



# The Crane

Volume 59 Number 1 Sept–Oct 2017

## September and October Field Trips

*The Annual Schedule of 2017/2018 Alachua Audubon Field Trips is now on the AAS web site (AlachuaAudubon.org under Activities > Field Trips > Field Trip Schedule). Printed copies may be obtained at Wild Birds Unlimited.*

### Sunday, September 17

**Cedar Key by Boat (sign-up required):** Join trip leader Scott Flamand and the Tidewater Tour crew on a canopied pontoon boat ride into some of the lesser-known shorebird haunts of the Cedar Key area. Tidewater Tour owners offer a special Alachua Audubon price of \$25 per person for this trip. Call Wild Birds Unlimited (352-381-1997) for details and to reserve a spot. Difficulty: 1.

### Saturday, September 23, 8:00 a.m.

**San Felasco Hammock (Millhopper Rd.):** Meet trip leader Steve Hofstetter in the parking lot at the trailhead on Millhopper Road. Sandhills, meandering streams, and forested slopes set the stage for the diversity of warblers, thrushes, tanagers, and other migrant birds that we hope to see. Difficulty: 3.

### Sunday, September 24, 8:00 a.m.

**Powers Park and Palm Point:** We'll meet trip leader Barbara Shea at Powers Park to look for migrant warblers, tanagers, and thrushes in the trees along the boat channel and to scan the lake from the fishing pier. Then we'll travel to nearby Palm Point to search for more migrants in the live oak and cypress trees. Difficulty: 1.

### Saturday, September 30, 8:00

**Barr Hammock New Woodlands Trail (CLEP\*):** Meet trip leader Michael Drummond at the Sunoco station at the flashing light in Micanopy on US-441 and carpool to Barr Hammock. Barr Hammock forms a land bridge between Ledwith and Levy Prairies, and is a county jewel that provides habitat for a wide diversity of upland and wetland species. We should see some migrant birds on this walk, but we'll be looking at everything – trees, wildflowers, insects, reptiles, and whatever else we find. Difficulty: 2.

### \*The Conservation Lands Educational Program

(CLEP) is designed to bring attention to local land conservation efforts. These trips are conducted on properties purchased to protect natural resources. They will be led by a representative of the managing agency who will discuss the ecological features and history of the site, in addition to birding.

### Sunday, October 1, 8:00 a.m.

**Newnans Lake State Forest, East Trail:** Meet in the parking corral for the Pithlachocco Trails, directly across the road from the NFETC sign on State Road 26, three-quarters of a mile north of the junction with County Road 329B. Rex Rowan will lead us along a 2.5-mile trail through a variety of habitats that include pine-woods, open oak woodlands, wetlands, and a bit of lakeshore. Plenty of migrant warblers should be around. Difficulty level: 3.

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**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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*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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Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. Deadline for the Nov–Dec issue: Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>



Believe it or not, fall migration began in the waning days of June when Lloyd Davis noted our first returning Louisiana Waterthrush at San Felasco Hammock; and, while migrant warblers are few- and-far-between during July and early August, an intrepid and observant birder can usually come up with a few during that early phase of migration. Our first Black-and-white Warblers checked in July 7<sup>th</sup>, spotted by Eric Amundson along the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail, and a pair of Prairie Warblers were reported July 17<sup>th</sup> by Danny Rohan along La Chua Trail. The first American Redstart this fall was found July 31<sup>st</sup> by Ben Ewing along the Hogtown Creek Greenway; John Hintermister picked up our first returning Yellow Warbler August 8<sup>th</sup> along Bolen Bluff trail, and Jonathan Mays had an Ovenbird August 12<sup>th</sup> along the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail. Our first reported Kentucky and Worm-eating Warblers were picked up August 18<sup>th</sup> at San Felasco Hammock by Steven Goodman and Noah Frade, and also on the 18<sup>th</sup> Rex Rowan and I found our first Northern Waterthrush of the season at Poe Springs.

