



The Crane

Volume 59 Number 4 March–April 2018

March and April Field Trips

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

Saturday, March 10, 8:00 a.m. NOTE: DATE CHANGE!
Morningside Nature Center (CLEP*): Meet Geoff Parks for a visit to one of Gainesville's premier nature parks featuring over six miles of trails through sandhills, flatwoods, cypress domes, and beautifully-restored native longleaf pines and wiregrass habitat. Morningside also features a working 19th-century farm, a bird blind, and a diverse array of wildlife that thrives in this unique environment. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, March 17, 8:00 a.m.

La Chua Trail: Meet trip leader Howard Adams at the trailhead of La Chua Trail on Camp Ranch Rd. La Chua is one of the area's best birding hotspots and it supports a tremendous bird population including wading birds, waterfowl, raptors, warblers, and others. Resident species should be in the midst of nesting activities, and we may see a few migrants passing through. Entry fee \$4 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, March 24, 7:30 a.m.

Mill Creek Preserve: In 2002, the Alachua County Forever program made its first conservation land purchase, the Mill Creek Preserve, 1190 acres of deep hardwood forest containing the southernmost stand of beech trees in North America. Meet trip leader Deena Mickelson at the parking lot of Hitchcock's Grocery Store on US-441 in Alachua and carpool to the Preserve. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, April 7: 7:00 a.m.

Ocala National Forest: Meet trip leader Karl Miller in the Publix parking lot at the corner of Williston Rd. and SW 34th St. Come and admire the longleaf sandhills and scrub in this marvelous 383,000-acre remnant of the original Florida, while we search for Florida Scrub-Jay, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, and other specialty birds. Difficulty: 2.

Sunday, April 8, 7:30 a.m.

Prairie Creek and Newnans Lake by Canoe and Kayak: Meet trip leader Matt Bruce at Kate's Fish Camp on Hawthorne Road at Prairie Creek. Going east on Hawthorne Road, drive 0.7 miles past Powers Park and, just before the bridge, turn left into Kate's. Bring your own canoe or kayak (\$5 launching fee); or Kate's has a limited number you can rent (one-person kayak \$15, canoe \$20). Email Matt at mattbrucefl@gmail.com if you plan to rent. Depending on the water levels, we'll paddle along the lakeshore and/or down Prairie Creek, keeping an eye out for Prothonotary Warblers, Limpkins, and other swamp-loving birds. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, April 14, 7:00 a.m.

Bell Ridge Longleaf Wildlife & Environmental Area: Bell Ridge is a 720-acre property with a 3.1-mile trail winding through "one of the highest quality longleaf pine sandhill forest tracts in Florida." Join trip leader Bob Carroll in the parking lot of Publix at NW 53rd Avenue and NW 43rd Street to carpool. We'll look for Summer Tanagers, Bachman's Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers, American Kestrels, and other longleaf-savannah species. Difficulty: 3. *Continued on page 4*

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.

Content of *The Crane* is the sole responsibility of the editor and fulfills the stated objectives and goals of the Alachua Audubon Society. Annual subscription to *The Crane* is included in National Audubon and/or Alachua Audubon membership. Please see the back page for more information. New advertisers are welcomed. Please contact the editor for information at karenpbrown1953@gmail.com or 352-213-4257 .

Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. Deadline for the May-June issue: April 15th



The biggest story in local birding circles this winter was the presence of one, and then for a time *two*, Ruffs. Anytime a Ruff shows up it's a pretty big deal, but having two was such a spectacularly rare occurrence that it's worth a moment to recount the history of this species in the county. The Ruff

