two years, Alachua Audubon member, Jean Kaufman, has provided a valuable service to the patients at Haven Hospice by filling the 19 bird feeders with seed two to three times a week. Alachua Audubon Society supports her efforts by paying for the birdseed that she uses. We extend a special thanks to our Audubon members who have supported this project by donating funds for the purchase of bird seed for the Haven Hospice bird feeders.

Jean has requested some assistance to maintain this ministry. She is seeking someone who would be willing to go to Haven Hospice once a week to fill the feeders and to serve as her back-up when she travels out of town. In addition, she needs some one-time assistance with cleaning feeders and birdbaths. If any of our Audubon members would be willing to assist Jean, please contact her at jeanandrandy77@hotmail.com. These roles could also be filled by a high school student who needs community service hours.

Alachua Audubon field trips are full of unexpected sightings—like this large alligator crossing the La Chua Trail at Paynes Prairie. Photograph taken by Danny Shehee.



June Challenge party details!

The June Challenge Party is Tuesday, July 1st, at 6:00 p.m. At Becky Ennis' house in Alachua (14806 NW 147th Avenue; Alachua). Please attend and bring a covered dish (preferably with food already in it!). Becky will provide sodas, wine, and beer. Also, please bring a lawn chair. If you plan to join us at Becky's, please RSVP to Rex Rowan (rexrowan@gmail.com) so we can prepare. And also remember to send Rex your June Challenge total by midnight on June 30th.

Around the County *(continued from Pg 2)*

records of singing male Robins here in summer, and I believe this is the first pair ever noted.

There were a couple of notable rail sightings from Sweetwater Dike on Paynes Prairie basin. On May 27th, Bob Simons, Andi Christman, and Debbie Segal spotted, right next to a King Rail, a much smaller but otherwise identical rail which was almost certainly a Virginia Rail. Two days later Erika Simons photographed a Sora Rail along Sweetwater. These are extremely late dates for both species. Another good find at Paynes Prairie was a Roseate Spoonbill seen by many from the outer berm of the Sheetflow project near La Chua Trail; a very late Semipalmated Sandpiper turned up there as well on June 15th.

Short-tailed Hawk is a real prize in June. Ellen Frattino reported one June 1st near Westside Park, and Bob Carroll spotted one, or the same, June 14th soaring over Possum Creek Park. Perhaps the most charming June treat was a family of Burrowing Owls, probably the only ones in the county, on restricted property at Watermelon Pond. Rex Rowan, along with Susie Hetrick of Alachua County Environmental Protection Department, graciously organized a supervised pilgrimage of some fifty delighted birders June 14th to view the owls at their burrow site. Many thanks to Rex and Susie for their help and efforts; and what a huge turnout...yet another example of the enthusiasm for birds and birding in Alachua County!

Sandhill Crane Hatchling

The Ordway-Swisher Biological Station (OSBS) is a research and education facility operated by the UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). Located 24 miles east of Gainesville near Melrose, the Station is approximately 9,500 acres, and serves as a vast open-air laboratory and classroom. Comprised of a wide array of habitats, offering a great diversity of plant and animal species, OSBS is dedicated to the long-term study and conservation of unique ecosystems through research, education, and management.

In April 2014, OSBS staff reported finding a Sandhill Crane nest with 2 eggs, and a subsequent hatchling. In past years, hatchlings have been observed at other areas of the Station, but no nests were ever reported. The lake edge, where the nest and hatchling were found, was being monitored for fire effects following a prescribed burn. The nest was constructed of dried maidencane, woven into a floating mat, approximately 30 ft from shore. Both parents were observed to be warily watchful as the nest was approached, and care was taken to limit disturbance.

Upon revisiting the nest to check hatchling status, only eggshell fragments and fire ants were found. As the vigilant parents were still in the area, further searching revealed a fuzzy, rust-colored hatchling hunkered down among the maidencane. The second egg/hatchling may have succumbed to fire ants, as they are able to form floating mats and float themselves...right out to the nest! The fact that the lake edge had been recently burned, may have been a benefit as to limit predator cover. In any case, the fresh, new growth and exposed insects certainly provided plenty of food for the new hatchling.

By Lisa Huey

The OSBS is included in the Melrose Christmas Bird Count circle, and each December volunteers are needed to help survey birds across the vast research station.

Backyard Bird Feeding—Owls?

I first noticed the young Barred Owls in March at my house in the woods next to Orange Lake as they screeched loudly for mom and dad to bring more dinner. Since that early discovery, I watched the young most evenings, and enjoyed seeing them grow and become more mobile. In fact, they became reliable yard entertainment every night.



I have a healthy mouse population in the barn so I started live trapping mice and releasing them in the yard when the owls were active. Mom and dad wouldn't hesitate to catch a mouse at my feet and they didn't miss. Watching the Jr's try to catch a mouse was like watching a buzzard try to play soccer. It wasn't pretty, but it sure was entertaining. Mom and dad usually had to intervene. In mid-April I released a mouse far from any cover and watched as one of the young finally nailed the mouse after several misses.

