

The Crane

Volume 60 Number 1 September – October 2018

September and October Field Trips

The Annual Schedule of 2018/2019 Alachua Audubon Field Trips is now on the AAS website and printed copies may be obtained at Wild Birds Unlimited. See the top of page 5 for complete information.

Sunday, September 16, 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 oaks and cypresses. Difficulty: 1.

Saturday, September 22, 8:00 a.m.

San Felasco Hammock (Millhopper Rd.): Meet trip leader Steve Hofstetter in the trailhead parking lot on Millhopper Road. Sandhill, meandering streams, and forested slopes set the stage for the diversity of warblers, thrushes, tanagers, and other migrant birds that we'll hope to see. Entry fee \$4 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, September 23

Cedar Key by Boat (sign-up required): Join trip leader Scott Flamand and the Tidewater Tours crew on a canopied pontoon-boat ride into some of the lesser-known shorebird haunts of the Cedar Key area. Tidewater Tours offers 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, September 29, 8:00 a.m.

Barr Hammock Woodlands Trail (CLEP*): Meet trip leader Michael Drummond at the trailhead on SE 175th Avenue 1.5 miles west of I-75 (go west on County Road 234 and keep right at the fork). Barr Hammock is a forested land bridge between Ledwith and Levy Prairies, an environmental 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, whatever we find. 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 an agency representative who will discuss the ecological features and history of the site, in addition to birding.

Continued on page 5

Inside this issue:

Around the County	p. 2
New! Zen Birding; AAS Scholarship	p. 3
Monthly Programs	p. 4
Introducing Island Apple Snails	p. 7
Gainesville Tree Ordinance	p. 9
Lubee Bat Festival	p. 10
Osprey Cam Needs Help	p. 11
Songbird Student Art Exhibit	p. 11
FL Birding & Nature Festival	p. 13

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 be greater than two miles.

Alachua Audubon Officers &
Chairpersons of
Standing Committees

PresidentDebbie Segal 352-514-0596
Vice PresidentScott Flamand 352-665-7020
Secretary.....Felicia Lee 714-791-8855
Treasurer Trina Anderson 352-363-6810
Membership ..AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com
Field Trips Barbara Shea 352-514-3956
Education Emily Schwartz 352-372-0754
Birding ClassCharlene Leonard 352-226-1214
FestivalsEric Amundson/Alan Shapiro
Conservation.....Bob Simons 352-372-7646
Editor/AdsKaren Brown 352-213-4257
Website Trina Anderson 352-363-6810
Crane Circulation.....Erika and Bob Simons
AAS Websitewww.AlachuaAudubon.org

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.

Submissions to *The Crane* are welcomed. Deadline for the November–December issue: Oct. 15th

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 complete information.

Additional advertisers are welcome. Please contact the editor for information at: 352-213-4257 or karenpbrown1953@gmail.com

**Around
The County...
By Mike Manetz**

You may have heard we added a new species, Egyptian Goose, to the county bird list since the last issue of *The Crane*. Egyptian Geese are native to the Nile Valley and sub-Saharan Africa but have been widely imported as “domestic” or “pet” geese

around the world. This includes south and central Florida, where escapees have bred and developed “wild” colonies at several golf courses and parks. Even though they had recently become established at The Villages and were known to occasionally wander as far north as Ocala, it was still a bit of a surprise when Danny Rohan reported one July 21st at Sweetwater Wet-



Egyptian goose. Photo by David Campione.



EGGO photo by Lloyd Davis

lands Park. Local birders predictably flocked to Sweetwater to greet this newcomer and hopefully add it to their life lists, but well before day's end the goose (nicknamed “EGGO”, the four–letter banding code for that species) seemed to disappear. On August 1st Rex Rowan relocated the fugitive a little over a mile away at Sun Bay Apartments where a resident had been feeding it for about two months! “EGGO” now proudly takes its place beside Muscovy Duck in the official ranks of Alachua County avifauna.

In other goose news, on July 1st Linda Hensley and Howard Adams visited a site off Williston Road where Canada Geese had been reported recently and counted seven of them there. Small flocks have been seen sporadically in the county over many years, but we have yet to confirm them breeding here.