is a Eurasian shorebird that was undocumented in Florida until 1957. Since then it has gradually become more or less expected annually in the state, but in such small numbers it is still considered a very rare migrant and a "must see" for birding fanatics. The first Ruff recorded in Alachua County was discovered by Rex Rowan at Newnans Lake the winter of 1999-2000. We didn't see another until last spring when, again at Newnans Lake, Rex along with Matt Bruce found an adult male in near-breeding plumage. On December 27th of this winter, Rex "Ruff" Rowan caught a brief glimpse of what he thought was a Ruff at Sweetwater Wetlands but the bird flew off too quickly to say for sure. ("If you go out there keep your eyes open for it," he advised.) Three days later a female Ruff was positively identified and photographed by Dale Bonk. With that, a horde of birders from around the state began streaming into Gainesville eager to check it off on their life or year lists. Then on January 14th, to the disappointment of those who hadn't managed to see it yet, the bird seemed to disappear. The following day I got a call from Jennifer Donsky saying that she was looking at a Ruff at the Home Depot pond off Tower Road, though it didn't quite fit the description of the female from Sweetwater. This one was in male plumage and was showing orange legs! John Hintermister went to see the "new" Ruff the next morning and found *two* present: the male *plus* a female with plumage characteristics that matched the one from Sweetwater Wetlands! This triggered another mad rush of birders who had missed seeing the female while she was at the Wetlands. When the pond finally dried up several days later, both birds disappeared. A few days later the female turned up again at Sweetwater Wetlands where she was still busy foraging and occasionally posing for photos at the time of this writing. From eBird records alone, some ninety birders from out of town and out of state had made the pilgrimage to Gainesville to see these two unusual visitors; undoubtedly, many non-eBirders made the trip as well.

Elsewhere, several semi-annual wintering species that seemed to have forsaken us this year made tardy but welcome appearances. For instance, the Rusty Blackbirds that resided at Magnolia Parke the last few winters were thought to be no-shows this year but were finally picked up January 13th by Ben Ewing and were still present at the time of this writing. Likewise, Fox Sparrows seemed to have snubbed us until Jonathan Mays found one

Continued on page 9

San Felasco Hammock and Hogtown Creek Parks Vandalized

In the late 1970s or early 1980s, a pair of ecologists from Poland came to stay at my house. On the border of Poland and Belarus, they worked in the largest natural hardwood forest in Europe – the Bialowieza Forest – which is 548 square miles in size. Their mission here was to find and study a forest that was ecologically similar to this last remaining great hardwood forest of Europe, and, after searching world-wide, they settled on the hardwood forest in San Felasco Hammock. If they had come earlier, in the 1950s or 1960s, they might have settled on Gulf Hammock in Levy County or the Big Thicket in East Texas, but by 1980, both had been largely destroyed by timbering and conversion to managed forests of planted pine or other uses.

In 1980, San Felasco Hammock contained perhaps the best remaining example of a naturally functioning low elevation temperate hardwood forest. It was a natural, mature, diverse, healthy forest of oak, hickory, ash, elm, maple, basswood, sweetgum, southern magnolia, and other tree species, all tied together with a diversity of large vines dominated by several species of grape vines.

The abundance of vines was a very good thing for the fauna of the forest. The fruits of grape, Virginia creeper, pepper vine, supplejack, and poison ivy served as valuable food for various species of mammals and birds, the flowers of trumpet creeper and cross vine were important for hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies, and the tangle of vines and foliage in the tree tops provided valuable habitat for nesting and foraging.

Unfortunately, someone seems to have decided that this natural condition of the forest is undesirable. It has been recently discovered that huge numbers of the vines in San Felasco Hammock have been intentionally killed by cutting on at least several hundred acres.

My wife and I discovered this assault in April, 2017. When asked, the park manager said that they had discovered the vine cutting the previous summer, and tried but failed to find out who did it or why. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Law Enforcement attempted to catch the perpetrator in the latter half of 2017, without success. I have been working with Florida Park Service personnel to try to find how bad the damage is and who did it. So far, it is clear that the vine cutting is very extensive, occurring in most of the high quality hardwood forest areas of the park that have been checked for vine cutting. On at least a couple hundred acres, almost all the vines have been cut and are now dead. When I say almost all of the vines, Erika and I could not find a vine that had not been cut on the area where we first noticed this damage. And, unfortunately, the damage may be much more extensive than this.

There are over 3000 acres of upland hardwood forest in the park and hundreds more acres of lowland hardwood forest. Most of this has not been checked to see if vines have been cut, and at least some vines have been cut on all of the areas that have been checked so far. In addition, vines have been cut in Alfred A. Ring Park, and from there south in the other city park lands along Hogtown Creek. On 02/01/2018, David Auth and I found newly cut vines in San Felasco Hammock; the vandalism is continuing.



