



# The Crane

Volume 58 Number 2 November December 2016

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**Note:** Starting January, 2017, *The Crane* newsletter goes electronic. This is the last full mailing of *The Crane*. Please see the enclosed green insert and let us know if you want to receive future newsletters by email, snail mail, or from the AAS website.

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## November and December Field Trips

See the *Carpooling Information* at the end of this article.

**Saturday, November 5, 8:00 a.m.**

**Hague Dairy:** Meet Howard Adams at the Tag Agency on NW 34th St. just south of US-441 to caravan to one of the county's best spots for sparrows, blackbirds, and raptors. Difficulty: 2.

**Saturday, November 12, 8:00 a.m.**

**La Chua Trail:** Meet trip leader Felicia Lee at the trailhead on Camp Ranch Rd. La Chua is one of the best spots to see a variety of sparrows and other brush-loving birds, as well as wintering flycatchers, raptors, and waterfowl. Entry fee \$4 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

**Saturday, November 19, 8:00 a.m.**

**Sweetwater Wetlands Park:** Join trip leader Debbie Segal for a birding stroll around Gainesville's newest birding hotspot, a site that has already logged over 200 bird species! We'll search for ducks, rails, American Bitterns, and other wetland birds. Directions: From the intersection of US-441 and Williston Rd., go east on Williston Rd. roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. The entrance will be on the right. Entry fee \$5 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

**Saturday, November 26, 8:00 a.m.**

**Kanapaha Prairie:** Meet trip leader Rex Rowan in the Publix parking lot at Archer Rd. and Tower Rd. (SW

75th St.). The Kanapaha Prairie is a cattle ranch and also a privately-owned conservation property whose 700+ grassy acres are dotted with marshes. We'll see Sandhill Cranes, Eastern Meadowlarks, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Eastern Bluebirds in the pastures, and ducks, raptors, American Bitterns, and other waterbirds in the marshes. Difficulty: 3.

**Sunday, December 4, 6:30 a.m.**

**Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive:** Lake Apopka is in the headwaters of the Ocklawaha River and has been the site of significant marsh and floodplain restoration. A created marsh flow-way system filters Lake Apopka's waters by circulating lake water through restored wetlands. The wildlife drive meanders for 11 miles through the eastern portion of the property. Meet trip leader Bob Carroll in the Target Parking lot on Archer Rd. to explore this birding hotspot. Difficulty: 2.

**Saturday, December 10, 8:00 a.m.**

**La Chua Trail:** Meet Matt Bruce at the trailhead on Camp Ranch Rd. La Chua is one of the best spots in north Florida to get close looks at sparrows as well as wintering raptors, waterfowl, and Sandhill Cranes. Entry fee \$4 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

*Field Trips Continued on Page 5*

**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

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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.*

Content of **The Crane** is the sole responsibility of AAS and fulfills stated objectives and goals of AAS. Annual subscription to **The Crane** is included in AAS dues. Non-Audubon members may subscribe to **The Crane** for \$10 annually. All checks for subscriptions or changes of address should be mailed to Paul Moler, Membership Chairman: see back page for address. Submissions to **The Crane** are welcomed. **The Crane** is printed on recycled paper.

**Deadline for  
Jan.-Feb. Crane:  
Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**



One reason I love fall migration is the sheer length of time it takes to play out. From the earliest Louisiana Waterthrush around the first of July, to our first wave of Yellow-rumped Warblers at October's end, fall migration is long enough to divide into three periods: early (July-August), middle (September-early October), and late (early-late Octo-

ber), each with their own characteristic suite of migrants. This year our great middle period was more or less bracketed by tropical weather events. The first was tropical storm Hermine, which blew past us September 2<sup>nd</sup> and brought with it some of the most exciting birding in memory. A record eleven species of terns swept over our lakes, including at least a hundred Sooty Terns, plus first county records of Bridled Tern and Brown Noddy. Frigatebirds appeared in the double digits, along with several Black Skimmers and an assortment of coastal shorebirds rarely seen in our area, including Willet, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, and Red-necked Phalarope. At the other end of our middle period was hurricane Matthew. Matt didn't churn up nearly as many birds as Hermine, but did give us our second county record of Black-capped Petrel, first spotted the morning of October 8<sup>th</sup> by Adam Kent. Thanks to the effective network of communications among the birding community, the petrel was seen and photographed by dozens, and even made its way into the Gainesville Sun in a well written article by Felicia Lee (article on Page 8).