August is often pretty good for shorebird migration, but continuing high water levels deprived us of the muddy edges and mudflats that shorebirds prefer, and grassy areas that would otherwise be promising were too thickly overgrown with vegetation. That didn't stop Rex Rowan and Bob Carroll from finding a very early Spotted Sandpiper at Lake Lochloosa July 12<sup>th</sup>. A couple of days later another showed up in the sediment basin at Sweetwater Wetlands where one or two have been present nearly year-round for the last couple of years; this year they were absent barely six weeks! Rex and Bob also encountered a few shorebirds August 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Hague Dairy, where the fetid edge of the lagoon was harboring Spotted, Solitary, and at least one Least Sandpiper.

By the time this issue of the Crane reaches you, fall migration will be ramping up significantly. Most of the warblers mentioned above will be easier to find, and some other goodies such as Cerulean and Golden-winged Warblers should be making their first appearances. Numbers of Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos will begin to swell, and we will be looking for our first Veeries.

Our annual Fall North American Migration Count will take place September 16<sup>th</sup>. If you are at intermediate skill level or above (able to identify most fall warblers) and would like to participate, send me an email at [mmanetz@yahoo.com](mailto:mmanetz@yahoo.com).

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

By Mike Manetz

## Beginning Birding Class

The Fall session of the beginning birding class sponsored by Alachua Audubon Society and offered through Santa Fe College Community Education will start September 9<sup>th</sup>. The class consists of Saturday morning field trips led by local birding experts and runs through October 14<sup>th</sup>. This class is also fun for birders who are not beginners but may be looking for a different way to explore our local birding hotspots. Class size is limited to 12, and may fill quickly. Registration is now open at [sfcollege.edu/cied/communityed/index](http://sfcollege.edu/cied/communityed/index) (or call 352-395-5193 to register via telephone). Bring your binoculars, or you may borrow ours if you do not have your own. Cameras are welcome. Field guides are also available. The final class is a longer trip to Cedar Key. Contact course coordinator Charlene Leonard with questions at [Cleonard@peds.ufl.edu](mailto:Cleonard@peds.ufl.edu).

Next event: October 5th at 6:15 pm!



## First Birds and Brews Event a Success

After a day of solid rain, the skies cleared just in time for the first Birds and Brews event at **First Magnitude Brewery**. A table was set up with information about Alachua Audubon and loaner binoculars were on hand for those who needed them. At 6 pm, the group set out for **Depot Park** to bird around one of the ponds. There were more than 40 attendees and one of those was a young girl visiting from China who didn't want to miss a single bird. The birds were quite cooperative with many flying low overhead on their way to Sweetwater Wetlands or elsewhere to roost for the night. Thanks to Michael Brock, Mike Manetz, and Adam Kent for making this inaugural event such a success, and to Emily Schwartz for organizing the loaner binoculars. Don't miss future events as they will occur monthly. Arrive early as parking can be scarce.

Meet at **First Magnitude Brewery** (1220 SE Veitch Street) for a stroll to **Depot Park** to look for birds, and return to First Magnitude for a cold brew and good conversation. **Birds and Brews** is a monthly event meeting on the 1st Thursday evening. Be sure to check the start time each month as it will vary through the year according to the seasons. All birding skill levels are welcome; enthusiasm is what matters! Bring your binoculars and a thirst for good craft beer (but if you forget your binoculars, stop by anyway, because we'll have some to loan out).



Birds and Brews event photo by Emily Schwartz

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## Field Trips

(Continued from Page 1)

**Saturday, October 7, 6:30 a.m.**

**Guana-Tolomato-Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve:** Peregrine Falcons migrate down Florida's Atlantic Coast in fall, usually peaking in early October. Meet trip leader John Hintermister at the Alachua County Tag Agency and carpool to the hawk-watching platform at the north end of the park in hopes of seeing Peregrines. During the second half of the morning we will walk a woodland trail in search of fall warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and thrushes. Entry fee \$3 per vehicle. Bring water and insect repellent. Lunch is at Cap's on the Inland Waterway. Difficulty: 2.