Sweetwater Wetlands had a couple other interesting recent visitors. Candace Davis and Rebecca Davis-Nord were there July 1st and spotted a Magnificent Frigatebird, which is a coastal species occurring as far north as Cedar Key and typically only shows up here during tropical storms.

Continued on page 12

New and Continuing Programs

Introducing Zen Birding: A Yoga and Birding Experience

Enjoy a calm morning of mental and physical wellness while discovering the joys of urban birding. Zen Birding is a new monthly program combining a gentle yoga workout with a birding walk where you will discover the rich diversity of bird life that exists right in the middle of Gainesville. **No previous experience with yoga or birding is required.**

We will meet on the fourth Sunday of every month at 9:00 am in the covered pavilion at Possum Creek Park at 4009 NW 53rd Avenue in northwest Gainesville. Yoga mats and binoculars will be available for loan if you need them.

We'll start with a gentle beginning yoga workout, led by a certified instructor, then enjoy a short stroll around the park to watch and listen for birds and other wildlife. The experience should last about 90 minutes.

All are welcome, regardless of birding or yoga experience. Our first meeting will be on **Sunday, September 23, at 9 am**; our second meeting will take place on **Sunday, October 28, at 9 am**. We hope you can join us!

Audubon EagleWatch Seeks Volunteers

This year Audubon EagleWatch celebrates 26 years of conservation in Florida. EagleWatch began in 1992 in the Central Florida region with only 22 volunteers. Today the program is state-wide, reaching more communities each year and continuing to heighten awareness of Bald Eagle nesting activities throughout the state.

Audubon EagleWatch now seeks volunteers to monitor nests for the 2018-2019 breeding season. The project provides valuable information to scientists on nesting activity and Bald Eagle population trends in Florida. As a volunteer, you'll be assigned to monitor one or more eagle nests in your vicinity during the breeding season (October-May). Contact Audubon EagleWatch Program Manager Shawnlei Breeding for more information at sbreeding@audubon.org, 407-644-0190 or visit eaglewatchflorida.org.

New Scholarship Program

To encourage youth activities consistent with the Alachua Audubon Society mission, we are pleased to announce the availability of \$300 in scholarship funds to an Alachua County high school student for equipment such as books and binoculars; training such as birding classes; or conservation projects. The award will be based upon the following criteria:

- Keen interest in the environment/nature/conservation
- Involvement in extracurricular environmental/nature activities
- Academic record
- Teacher/counselor recommendation

Eligibility Requirements:

To be considered for a scholarship, an applicant must:

- Be a resident of Alachua County.
- Be a student at the 9th to 12th grade level.
- Be in good academic standing.

How to Apply:

To apply for the AAS Scholarship, please complete the application form on the AAS website home page. Creating an account (optional) will allow you to save your progress and complete the form at a later time if needed.

Two letters of recommendation are required:

- one from a teacher or counselor who can confirm your academic record,
- the second from a teacher, club sponsor or volunteer supervisor who can provide information on your interest in the environment and involvement in extracurricular/environmental/nature activities.

Letters of recommendation should be sent as a .pdf file and attached to the application or emailed separately to:

scholarship@AlachuaAudubon.org

Good luck, applicants!

Family Birding Program

The AAS Education Committee continues to partner with Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park to offer family walks at La Chua Trail on the first Saturday of the month (October through April). Interested families may register at the Friends of Paynes Prairie website at www.prairiefriends.org under *Upcoming Events*. We will walk at a leisurely pace for about 2 hours from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

A family is not required to join us – anyone is welcome! Bring a child, a grandchild, a neighbor, or just yourself and take a walk on the La Chua Trail. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Loaner binoculars are available during the walk, but supplies are limited. Meet at the La Chua Trail parking lot at 4801 Camp Ranch Road, Gainesville. Walks are free, but park admission at La Chua Trail is \$4.00 per vehicle (cash only) or free with a Florida State Parks Annual Pass. Contact Emily Schwartz at 352-372-0754 if you have questions.