Erika Simons next to a cut vine in San Felasco Hammock.

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Field Trips

(Continued from Page 1)

Sunday, April 15, 8:00 a.m.

La Chua Trail: Meet trip leader Felicia Lee at the trailhead of La Chua Trail on Camp Ranch Rd. La Chua is one of the area's best birding hot-spots and supports a tremendous bird population including wading birds, waterfowl, raptors, warblers, and others. Resident species should be in the midst of nesting activities, and we may see a few migrants passing through. Entry fee is \$4 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, April 21, 6:30 a.m.

Cedar Key: Meet trip leader Rex Rowan in the Target parking lot on Archer Rd. at I-75. The emphasis on this trip will be migrants – mainly warblers and shorebirds. We'll also look for some uncommon and/or coastal-nesting species: Gray Kingbird, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Short-tailed Hawk. Some people stay after the trip for lunch. Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, April 22, 8:00 a.m.

Powers Park and Palm Point: Meet trip leader Barbara Shea at Powers Park to look for migrants 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 like American Redstart, Cape May and Blackpoll Warblers, and Scarlet Tanager. Difficulty: 1.

Saturday, April 28, 8:00 a.m.

Bolen Bluff: Meet trip leader Mike Manetz at the trailhead on US-441 at the south rim of Paynes Prairie. Bolen Bluff is one of Gainesville's perennial favorite birding locations, especially during the peak of songbird migration, and we'll be watching out for spring migrants like Cape May, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Blue Warblers as well as recently-arrived residents such as Summer Tanager and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Entry fee is \$2 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, April 29, 6:00 a.m.

Huguenot Park/Ft. George Island: Meet trip leader Rex Rowan at the Tag Agency on NW 34th St. just south of US-441 to carpool to Jacksonville's Huguenot Park, where we'll look for shorebirds, gulls, and terns, all in their breeding plumage, and migrant songbirds, including Painted Buntings, at Ft. George Island. Admission to Huguenot is \$5 per vehicle, \$3 (exact change only) if we get there before 8 a.m. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, May 6

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 better-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) to reserve a spot and for details on where and when to meet. Difficulty: 1.

Saturday, May 12, 8:00 a.m.

Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve (CLEP*): Meet trip leader Michael Drummond at the Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve on CR-325. We'll look for Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Red-headed Woodpecker, and others, but we'll be looking at everything – trees, wildflowers, insects, reptiles, whatever we find. Directions: East on Hawthorne Rd. to CR-325, right on CR-325 for 2.3 miles. Bring bug spray, sunscreen, and water. Difficulty : 3.

***The Conservation Lands Educational Program (CLEP)** is designed to bring attention to local land conservation efforts. These trips take place on properties purchased to protect natural resources and are led by a representative of the agency in charge, who will discuss the ecological features and history of the site, in addition to birding.



Local Teen Medals in ABA Young Birder Events

While we've been at home watching the world compete for medals in the winter Olympics, a local young birder recently won medals in a different kind of competition. Gainesville teen Nora Parks-Church entered the American Birding Association (ABA) Young Birder of the Year contest and earned a Gold Medal for writing and a Bronze Medal for illustration. Parks-Church will receive a prize for her writing award.

The Young Birder of the Year contest has been in existence since 1998. There are two age brackets: 10-13 and 14-18. Parks-Church, who is in 8th grade at Howard Bishop Middle School, competed in the 10-13 category.

In order to enter the contest, birders must complete a significant amount of work over the course of seven months. An overall "Young Birder of The Year" is chosen in each age bracket, plus gold, silver, and bronze medalists (and honorable mentions) in each age bracket and

category (field notebook, community/conservation project, writing, illustration, and photography).

Entries are judged by a panel of birding professionals.

Nora has been birding since she was a young girl with her dad, Geoff Parks, her mom, Carol Church, and her brother, Owen. She also enjoys competing in the June Challenge and participating in the Christmas Bird Count. Nora's favorite bird is the black-bellied whistling duck, and her favorite place to go birding in Gainesville is Sweetwater Wetlands Park.