**Sunday, October 8, 8:00 a.m.**

**Chapman's Pond:** Meet trip leader Trina Anderson at the grassy parking lot next to Chapman's Pond. We will start by scanning the pond of this water treatment facility for water birds, swallows and flycatchers. Then we will hike the surrounding 1.5 miles of trail past other water features through dry oak woods and open mowed lawns seeking American Kestrel, migrating warblers, thrushes, tanagers, and buntings. Directions: Take SW 75th St. (Tower Rd.) 3 mi. south of Newberry Rd. (or 1.2 mi. north of Archer Rd.) to SW 41 Pl at the corner of Veterans Memorial Park. Go east just over 1/2 mile where the road curves and joins 63rd Blvd. and the parking lot will be on the left. Difficulty: 2.

**Saturday, October 14, 9:00 a.m.**

**Kanapaha Botanical Gardens:** Join Trina Anderson in the parking lot of Kanapaha Botanical Gardens for a stroll through a variety of neatly tended gardens, hardwood hammocks, sink-holes, and a constructed watercourse. This under-birded park can be excellent for migrating warblers. Participants will be admitted to the park for half price (\$4), but **MUST** be on time to get the group rate. Difficulty: 2.

**Sunday, October 15, 8:00 a.m.**

**Bolen Bluff Trail:** Meet trip leader Mike Manetz at the Bolen Bluff trailhead on US-441. Bolen Bluff is one of Gainesville's perennial favorite birding locations, especially during fall songbird migration, which will be peaking. This is often the best walk of the season for warblers and thrushes. Entry fee \$2 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

**Saturday, October 21, 8:00 a.m.**

**Bellamy Road:** Join trip leader Jerry Krummrich for a 2.5-mile ramble through his favorite fall-migration hotspot: "I enjoy birding here because of habitat diversity, with sandhill, scrub, and floodplain. Lots of tree species, lots of edge." We'll meet at the High Springs Winn-Dixie on US-441, a mile past the stop light at County Road 236 and carpool from there. There should still be some fall migrants passing through, and we will keep a particular eye out for Bay-breasted and Black-throated Green Warblers. Difficulty: 3.

**Sunday, October 22, 7:00 a.m.**

**Rosemary Hill:** Meet trip leader Deena Mickelson in the Target parking lot on Archer Road for a visit to this University of Florida property near Bronson. The UF observatory sits on 80 acres of turkey oak sandhill and rosemary scrub that is surrounded by pastures. We will not be looking through the observatory's telescope – it's daytime, after all – but we will bird the slopes of the hill for late fall migrants, and we might run into a Sherman's Fox Squirrel or two. Bathroom facilities and running water are available on the property. There is room to park, but the last stretch of road is sandy, so carpooling may be preferred. Access to the observatory is restricted, so this is a one-time-only event. Difficulty: 3.



*Continued on page 5*

## Speaker's Corner

### "Cuba – So near, and yet so far away. . ."

For half a century, Cuba was the mystery island for American birders and nature lovers. The island held an alluring charm enhanced by its inaccessibility. On **Wednesday, September 20th, 2017**, join two travelers as they share their experiences of the landscape, native wildlife and endemic species of Cuba with you. Your presenters will be Pat Bartlett and Rob Norton who combined forces to bring you this special presentation.

Join us for socializing at 6:30; program starts at 7:00 pm at Millhopper Public Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville.

## Third Thursday Bird Walks

Alachua Audubon now sponsors mid-week bird walks on the third Thursday of most months for retirees and anyone else who would like to attend. There is also an optional lunch for those who would enjoy some extra socializing. We make up the schedule as we go along so if you are interested in attending, please contact Bob Carroll for further details at [gatorbob23@yahoo.com](mailto:gatorbob23@yahoo.com).

Don't miss the 13th Annual Lubee Bat Festival October 21 from 10:00 am-5:00 pm at 1309 N.W. 192nd Avenue in Gainesville. It's a once a year event unlike any other! Be sure to stop by the AAS information table while you're there.