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 **September 2nd** we will meet up at **6:15** for a **6:30 PM departure** to Depot Park. On **October 7th** we will meet at **5:45** for a **6 PM departure**. 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, September 2nd at 6:15 pm



SPEAKER'S CORNER

Programs are held at the Millhopper Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville. 6:30 social time, 7:00 program

Birds and Mammals of North India, Wednesday, September 5th.

Scott Flamand, retired science teacher from Buchholz High School and former president, current vice president of Alachua Audubon Society will describe his recent trip with a nature guide through northern India. Scott was very excited to be able to take this trip and this should be an outstanding presentation about what he saw and learned in northern India.

Climate-Wise Landscape, Practical Actions for a Sustainable Future, Thursday, November 8th.

Ginny Stibolt, a life-long gardener with a Master of Science degree in botany, will speak on topics from the book, *Climate-Wise Landscaping: Practical Actions for a Sustainable Future* by Sue Reed and herself. The book was published by New Society Press in 2018. The authors have taken an optimistic approach, with hundreds of actions that people can take to accomplish at least one of 3 objectives:

- 1) to help the landscape survive climate change,
- 2) to help wildlife survive climate change, and
- 3) to help mitigate climate change.

Since moving to Florida in 2004, Ginny has written 4 peer-reviewed books on Florida gardening, all published by University Press of Florida. In addition, she has written hundreds of gardening and nature articles for various publications.

Third Thursday Bird Walks

Alachua Audubon offers mid-week bird walks on the third Thursday of most months for anyone who would like to attend. Lunch is optional for those who would enjoy some extra socializing. The first trip is scheduled for **September 20th**. We make up the schedule as we go along so if you are interested in attending, please contact Bob Carroll at gatorbob23@yahoo.com

New Season of Weekend Field Trips Begins!

The new season of weekend field trips begins September 16th! Alachua Audubon field trips are designed to follow the predicted occurrence of our many migrant and seasonal birds and take us to the places they favor. Basically, it's our best guess at being in the right place at the right time!

There will be new trips and old favorites this year. Explore some of the newer Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) managed properties such as the Santa Fe River Preserve – South Trail or Little Orange Creek Preserve. Find birds within Gainesville's extensive park system starting at Green Acres Nature Park. Did you enjoy (or miss) the canoe/kayak trip last year? This year there will be two! Learn about local conservation with the Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP) trips.

Special leaders have been selected for each trip and there is always something new to learn from these experts. Come join us! All trips are open to the public and free. Bring your binoculars and join old friends or meet new ones, and learn about some of the many birding Hot Spots in Alachua County and beyond.

By Barbara Shea

Newly Printed Field Trip Schedule

The 2018/2019 schedule can be picked up from Wild Birds Unlimited. You may also go to our website, AlachuaAudubon.org, to download a copy. Click on *Activities* at the top, choose *Field Trips* from the dropdown box, and click *download this pdf*. Or check the trip-by-trip calendar on the website. (It's always a good idea to check the website right before a trip for any last-minute changes, although these are rare.)

There is something for everyone – just look on the “More Birding Trips” section for a list of the many and varied recurring and new offerings by AAS.

Field Trips

(Continued from Page 1)

Sunday, September 30, 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. Mike Manetz will lead us along a 2.5-mile trail through a variety of habitats that include pinewoods, open oak woodlands, wetlands, and a bit of lakeshore. Plenty of migrant warblers and thrushes should be around. Difficulty level: 3.

Saturday, October 6, 8:00 a.m.

Santa Fe River Preserve - South Trail: Meet at the parking corral on State Road 121 4.5 miles north of LaCrosse. This will be our first visit to this 910-acre Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) property, which opened to the public last fall. ACT biologist Chris Burney will lead a walk along the 1.5-mile trail through hardwood forest and bottomland surrounding Santa Fe Creek in search of migrants. Wear rubber boots or old shoes you don't mind getting wet, as the trail can be soggy in places. Difficulty: 2.

Sunday, October 7, 8:00 a.m.