In the intervening month between these two storms, migrants were making their way steadily south. Our annual Fall Migration Count, held the third Saturday in September, has long stood as a useful marker at the mid-point of fall migration. This year's count produced a record-tying 25 warbler species, with rarest being Cape May, Golden-winged, and Cerulean Warblers; a late-lingering Louisiana Waterthrush, and early arriving Palm and Tennessee Warblers. Also appearing was an Alder Flycatcher along La Chua's Sparrow Alley, marking the fourth consecutive year that species has been present there. Adam Zions found a second Alder on September 24<sup>th</sup> along Cone's Dike.

While the overall flow of migrants is somewhat predictable, each fall seems to have its own distinct micro-variations. A few years ago we experienced a larger than usual influx of Yellow Warblers, and for over a week dozens of them could be found frolicking in the canopy along Bolen Bluff. Last fall we had a massive two-day invasion of Blackburnian Warblers (not a bad problem to have!). This year's standout was Kentucky Warbler. Normally a few will show up in relatively predictable places, but birders have to work hard or be lucky to see one. This year, to my best calculation, 29 Kentuckys were reported from various locations including four or more each from (Continued on Page 9)

**10th Annual Holiday Social**  
**Friday, Dec. 2nd; 6:30—9:00 pm**  
**Mill Pond Clubhouse**  
**240 NW 48th Blvd**

Celebrate conservation, birds, and the holidays with the Alachua Audubon Society! In place of the traditional Silent Auction, AAS will offer alternative fund raising activities.



We will be selling AAS hats, and bird and nature-related books, CDs, and DVDs for very reasonable prices. Donate to AAS by contributing bird and nature-related books that you no longer need, and consider purchasing new additions for your library collection.

A new UF birding club, GREBE (Gators for Really Excellent Birding Experiences) will host a bird calling contest that will have two categories: local bird calls and bird call karaoke. Demonstrate your bird calling skills. Prizes will be given out to the winners. Amaze your friends with your Barred Owl and Screech Owl imitations!

Please join us, support Alachua Audubon and enjoy food and drink with your birding friends.

The holiday party will be held at the Mill Pond Clubhouse. Directions: From Newberry Road, turn south on NW 48th Blvd (across from GNV Health and Fitness Center). Drive south about 2 blocks. Look for tennis courts on the right. The Clubhouse is next to the tennis courts on the right. Look for our Alachua Audubon signs! We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming Holiday Social!

**AAS Birding Programs**

**Thursday, November 10, 2016** – 6:30 social time, 7:00 program at Millhopper Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville. ***Putting Tracking Information to Work: From Tagging Birds to Conservation Action.*** Caroline Poli, University of Florida, will speak about how rapid and recent advances in miniaturization of tracking technology have enabled scientists to learn about the movements of species, including pathways of global migrations, expansive flights, and unexpected behaviors. We'll follow Atlantic Puffins in Maine, Brown Pelicans along the Atlantic coast, Masked and Red-footed Boobies in Mexico, and critically endangered Snail Kites in Florida, to find out how tracking animals can fill critical information gaps and guide conservation action.

**Tuesday, January 17, 2017**—6:30 social time and 7:00 program at Tower Road Library, 3050 SW 75th St. Gainesville. **Treatment Wetlands = Cleaner Water, More Birds.** Presented by Bob Knight and Debbie Segal. Some of the best birding hotspots in Florida are man-made treatment wetlands that were designed to strip nutrients and pollutants from storm water and municipal wastewater. The use of treatment wetlands is a proven technology that cost-effectively cleanses nutrient-laden water. And one of the many ancillary benefits of treatment wetlands is their high biological productivity that translates into more birds. Learn how these man-made features cleanse Florida's water bodies, attract birds, enhance environmental education, contribute to Florida's public use facilities, and generate ecotourism dollars.

**Tuesday, February 7, 2017** – 6:30 social time, 7:00 program at Millhopper Library, 3145 NW 48th Street, Gainesville. **Gull and Jaeger Identification.** Michael Brothers, Marine Science Center (Volusia County, Ponce Inlet, FL) Learn to identify those difficult Larids from the expert. Michael Brothers will also lead a Gull-Fly-In field trip and training session at Frank Rendon Park in Daytona Beach Shores on February 11th. *Your best opportunity to fine tune those gull and jaeger identification skills! A very special adventure!*

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Drawing by  
Andre Frattino



***Save The Date!!***

**February 25th**

**Back Yard Birding Tour**

**Sponsored by Alachua Audubon and  
Wild Birds Unlimited**

### **Family Birding at Paynes Prairie**

Join Alachua Audubon volunteers for family birding events on the first Saturday of each month, November through April. These field trips are sponsored by Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. Register for the walk at [www.prairiefriends.org](http://www.prairiefriends.org). For more information, call 352-466-4100 or email [audubonyouthbirding@gmail.com](mailto:audubonyouthbirding@gmail.com). Families and kids are encouraged to participate. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Kids' Christmas Bird Count  
Coming in January!  
Date to be announced.**

### **Wednesday Bird Walks at the Wetland**

#### ***At the Sweetwater Wetlands Park***

Alachua Audubon leads a weekly bird walk at the Sweetwater Wetlands Park every Wednesday morning at 8:30 am (through May). Join us and bring a friend!