To learn more about the Young Birder of the Year contest, visit the American Birding Association website (<https://www.aba.org/>) and search Young Birder of the Year.



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 such as 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 restrooms.

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



Family Birding at Paynes Prairie

Alachua Audubon collaborates with Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park to offer family birding walks on the first Saturday of the month. This is an ideal time to introduce a child, youth or neighbor to birding. All walks are on the La Chua trail and last approximately 2 hours (although you may leave whenever you wish). Loaner binoculars are available. So far, we have had excellent turnouts for these events.

Register for walks at Friends of Paynes Prairie (prairiefriends.org). Meet at the La Chua trailhead parking lot at 9 AM.

Contact Emily Schwartz at 352-372-0754 if you have questions.



Created by Martyn Jasinski
from Noun Project

AAS Potluck Dinner Party and *Welcome to New Board Members*

Join us on Wednesday, April 11th at 6:30 pm for Alachua Audubon's annual pot luck dinner and help us welcome our newest AAS Board Members. This event will be held at Bubba and Ingrid Scales' house at 3002 SW 1st Way, Gainesville, located in the Colclough Hills neighborhood between south Main Street and Williston Road. (Look for the AAS signs!) Bring some food to share and a drink of choice, and enjoy visiting with other Alachua Audubon members and the Board of Directors. This will be a fun gathering and an opportunity to learn more about AAS for members and especially those interested in becoming more involved!

The Alachua Audubon Society is a volunteer organization. The Board of Directors is comprised of four officers and 15 members. The officers of Alachua Audubon are: President: Debbie Segal, Vice President: Scott Flamand, Secretary, Felicia Lee, and Treasurer: Trina Anderson. Returning board members are Emily Schwartz, Bob Simons, Anne Casella, Mike Manetz, Barbara Shea, Karen Brown, Katie Sieving, Charlene Leonard, Adam Zions, Steve Goodman, Michael Brock and Alan Shapiro. Alachua Audubon sincerely thanks outgoing board members Sharon Kuchinski for serving for many years and organizing and leading numerous youth birding field trips, and Will Sexton for serving in many roles including tabling for AAS at many environmental events and festivals. Incoming board members are Jonathan Varol, Cindy Boyd, Eric Amundson and Brittany Kryder. *Please join us on April 11th to celebrate Alachua Audubon and welcome new board members.*

Third Thursday Bird Walks

Alachua Audubon 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 details: gatorbob23@yahoo.com

SPEAKER'S CORNER

All programs are held at the Millhopper Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville.

Birds of Panama, Saturday, March 24, 2018, at 2:00 p.m. **Please note this is a Saturday program.** Clyde Stephens, a fifth generation Floridian, enjoyed a career in banana research in Central America. He and his wife Phyllis have a solar-powered home on a remote tropical island in Bocas del Toro, Panama, where they promote the wonders of nature. **Birds of Panama** presents personal experiences, bird behavior, habitats and biodiversity of some of the 976 recorded species in Panama.

Florida's Charismatic Microfauna, Wednesday, May 2. Socializing at 6:30; program at 7. Dr. Paul Molar will introduce a select few of the less familiar members of our local fauna.

A special thank you to the Millhopper Branch Library staff for displaying interesting library materials related to each topic of our speakers.

Monthly Birds and Brews

The AAS Birds and Brews event continues to be a popular event for both new and experienced birders. Meet the first Sunday of the month at **First Magnitude Brewery**, 1220 SE Veitch Street. Arrive early as parking can be scarce. There will be an Alachua Audubon table set up and loaner binoculars will be available. On **March 4th** and **April 1st** we will meet up at **4:45** for a **5:00 PM** departure to Depot Park. It is a lovely time of day for a leisurely stroll to look for birds around the ponds. Then we'll return to First Magnitude for an optional cold brew and good conversation. All birding skill levels welcome.