Little Orange Creek Preserve: Meet trip leader Barbara Shea at the parking corral on the north side of State Road 20 1.75 miles east of US-301. This will be our first visit to this 2,868-acre Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) property which opened to the public in January 2017. Migratory birds should be present in good numbers along the 2-mile trail that parallels the marshy creek. Wear rubber boots or old shoes you don't mind getting wet, as the trail can be soggy in places. Difficulty 3.

Saturday, October 13, 8:00 a.m.

San Felasco Hammock (Millhopper Road) - Yellow Trail: Meet trip leader Anne Casella at the parking lot on Millhopper Road for a walk on the *trail less traveled* by recent AAS field trips. We'll amble through shady hammocks, pinelands, and sandhills looking for migrating warblers, thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Scarlet Tanagers. Entry fee \$4 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

Continued next page

Field Trips

(Continued from Page 5)

Sunday, October 14, 8:00 a.m.

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

Saturday, October 20, 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 326 (where Hardee's is). There should still be some fall migrants passing through, and we'll keep a particular eye out for Bay-breasted and Black-throated Green Warblers. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, October 21, 8:00 a.m.

Watermelon Pond Wildlife and Environmental Area: Meet trip leader Rex Rowan at the parking lot of the Watermelon Pond WEA on SW 250th Street 2.0 miles south of SW 46th Avenue. We'll be looking for open-country migrants like Western Kingbirds as well as winter arrivals such as Savannah and Vesper Sparrows (and the season's first Yellow-rumped Warblers!). Fall wildflowers should be blooming, and hopefully we'll encounter a Fox Squirrel or two. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, October 27, 8:00 a.m.

Kanapaha Prairie: Meet trip leader Rex Rowan in the Publix parking lot at the corner of Tower Rd. (SW 75th St.) and Archer Rd. The Kanapaha Prairie, a 700-acre grassland dotted with marshy ponds, is co-owned by The Conservation Fund and several surrounding landowners. Access is restricted, so field trips like this one are possible only every year or two. Expect grassland, marsh,

and open-country birds like Marsh and Sedge Wrens, Savannah and Swamp Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlark, Loggerhead Shrike, and American Kestrel. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, November 3, 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, not to mention western strays like Yellow-headed Blackbird and Bronzed Cowbird. It doesn't smell pretty. Just sayin'. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, November 10, 8:00 a.m.

Newnans Lake State Forest - West Trail: Meet trip leader Rex Rowan in the parking corral for the West Trail, on State Road 26 one mile north of the junction with County Road 329B. The 182-acre field on this property produced 13 species of sparrows last winter, including Henslow's, Lincoln's, and Clay-colored, and we'll see how many of them we can find. Interesting western strays are also possible at this time of year. Difficulty: 2.



Cardinal feeding on blue-stem palmetto berries. Blue-stem palmetto is a Florida native plant. You might also see Cardinals feeding on native pokeweed fruit right now. Read more about National Audubon's Plants for Birds initiative on page 9. Photo by Erika Simons.

Introducing the Island Apple Snail

On September 9, 2007, while scouting the Windsor boat ramp for the following Saturday's fall migration count, I noticed four hot-pink egg masses on the stems of giant bulrush growing at the mouth of the boat channel. They reminded me of Florida Apple Snail eggs, but the individual eggs were smaller and much brighter in color than Florida Apple Snail eggs I'd seen before.

I emailed a friend of mine, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) fisheries biologist Jerry Krummrich, and asked if he could tell me what I was looking at. Jerry put me in touch with a biologist in FWC's Eustis office, who explained that I had found egg masses of the Island Apple Snail (*Pomacea maculata*), a South American species that had been introduced near Lake Okeechobee in the 1980s, but that hadn't been recorded in Alachua County, or anywhere else in the Orange Creek basin, prior to this time.

That was the end of it, as far as I knew at the time; just an interesting discovery. But the Island Apple Snail was a species of some concern to FWC, an invasive exotic with a reputation for stripping lakes of aquatic vegetation. So the Eustis office reported the sighting to the Gainesville office, and they recruited the DEP, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and UF professor Bill Haller, who studies control of invasive aquatic species, and created a task force to seek some method of control.