## Field Trips

(Continued from Page 4)

### Saturday, October 28, 6:30 a.m.

**Cedar Key:** Meet Rex Rowan in the Target parking lot and carpool to Cedar Key, a quintessential Florida birding destination where birders can often view shorebirds over one shoulder and songbirds over the other. Participants may want to stay in Cedar Key for lunch. Difficulty: 1.

### Saturday, November 4, 8:00 a.m.

**Hague Dairy:** Meet Mike Manetz 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 11, 8:00 a.m.

**La Chua Trail:** Meet trip leader Howard Adams at the trailhead on Camp Ranch Rd. La Chua is one of the best spots for close study of 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 18, 8:00 a.m.

**Sweetwater Wetlands Park:** Meet Barbara Shea for a birding stroll around Gainesville's newest birding hotspot. This 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.

### Sunday, November 26, 8:00:

**Levy Lake Loop:** Meet field trip leader Matt Bruce for a two- or three-mile walk along Levy Lake's dike trail (we won't walk the whole loop). We'll be birding marsh, wet prairie, and woodland edges in search of migrant warblers, flycatchers, and swallows. To reach the trailhead, drive south from Gainesville on US-441. Across from Lake Wauberg, turn right onto Wacahoota Rd. (County Road 18). Go roughly half a mile and, just after the I-75 overpass, turn left on SE 11th Dr. and continue all the way down to the parking area. Difficulty: 3.

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## Wednesday Morning Bird Walks at Sweetwater Wetlands Park

Meet AAS volunteers at 8:30 am every Wednesday from September – May to search for wetland birds like Least Bittern, Limpkin, and Purple Gallinule at Sweetwater Wetlands Park. The park is teeming with plants and wildlife and improves water quality while providing one of the best birding spots in Alachua County. It is located on the south side of Gainesville, 3/4 of a mile east of the intersection of SW 13th Street/US-441 and Williston Road. Look for the sign on the south side of the road. We'll meet at the covered shelter by the bathrooms.

Guided walks are free, but park admission is \$5/car. Bring binoculars, a hat, sunscreen and water. Please visit [SweetwaterWetlands.org](http://SweetwaterWetlands.org) to learn more about the park.



A Yellow Warbler photographed at Sweetwater Wetlands Park by Emerson Gravely.

## AAS Opposes Alachua County's New Cat Policy

The Alachua County Commission recently adopted new policies that allow special exemptions for stray and feral cats that are brought to the animal shelter. These cats are examined for health issues, vaccinated, neutered or spayed and then released back to the original location where they were captured to continue living in a state of abandonment. Many feral cats are picked up by animal services because they are a nuisance to nearby residents. However, impounded feral cats that are ear-tipped can be reclaimed without proof of ownership (as no one really owns them), and are exempt from reclaim fees.

The Alachua Audubon Society opposes Alachua County's new policies on stray and feral cats because outdoor cats, especially those that are forced to fend for themselves in the wild, are extremely destructive to wildlife. According to the [American Bird Conservancy](http://AmericanBirdConservancy.org), cats are the #1 source of direct, human-caused mortality for birds and mammals, killing 2.4 billion birds and 12.3 billion mammals annually in the contiguous United States. Furthermore, cats have contributed to the extinction of 33 wildlife species. The [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\) Invasive Species Specialist Group](http://InternationalUnionfortheConservationofNature.org) lists cats among the world's worst invasive species globally. Even when cats do not directly kill wildlife, their presence in the environment leads to indirect mortality (e.g., reduced feeding of young birds, spread of Toxoplasmosis to wildlife). Cats are inherent hunters, even well-fed and well-cared for cats. Cats should be kept indoors and away from wildlife.

By Joni Ellis  
Director, Optics for the Tropics

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*The Crane*  
Sept–Oct. 2017

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**To join National Audubon, please go to [AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership](http://AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership) where you will be directed to their membership page.**

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