Next event: Sunday, March 4th at 4:45 pm



Local Parks Vandalized

(Continued from page 3)

Whoever is doing it and for whatever the reason, the vine cutting is a very bad thing. San Felasco Hammock will never again be as wild or as natural or as good habitat for wildlife as it was just a couple of years ago. If ecologists from Europe (or the University of Florida) want to find a low elevation temperate hardwood forest in natural condition to study, they may be disappointed. If a swallow-tailed kite raising a family here is searching for a lizard or a snake basking in the sun on top of the vine tangle in the treetops, its babies may go hungry. If a flock of migrating thrushes or vireos or warblers stops by San Felasco Hammock to feed on the fruits of Virginia creeper, pepper vine, or poison ivy in the treetops, or on the insects that live in this tangle, to fuel their journey south in autumn, they may also go hungry. Last summer, birders looking for hooded warblers, which nest in San Felasco Hammock, were unable to find these birds north of Millhopper Road, where almost all of the vines have been cut, but did find them south of Millhopper Road where only a small percentage of the vines have been cut. Someone has done a very bad deed, and it is one that cannot be undone in the span of a human lifetime. The vines are not sprouting back, and the shade of the forest, combined with the browsing of deer, are effectively preventing any new vines or vine sprouts from getting started.

This needs to stop before even more damage is done. If anyone has information about this issue, please contact Bob Simons at 352-372-7646 or bobgraybeardsimons@gmail.com. If anyone sees vine cutting in progress, please call the Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-3922 or the San Felasco Hammock State Park office at 386-462-7905.

Bird Collisions News

Recent bird collisions with windows on the UF campus resulted in the deaths of many Cedar Waxwings and was a shock to students, leading to an article in The Independent Florida Alligator student newspaper.

Mark Hostetler, a professor in the UF Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, is spearheading an initiative to make UF's 2,000 acre campus safer for birds. "We are currently in the process of collecting bird strike data across campus....[which] will be demonstrated to UF officials who can make the changes that these buildings need to mitigate bird impacts." Learn more at wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/birdcollisions/

National Audubon addresses bird strikes by reporting on proposed federal legislation concerning glass used in federal buildings while also describing surprising news on the rural habitat front. Read more at www.audubon.org/news/proposed-federal-law-could-save-countless-birds-death-glass

2018 is The Year of the Bird

The Year of the Bird celebrates the importance of birds in our lives and the roles they play in the web of life. 2018 marks the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of the earliest environmental laws enacted anywhere in the world, and a key element of Audubon's beginnings. It was Audubon chapters, largely comprised of the audacious women of the early 1900s who had not yet won the right to vote – spurred by the wanton destruction of bird life wrought by the plume trade – that were the force behind Congress's adoption of rules that still protect birds 100 years later. **Audubon, National Geographic, BirdLife International** and **The Cornell Lab of Ornithology** are joined by more than 100 organizations that work to protect birds and their habitats. For stories, photos, and insight into science and conservation efforts, visit Year of the Bird at BirdYourWorld.org.

[Excerpted from Audubon magazine (Winter 2017) and Audubon Florida Annual Report 2017]

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Be sure to visit Alachua Audubon Society's Facebook page for regular updates on local birds, including the Federally Endangered Snail Kite that has been spotted at Sweetwater Wetlands Park.




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Around the County

(Continued from Page 2)

February 9th at Boulware Springs. We missed Least Flycatcher on the Christmas Count for the first time in several years, but one showed up along Sparrow Alley in early January; this was possibly the same bird found there in late fall. Unusual wintering warblers continued to be discovered. Caroline Poli and Jessica Hightower had a Nashville Warbler in the tree canopy adjacent to the tower at Payne's Prairie Visitor's Center, and Adam Zions tallied another Nashville in his yard along with a Redstart and a Black-throated Green Warbler, all on the same day! We also had a Wilson's Warbler continuing on the UF campus through the winter.

Two very interesting birds were wintering and patronizing feeders at private residences in the area. They included a Western Tanager in the Florida Park neighborhood, and an adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird in the Jonesville area. Readers may be interested to know the injured Short-eared Owl mentioned in the previous issue of *The Crane* was successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild on December 23rd.

If you were planning on slacking off birding until spring you are too late! Our first returning



Female Ruff (Reeve) at Sweetwater Wetlands Park. Photo by Lloyd Davis.