Admission is \$5 per car and the bird walks are free. An annual pass can be purchased for \$75 from the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs administrative office, which is located on the third floor of the Thomas Center, Building B, 306 NE Sixth Ave. The office is open Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. The annual pass is valid from Oct. 1, 2015 to Sept. 30, 2016.

### **Florida Friendly Landscape Yard Tour**

This self-led tour is scheduled for Saturday, November 5th and is sponsored by IFAS and the Alachua County Master Gardeners. The tour begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Rosemont/Vista Grove Clubhouse (6200 N. W. 35th Terrace). Here you will pick up a map of four homes in the Rosemont and Applegate neighborhoods. Alachua County Master Gardeners will be onsite to answer any questions. These homes demonstrate the Florida Friendly Landscaping principles: Right Plant, Right Place; Water Efficiently; Fertilize Appropriately; Mulch; Attract Wildlife; Manage Yard Pests Responsibly; Recycle; Reduce Stormwater Runoff; Protect the Waterfront

### **Hummingbird Update**

Most of our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are gone now but don't take down your hummingbird feeder yet. It is time to start watching for the first of the western hummingbirds like Rufous, Black-chinned, or Calliope. Please let Fred Bassett ([FHound@aol.com](mailto:FHound@aol.com)) know if you have already identified a western hummer at your feeder, or if you see any species of hummers in your yard after November 1st.

## Cat Wars: The Devastating Consequences of a Cuddly Killer

By Peter P. Marra & Chris Santella  
A Book Review

In 1894, a lighthouse keeper named David Lyall arrived on Stephens Island off New Zealand with a cat named Tibbles. In just over a year, the Stephens Island Wren, a rare bird endemic to the island, was rendered extinct. Mounting scientific evidence confirms what many conservationists have suspected for some time—that in the United States alone, free-ranging cats are killing birds and other animals by the billions. Equally alarming are the little-known but potentially devastating public health consequences of rabies and parasitic *Toxoplasma* passing from cats to humans at rising rates. *Cat Wars* tells the story of the threats free-ranging cats pose to biodiversity and public health throughout the world, and sheds new light on the controversies surrounding the management of the explosion of these cat populations.

This compelling book traces the historical and cultural ties between humans and cats from early domestication to the current boom in pet ownership, along the way accessibly explaining the science of extinction, population modeling, and feline diseases. It charts the developments that have led to our present impasse—from Stan Temple's breakthrough studies on cat predation in Wisconsin to cat-eradication programs underway in Australia today. It describes how a small but vocal minority of cat advocates has campaigned successfully for no action in much the same way that special interest groups have stymied attempts to curtail smoking and climate change.

*Cat Wars* paints a revealing picture of a complex global problem—and proposes solutions that foresee a time when wildlife and humans are no longer vulnerable to the impacts of free-ranging cats.

**Peter P. Marra** has written more than 175 scientific publications, is the coeditor of *Birds of Two Worlds*, and directs the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. **Chris Santella** is the author of many books, including the Fifty Places travel and outdoor series and *The Tug Is the Drug*. His writing has appeared in such publications as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New Yorker*, and *Trout*.

*Cat Wars* can be ordered on-line through Princeton University Press.

## Field Trips (continued from Page 1)

### Sunday, December 18, SPECIAL EVENT Gainesville Christmas Bird Count

Contact Andy Kratter ([kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu](mailto:kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu); 352-226-2462) or Bob Carroll ([gatorbob23@yahoo.com](mailto:gatorbob23@yahoo.com); 352-281-3616) if you are interested in participating in this all-day event. Difficulty: 3.

### Saturday and Sunday, January 7-8, 8:00 a.m.

**St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge:** Meet John Hintermister at the St. Marks visitor center on Saturday at 8 a.m. for a visit to one of Florida's premier winter birding spots. Expect a large number and wide variety of birds. Bring a lunch. Sunday's meeting time and location will be decided on Saturday. Call Wild Birds Unlimited (352-381-1997) to register. Limit 20 people. Difficulty: 3.