Article and Photographs by Terry Cake



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Tagging and Tracking Hummingbirds

A brown hummingbird had been seen at Roy Young's house in Tallahassee for several weeks in early January. I trapped the bird on January 20th, a very frosty morning. The bird was a second year male Rufous who was likely born in the far northwest in June of 2013. Little did I know that this bird would soon be famous and provide us with interesting and valuable information about the migratory patterns of the Rufous Hummingbird.

After I banded the hummer's right leg with a small band labeled **L47018**, I took a series of measurements, checked the bird's molt progress, and weighed the bird. After letting each person hold the small bird, I placed a small drop of pink fabric marker on the bird's head so it can easily be identified and its time at Roy's house noted. Quite an exciting morning



for all of us, but it was going to get much better in a couple of months.

When I banded the bird it was about 70 percent through its winter molt and it stayed around until the first week of February before departing for its breeding ground. For Rufous, the breeding range extends from the very northern tip of California, as far north as Anchorage, Alaska. Now comes the really good part of the story.

On April 17th, Katie Allen recaptured

this male Rufous Hummingbird. Katie took a number of photos of the band to verify the number and said "we doubled checked it about ten times because we were so excited to get a banded hummingbird". They had no idea where the bird had been banded and submitted the information into the Bird Banding Laboratory's database. When the band number was matched against the banding database it was determined that this was the same bird that I had banded in Tallahassee three months earlier. Oh by the way, Katie works at the Tijuana River National Estuarine Reserve in Imperial Beach (San Diego County), California. This is located on the Pacific Ocean at the U.S. – Mexican border and some 1,930 miles nearly due west of where it was banded.

We have suspected that birds who winter in the southeast follow an elliptical migration route, moving east across the northern tier of states toward the Atlantic coast and then turning south. On their return trip we think they stay along the southern coast for some distance before turning back to the north. Where they turn north remains a mystery, but now we do know that at least this bird did not take any shortcuts on the way back. It went absolutely as far west as it could go and along the way, averaged between 25 and 30 miles a day.

Another interesting bit of information from this winter's banding is the recapture of a Rufous I banded in Tallahassee last winter and recaptured by Mark Armstrong in Oak Ridge, TN. This location is 400 miles due north of where it was banded.

A big thanks to all of you who hosted wintering hummingbirds this season; it does make a difference in their survival rates. I know a lot of you did not have a bird this winter, including me (again), or only had brief visits from one. Hang in there, they will return and maybe they will join the ranks of famous hummingbirds in Tallahassee.

Fred Dietrich

Bowls of Light or Black Lagoons?

What is the fate of Florida's springs? Will they once again be restored to "bowls of liquid light" or are they all fated to become "black lagoons"? This is a question that many are asking during this period of ample rainfall throughout north and central Florida.

With the recent flooding in the Santa Fe, Suwannee, and Withlacoochee rivers, the wetlands that nourish the rivers release residual humic acids derived from decomposing leaves and cypress needles. These complex organic compounds in turn mix with runoff to stain the flood waters the rich, brown color of tea and dominate these rivers during flooding events. These "dark", tannic waters are natural and are familiar to long-time area residents.

What is also familiar to these old timers is the crystal-clear springs that once repelled these dark waters, even in times of floods. Thirty years ago there was enough pressure in the Floridan aquifer to hold these floodwaters at bay, resulting in clear demarcations between the spring pools and the adjacent dark river waters. Springs such as Fanning Spring in Gilchrist County on the bank of the Suwannee River once resisted the dark, tannic Suwannee outside its short spring run through its powerful artesian flow. Similarly, Poe Spring adjacent to the Santa Fe River kept that river's black waters back from its spring vent through the sheer pressure of its crystal blue flow.

No longer can those two springs and many others that provide baseflow to those two rivers, hold back the rivers' tea-colored floods. During this year of above-average rainfall, both springs now flow backward. The scientific term is: "estevellé", a spring that reverses its flow direction in response to changing hydrostatic pressures. When the aquifer pressure is high, these springs can hold off the flooding rivers. But when aquifer pressures and levels are low, the floods overwhelm the groundwater, and like water through a funnel, the rivers fill the aquifer with their dark waters. What a disappointment to the folks who have river houses near these reversing springs when their well water turns from clear to tea-colored and is no longer safe to drink. What about the scuba divers who travel half way around the world to come to these springs to practice their chosen sport? There is no joy in entering an underwater cave and having to peer through brown water. And as aquifer levels have continued their decline over the

past four decades, a larger volume of river water spills into the aquifer during each flood event. Once the flood recedes and a spring starts to flow again, it takes months or years for the groundwater to lose its brownish or greenish tint. In the case of Fanning and Poe springs, the water will possibly never be blue again. There is just too much of the tannic water underground for it to be totally diluted by the clear groundwater that used to feed these springs. It appears once again that our springs are our eyes into the aquifer, their brown water instructs the observant that the Floridan aquifer is in trouble.

So poet Robert Frost's proverbial "two roads in a yellow wood" presents an allegory for the future of our region's springs. In principle the choice is clear: either we reduce our groundwater pumping and allow aquifer levels to return to their historic levels and have gin-clear springs again, or we continue to allow our springs to become nothing more than black lagoons.