Male Ruff at Home Depot Pond. Photo by Lloyd Davis.

Purple Martin was spotted by Andy Kratter January 31st at Sweetwater Wetlands; and by the time this issue of *The Crane* reaches your inbox or mailbox the woods will be filled with the songs of returning Northern Parulas blending their voices with the swelling chorus of our resident song birds. Soon after, someone will report the first returning Louisiana Waterthrush and we will be off and running again. See you out there!

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through February 13th, 2018.

By Mike Manetz



CHIMNEY SWIFT ALERT

Chimney Swifts are small, about five inches, cigar shaped black birds with slender pointed wings. With the exception of the very rare Vaux's Swift, they are the only swift species that we have here in the eastern U.S. These birds migrate from Chile, South America to breed and raise their young here in the states. They will be scouting for nesting places during March but because of habitat destruction, the large tree cavities and rock crevices used as nesting sites are gone. The only alternative they have is to use human structures such as buildings and chimneys.

We are encouraging everyone to leave a safe nesting site open for Chimney Swifts. If you have a real stone or brick fireplace keep the top open and the damper to the flue closed from March through September. The parents and little ones will be long gone before you start any fires. If you don't have a damper, place a large piece of foam rubber into the opening to seal it. This will prevent the adults from flying into the house. Many times when we have heavy rains the humidity weakens the nest of young swifts and it may fall. The damper (or foam) will stop their fall and the parents will continue to feed them as they cling to the wall of the chimney.

You'll know if you have Chimney Swifts by the chattering you will hear in the chimney every time the parents fly in to feed the babies. You will also observe their aerial acrobatics as the adults and fledglings feed around the outside of your house.

Early March or October is the time to get your chimney cleaned. This will keep your fireplace safe for you and provide a better surface for Chimney Swift nests to adhere to.

(Note: If you have a metal chimney, PLEASE make sure it is capped properly. *Any* animal that enters a metal flue will fall to the bottom and be unable to climb the slippery walls.)

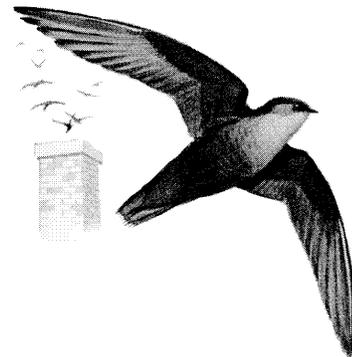
CHIMNEY SWIFTS

- Consume as many as 1000 flying insects each day, such as mosquitoes, aphids and flies.
- All four toes point forward, they can only cling to vertical surfaces.
- Use gelatinous saliva to glue their nest together and to the wall.
- Collect small twigs for the nest by snapping them off in mid-flight.
- Nest from April to August and may nest twice in one season.
- Have a strong tendency to return to the same nesting site each year.
- There is usually only one breeding pair at a site.
- The nest takes two to three weeks to construct.
- Eggs are laid while the nest is being built.
- They lay two to six eggs, each a day apart.
- Three weeks after hatching they attain adult weight.
- They take their first flight at four weeks of age but practice inside the chimney before that.
- Young birds often return to the area where they were raised to nest.

Chimney Swifts are protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Act. It is illegal to capture, remove, or harm a Chimney Swift!

To learn more go to FloridaWildlifeCare.org

By Leslie Straub



Birding Alachua County in the 1960s

This email is in reference to an article by Rex Rowan about the first sighting of a nesting burrowing owl in Alachua County, printed in the Nov-Dec 2017 issue of *The Crane*. The person referenced as being the first to sight a nesting burrowing owl is me, James (Jim) Brogdon.

I grew up in Gainesville during the 1950s and 60s, graduating from Gainesville High School in June 1961. During high school I banded birds at my house for Dr. Oliver Austin, Jr. I attended UF my junior year, but went on to get a bachelor's degree from Utah State University in 1966 in wildlife ecology, and then returned for a master's degree in 1977 in recreational fisheries management. I spent a number of years in the late 60s working for the (then) Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission as a wildlife technician, working with Lovett Williams (state turkey biologist), and Dale Crider (state waterfowl biologist). Later I worked for 30 years with the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the wildlife refuge program (White River NWR Arkansas and Tennessee NWR Tennessee). The remainder of my 30-year career was as an ecologist/environmental scientist with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in their wetland permitting/enforcement program. I've been retired since 2006 and live in Lenox, GA where we have 17 acres committed to wildlife enhancement.