### Saturday, January 14, 6:00 a.m.

**Circle B Bar Reserve:** Meet Bob Carroll in the Target parking lot to carpool down to Circle Bar B Ranch in Polk County. Located on the north shore of Lake Hancock, this birding hot spot supports a tremendous bird population including wading birds, waterfowl, raptors, warblers, sparrows, and others. The diverse habitat includes oak hammock, freshwater marsh, hardwood swamp, and lakeshore. Difficulty: 3.

### Saturday, January 21, 8:00 a.m.

**Sweetwater Wetlands Park:** Join trip leader Debra Segal for a birding stroll around Gainesville's newest birding hotspot, a site that has already logged over 200 bird species! We'll search for ducks, American Bitterns, and other winter wetland birds. Directions: From the intersection of US-441 and Williston Rd., go east on Williston Rd. roughly ¾ of a mile. The entrance will be on the right. Bring sunscreen and water. Entry fee \$5.00 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

*Carpooling: If you need a ride or are willing to provide a ride, check our web site under Activities > Field Trips > Field Trip Schedule. Click on specific field trip, then click on "Read more." Then click on "Leave a Reply" and note whether you are offering to drive or will need a ride. Then click on "Post Comment." Hopefully, folks will respond to the comments. Be sure to check the comments a day or two before the field trip.*

## Voting Alert

### Wild Spaces and Public Places

On November 8th, voters of Alachua County will have the opportunity to extend the life of the Alachua County Forever Program by voting to fund the Wild Spaces and Public Places ½ percent sales tax. The funds from this tax will be used to acquire and improve environmentally sensitive lands to protect drinking water sources, water quality, and wildlife habitat; and to create, improve and maintain parks and recreational facilities in all cities and the county, with citizen oversight and independent audit. County Commissioners have stated that they expect to spend over \$9 million per year on land acquisition with the balance of the funds devoted to park improvements. Many of these improvements include infrastructure needs at parks such as improvements to boat ramps, walking paths, benches, rest rooms and athletic fields. Some of the birding hotspots, such as Sweetwater Wetlands Park, are expected to receive funds to enhance the visitor experience. We hope you will consider supporting this initiative.



Visit Alachua Audubon Society on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/alachuaaudubon> and click “like” and you will be kept up to date on field trips, events, and more!

## Christmas Bird Count Schedule

*Please consider joining some of these CBCs.* The counts outside of Gainesville are typically short on volunteers and would welcome your participation!

Thursday, Dec. 15—Melrose; Contact Joyce King ([sjoyceking@comcast.net](mailto:sjoyceking@comcast.net) 352-475-1999)

**Volunteers needed.**

Thursday, Dec. 15—Lake City, Contact Valerie Thomas (386-466-2193 [v.thomas57@gmail.com](mailto:v.thomas57@gmail.com))

**Volunteers needed.**

Sunday, Dec. 18—Gainesville; contact Andy Kratter ([kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu](mailto:kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu); 352-226-2462) or Bob Carroll ([gatorbob23@yahoo.com](mailto:gatorbob23@yahoo.com); 352-281-3616)

Tuesday, Dec. 20—Ichetucknee/Santa Fe/O’Leno; Contact Ginger Morgan (386-586-8249; [ginger.morgan@myfwc.com](mailto:ginger.morgan@myfwc.com)) *Volunteers needed.*

Wednesday, Dec. 30—Cedar Key; Contact Ron Christen (850-567-0490) or Dale Henderson (352-543-5166 [dalehenderson2@icloud.com](mailto:dalehenderson2@icloud.com))

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## Local Birders Welcome an Unexpected Hurricane Evacuee

While many local residents were busy hosting friends and relatives escaping Hurricane Matthew's path, over 30 Gainesville-area birders were occupied with another hurricane evacuee: a rare sea bird that nests in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The bird, a Black-capped Petrel, was spotted Saturday morning (Oct. 8th) by Adam Kent, who first saw it sitting on Newnans Lake.

The Black-capped Petrel, a 16-inch-long gull-like bird with distinctive black-and-white markings, has only been seen once before in Alachua County and only once elsewhere in inland Florida. The bird is rare even in its normal breeding territory. Once thought extinct, Black-capped Petrels spend most of their lives at sea, returning to land only to breed. Currently, only about 2,000 breeding pairs are estimated to exist, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Hurricanes and tropical storms commonly force seafaring birds such as gulls and terns inland, and Gainesville-area birders know that the small parks on the edges of Newnans Lake—Palm Point Park, Powers Park, and Owens-Illinois Park in Windsor—are the places to find them the morning after a storm.