Many areas of the U.S. have cities with fountains, irrigated agriculture, fertilized yards, golf courses, and industrial endeavors. But no other area of this country has the massive Floridan aquifer and the 1,000+ springs it has spawned. No other area in the U.S. the size of north and central Florida has 100s of large springs that are in public ownership and preserved for future generations "for all time". Our public springs are what make our region unique. They are our Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, Everglades, Yosemite, etc. They are our playgrounds and state parks – Silver, Wakulla, Fanning, Manatee, Weeki Wachee, Wekiva; the list goes on and on.

Yet, in our almost thoughtless quest for green lawns, our never ending exploitation of our natural lands and resources for short-term profits, and our sprawling development, we are knowingly and apparently without regret turning our irreplaceable springs from crystal bowls of liquid light into black lagoons. We should seriously consider taking the other road before it is too late for all of our springs.

Bob Knight (Founder and Director of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute)

Conservation – Yes, There is an App for That

New smartphone app makes invasive species reporting user-friendly and fun

An invasive species is any species that is non-native to an ecosystem and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Non-native species often compete with and ultimately displace the native flora and/or fauna communities. It is estimated that half of all the birds threatened with imminent extinction are threatened either wholly or in part by introduced plant and animal species.

How can you help? If you have a smartphone, it just became a whole lot easier. One of the best ways to combat the spread of invasive species (either plant or animal) is by accurate and detailed reporting. This information is used by scientists and researchers to develop strategies to eradicate the invasive species or to learn more about the spread-knowledge that can be used with future invasions. Using the photo and Global Positions System (GPS) capabilities of your smartphone, you can help by providing the “boots on the ground” information that would be impossible to collect by a single researcher or team.

As Audubon members, we are some of the most-frequent guests in parks and on public conservation land. If you are headed out on a field trip, encourage your group to download the *free* Ivegot1 app – available in the app store (iPhone and Android). Create an account so you can enter information and then you are on your way as Florida’s newest citizen scientist.

Next time you are in the field (or even in your neighborhood) and you spot an invasive species, open your app, snap a photo, enter location details and push send. It’s that easy.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.eddmaps.org/florida/report/> or call Audubon Florida’s Jonathan Webber at [850-222-2473](tel:850-222-2473). Also, you can download and print instructions to bring on your next field trip: <http://bit.ly/1pdUnLB>.

Jonathan Webber
Conservation Campaign Manager
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Backyard Nesting—Purple Martins

Ron Robinson led a small group of birders out to visit Mr. Tony Pattee at his rural farm in Bronson and see his extensive Purple Martin nesting colony that includes more than one hundred nest boxes. We watched as approximately 40 pairs of Purple Martins flew back and forth to the nest boxes with food and nesting material. A Great-crested Flycatcher had even claimed one of the nest boxes to raise its young. Mr. Pattee described many aspects of Purple Martin nesting behavior, and of his management activities to encourage continued nesting by the Purple Martins.



Photographs by Chip Duetch.



Field Trip Was More than Just Birdwatching

For the last scheduled field trip of the 2013/2014 season, Michael Drummond and Steve Hofstetter led enthusiasts around the Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve. Michael and Steve scouted the area the previous day and had prepared a checklist that we could use that listed all the birds, mammals, amphibians, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, and insects they had seen the day before the field trip. We learned about the history of the property and had a great time looking for more than just birds. The Golden-winged Skimmer Dragonfly sparkled as if covered with glitter; the bright orange “Bog Cheetos” flowers and the tiny Oak Toad with its light stripe - all were intriguing. Thanks so much Michael and Steve for providing Audubon birders with an exceptional experience!

By Emily Schwartz

Watch for the complete list of 2014/2015 Alachua Audubon Field Trips in the next edition of the Crane Newsletter.

Children Look for Woodpeckers

On Sunday, May 18th, Alachua Audubon hosted a family Woodpecker Walk at Northeast Park. Seven children and their families searched for woodpeckers and other birds. Field trip leaders were Ted Goodman, Steve Goodman, and Sharon Kuchinski. Folks were delighted to observe the beautiful Red-headed Woodpecker and we even found them in a nesting hole in a telephone pole across the street at St Patrick’s Catholic Church!

By Emily Schwartz

Book Review— *Sanctuary* by Arliss Ryan

During the hot months you may be confining yourselves to looking out the windows for your birding (unless you are participating in the June Challenge). So it may be a great time to turn to Arliss Ryan's new novel “*Sanctuary*”. She lives in St. Augustine, and in addition to writing books, she leads birding trips.

This novel is set in New England and provides some very nice descriptions of birds and their habits. The protagonist is an engineer, but is hired as a caretaker for a large estate. She is escaping from a past trauma and eventually the estate becomes a sanctuary for her. She knows nothing about birds but is forced to give guided birding walks on the estate. An eclectic group of birders help her to learn about the intriguing world of birds and also become her friends.

In addition to birding, this novel has multiple plots and sub-topics: art, aviation and a couple of romances.

Sanctuary is available at the county libraries as well as online purchase. I think you will enjoy it. I did.

By Gail Dewsbury

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