In June of 1962 when I discovered the nesting burrowing owls, I was on break from college in Tifton, GA, returning to spend the summer in Gainesville. One of my best friends, Lannie Rowland, and I were very familiar with Alachua County and often drove the county roads looking for nesting raptors. We both became interested in falconry and (with the necessary permits) obtained several species for training.

I have provided photos from my old Brownie camera. The area today is known as Jonesville and is, unfortunately, over-developed in comparison to what existed in the summer of 1962 when there was only an old wooden grocery store at the intersection of Newberry Road and the road to Alachua. I took one of the young owls and raised it up. It was later given to an ornithology student at UF when I went back to college in Tifton.

I loved growing up in Alachua County back in the 50s and 60s. Gainesville was a small town compared to what exists now, and a group of us traveled over every county road, fished and hiked many of the ponds and prairies, and had access to Camp Ranch (Paynes Prairie) via a son of the manager of the ranch that owned it then. We spent many days and nights boating, hiking, frog gigging, and searching for raptor nests. Landowners were friendly back in those days and it was no problem getting access to many natural areas that are now state owned lands. It was a great time to be a young explorer.

Regards,

Jim Brogdon
Lenox, GA

me holding my burrowing owl found 12 miles N.W. of Gainesville. First one ever reported nesting that close to Gainesville. Aug. 1962



Jim with Burrowing Owl, 1962.



Jim with baby Red-tailed Hawk and Great Horned Owl, 1961.

EVENT AND TRIP REPORTS

Pints and Predators

By the best estimates of the bar staff at First Magnitude Brewing Co., about 2,000 people came out for the third annual Pints and Predators event on January 27th. After the bar tab was settled and Apopka-based Avian Reconditioning Center was paid its flat fee, we nearly doubled our proceeds over 2017 with \$1,936.07 each raised for Florida Wildlife Care, Inc., Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation, and Lubee Bat Conservancy.

Pints and Predators is a half-day educational fair and fundraiser for wildlife rehabilitators that started at Wild Birds Unlimited in 2015. It moved to First Magnitude in 2016 in order to accommodate more attendees and expand the number of rehabilitators and animals. In addition to seven species of raptor, this most recent event also featured several species of native microbat, a Rodriguez flying fox, a Virginia opossum, and a striped skunk.

Wild Birds Unlimited is already working with First Magnitude and the rehabilitators to make Pints and Predators even better in 2019. Watch the WBU website and Facebook page for an announcement about the fourth annual Pints and Predators.

By Bubba Scales

Adam Soistman of Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation introduces Merlin, the Barred Owl, while Einstein, the Great Horned Owl, checks out the crowd. Photos by Karen Brown.



AAS Weekend at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

A full capacity group of Alachua Audubon birders braved the cold and joined John Hintermister for a weekend of birding at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge and nearby coastal areas. On Saturday, January 6th, we tallied 95 species on the refuge, with highlights being a Common Goldeneye, Eared Grebe, White-faced Ibis, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Yellow Warbler, Nelson's Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbirds. On Sunday, we ventured west in search of the rare Short-eared Owl (with no luck), and for pelagic birds. Phil Lapis spotted two Black Scoters within a raft of scaup in the shallows of Alligator Point. A special thanks to John Hintermister for leading us on an exciting and fun-packed weekend of birding the Big Bend coast of Florida.

By Debbie Segal

Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation

Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation (SWR) was formed to assist native wildlife and their rescuers. We hold the required State and Federal Permits to rehabilitate songbirds, as well as other native wildlife. We regularly assist out of area callers by providing instructions on boxing and transport of injured wildlife. By quickly assisting and answering calls, we are able to head off well-meaning rescuers creating an orphan. This happens often when songbirds are fledging. If the wildlife is truly an orphan or injured, we help find qualified rehabilitation in their area quickly, and have found this is very helpful in calming the rescuer and saving the wildlife.