Sharing one's sightings, especially of rarities, is a cornerstone of the birdwatching culture, and within an hour, over 30 birders had gathered on the shoreline at Owens-Illinois Park. For most, it was a life bird. It was also a worthy consolation for the cancellation of Alachua Audubon's field trip that was planned for that day to Vilano Beach, just north of St. Augustine, an area devastated by Matthew.

By Felicia Lee

Top photograph taken by Glenn Price of the Black-capped Petrel seen at Newnans Lake on October 8th. Middle photograph of the same bird taken by Mitch Walters. Bottom photograph of bird watchers gathered to see the Black-capped Petrel taken by Gina Kent.



## Around The County

(continued from Page 2)

Poe Springs, San Felasco Millhopper, and Cellon Creek loop. Golden-winged Warbler is another tough bird to see here but there were at least seven, including three found by Chris Burney on October 5<sup>th</sup> at Bolen Bluff and one that visited Gail David's bird bath October 6-8<sup>th</sup>. Some years we miss Swainson's Warbler, but we had a couple this fall - one spotted by Rex Rowan on September 8<sup>th</sup> at Poe Springs, and another by Andy Kratter along the Rail Trail on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Likewise, it's not unusual if fall passes without sight of a Canada Warbler, but we had two this year: one reported at Palm Point on September 19<sup>th</sup> by Matt O'Sullivan, and another on October 7<sup>th</sup> by Sam and Ben Ewing in their yard. Matt's Canada was accompanied by a female Cerulean Warbler, and to the delight of many local birders, both birds lingered at Palm Point for at least a week. Ceruleans also made appearances at Poe Springs, Chapman's Pond, and in the yard of Gina and Adam Kent.

For a few evenings in early September, thousands of Barn Swallows were noted going to roost at dusk on the Payne's Prairie basin, but for the most part the diurnal swallow migration seemed a little stilted this fall. We did have a couple of Cave Swallows spotted on September 15<sup>th</sup> by Barbara Shea and John Hintermister at the Progress Center, and Hurricane Matthew produced a few Cliff Swallows at Newnans Lake.

At the time of this writing, the final period of fall migration was still in full swing. Two indicator species of late fall—Bay-breasted and Black-throated Green Warblers—had already been seen. One of the prizes of late fall is Black-billed Cuckoo. Linda Holt reported one in her yard on October 9<sup>th</sup>, and two days later Barbara Shea saw what was almost certainly another at San Felasco Hammock. Wilson's Warbler is another late fall “goody”. We had two show up on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, one noted by Adam Zions at Chapman's Pond, and another at Bolen Bluff reported by Matt O'Sullivan. The Bolen Bluff bird was still being seen as late as October 11<sup>th</sup>. Chimney Swifts have once again taken up their fall digs at the Seagle Building in downtown Gainesville. Adam

Zions checked there on October 10<sup>th</sup> and conservatively estimated four thousand of them swirling and funneling into the chimney at dusk.

By the time this issue of the Crane reaches you, fall migration will be in the history books. Our woodlands will be peppered with Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and it will be time to start looking for stray western flycatchers such as Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Western Kingbird. Keep an eye out for Red-breasted Nuthatch, too. Ryan Terrill heard one along the north rim of the prairie basin on October 9<sup>th</sup>, and it has been predicted that this will be an invasion year for them and other irruptive species such as Pine Siskin and Purple Finch. Got to run...see you out there! Thanks to those who shared their sighting thorough October 12, 2016.



Top photograph of a Cerulean Warbler taken by Trina Anderson at Chapman's Pond. Second photograph taken by Mitch Walters of a Kentucky Warbler at Bolens Bluff Trail.

Alachua Audubon Society  
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*The Crane*  
Nov.—Dec. 2016

We hope to see you at the Alachua Audubon Holiday Social on December 2nd at the Mill Pond Clubhouse. See Page 3 for more details.

**Note: Starting January, 2017, The Crane newsletter goes electronic. This is the last full mailing of The Crane. Please see the enclosed green insert and let us know if you want to retrieve future newsletters by email, snail mail, or from the AAS website.**

## Join Audubon!

Join the Audubon Society on 3 levels  
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Join the Alachua Audubon chapter for only \$10

Send completed application and check to:  
**Karen Brown, 3242 NW 12th Terrace,  
Gainesville, Florida 32609**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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