Our facility is home based and quite extensive. We have 20 acres and many appropriate enclosures within a safe, screened open air area. We also have an ICU room and above minimum standard mews to house the educational wildlife, as well as a state minimum standard size Sherman's fox squirrel release cage and active wild fox squirrel colonies where we soft release rehabilitated fox squirrels. We have released 14 fox squirrels in the last 8 years – a number we are particularly proud of because fox squirrels inspired our calling in wildlife rehabilitation.

SWR is an active member of both the Florida and National Wildlife Rehabilitators Associations. Networking with other rehabilitators and continuing education is imperative to stay abreast of ever changing techniques and general support. We are fortunate to have several expert advisors/mentors who are experienced and qualified wildlife rehabilitators. Our interaction with them is part of the effort to continuously improve the capabilities of SWR. We have a close relationship with our State and Federal Wildlife officials and encourage them to visit the facility often.

We do not attempt this volunteer work alone. We have 7 trained rehabilitators who can legally assist with native mammals off site, in addition to volunteers who help us with transport, maintenance and cleaning. We personally care for orphan hatchling, nestling and fledgling songbirds, and work with other area rehabilitators to try and group bird species. SWR strives to achieve quality rehabilitation leading to successful reintroduction to the wild. Intake and release numbers are documented. Nearly 100 songbirds were successfully rehabilitated and released in appropriate habitat during the 2017 season.

SWR reaches out throughout the area with offsite interpretive programs featuring 3 species of owls native to north central Florida. Owls of North Florida consists of 2 color morphs of Eastern Screech owl, Barred owl and a Great Horned owl. We also conduct a “Nocturnal Wildlife of North Florida” interpretive program which features a Virginia opossum in addition to the owls. We concentrate the programs during the cooler/slower rehabilitation months.

SWR has shared these wildlife ambassadors at many venues, including Fort White Library/Four Rivers Audubon, the Alligator Lake Festival, Santa Fe Audubon/Melrose, 1400 Safe Place, Devils Millhopper State Geological Site, O'Leno State Park, Alachua home school groups, the U.S. Forest Service's “More Kids in the Woods” initiative, Wild Birds Unlimited in Gainesville, and Stepping Stones Preschool, to name a few.

Because we have wildlife in rehabilitation, we are not open to the general public. This ensure wildlife is not overly stressed or habituated. Please visit us on Facebook where we post numerous successful releases and engage followers with upbeat and informative postings.

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The Crane
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**Join Alachua Audubon!
Membership Application**

Benefits of membership include expert-led field trips, programs for adults and youth, classes for beginning birders, *The Crane* bi-monthly newsletter, conservation advocacy with local and state legislators, and more.

Annual Membership Levels

Choosing a higher level provides additional support for our local chapter.

Student	\$10	Individual	\$15
Family	\$30	Limpkin	\$50
Purple Gallinule			\$100
Swallow-tailed Kite			\$250
Sandhill Crane			\$500
Whooping Crane*			\$1,000

(*bestows lifetime membership)

Please send your completed application with a check payable to
Alachua Audubon Society
to: 3242 NW 12th Terr., Gainesville, FL 32609

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The Crane is distributed via email. Your email address will not be shared with other organizations.

Alachua Audubon (AAS) is an official chapter of **National Audubon** and **Audubon Florida**. If you belong to National Audubon and live in our area, you are automatically a member of AAS.

To join National Audubon, please go to AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership where you will be directed to their membership page.

Alachua Audubon is a 501(c)3 organization.

Audubon Membership Explained

To join Audubon at the local level, please complete the membership form to the left, or print a form at AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership. Choose the level that is appropriate for you. Mail the completed form with your check, payable to **Alachua Audubon Society**, to the address provided.

To join Audubon at the National level, go to AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership where you will be directed to their membership page. This site allows payment by credit card. Your introductory membership (\$20) 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's *Naturalist* magazine, and Alachua Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Crane*.

Please send any questions to AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com