According to the *Gainesville Sun*, these methods included physically removing egg masses or coating them with canola oil, and treating the waters around the boat ramp with copper ("Exotic snail could harm Newnan's Lake," December 4, 2007). Treatment continued for at least one more year – over two tons of granular copper sulfate went into the lake! – before the task force threw in the towel. It failed to exterminate the snails, but it may well have slowed their expansion; I didn't find them in Hatchet Creek, at the lake's northwest corner, until June 2013, almost six years after the initial discovery at Windsor.

Since Newnans Lake communicates with Paynes Prairie via Prairie Creek, it would be natural to assume the snails would move down the Creek and invade the Prairie basin at its eastern end. But from the evidence, it didn't happen that way. The snails were first seen at the north end of the Prairie basin in 2016 by park biologist Andi Christman. What's at the north end? Sweetwater Wetlands Park.

Construction had begun on the park in August 2012, and marsh vegetation from a South Florida nursery had been planted in its three basins between fall 2013 and fall 2014. Island Apple Snails were found at Sweetwater before they were found on the Prairie, and although the nursery denied that any snails or egg masses had been imported with the plants, it seemed the most reasonable explanation of their origin.

But biologist Jonathan Mays worked on the construction site before the first plants went in, and he saw Island Apple Snails there in April 2013, "along the Sweetwater Branch inflow, mostly within Cell 1 (pre-clearing, when it was forested floodplain, during the time the creek was being rerouted through it)." How the snails got into Sweetwater Branch is anyone's guess – presumably someone emptied an aquarium into one of its urban tributaries – but the marshy cells of the park were an ideal environment for them, and their population exploded. By the winter of 2016-17, Andi Christman found them "widely established in the area south of Sweetwater Wetlands Park, around the power-line easement."



Island Apple Snail laying eggs. Photo by Jess Van Dyke, Snail Busters, LLC, Bugwood.org Licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/).

Continued on page 10

selvaverde.com




EXPLORE Selva Verde Lodge & Reserve
500 acres of vibrant tropical nature
in the heart of Sarapiquí, Costa Rica!

Wild Birds Unlimited®

Your Backyard Birdfeeding Specialist®

Birdseed • Feeders • Nesting Boxes • Nature Gifts • Optics

4212 NW 16th Blvd Gainesville
352-381-1997
gainesville.wbu.com
gainesvillewbu@hotmail.com

Mon-Sat 10-6 Sun 11-4




Blue Highway
a pizzeria
Eat well, live well...

Tioga • Micanopy • Ocala • www.BlueHighwayPizza.com

The Great Frame Up

WHERE PICTURE FRAMING IS AN ART.™



Visit our website for special offers!
4144 NW 16th Blvd. | 352-373-5400
gainesville.thegreatframeup.com

Please visit the Alachua Audubon Society's website and Facebook page for regular updates on local birds, field trips and other events. Please also thank our advertisers and tell them hello from AAS.



KESTREL
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

Native plant restoration
Biological Monitoring
Invasive/exotic plant surveys & control
Tree surveys & hazard tree evaluation

Erick D. Smith Michael Meisenburg
erick@kestreleco.com michael@kestreleco.com
(352) 380-0648 (352) 339-0701
Certified Arborist FL 5376A www.kestreleco.com



Sweetwater Branch and Inn
LODGING & EVENTS
CIRCA 1885

Conservation and Preservation is in our Hearts



The Sweet Tea
Restaurant

625 E. UNIVERSITY AVE • GAINESVILLE, FL 32601
WWW.SWEETWATERINN.COM
800.595.7760

TIDE WATER TOURS

from Cedar Key

For the ultimate birding experience by boat to remote coastal marshes or near shore islands

Call or check out our website:
352-543-9523
tidewatertours.com

Gainesville's Tree Ordinance

In 2013, the Gainesville City Commission adopted a tree ordinance following a lengthy process that involved review of urban forestry best practices and numerous public meetings that included citizens, environmental advocacy groups, city departments, Gainesville Regional Utilities, developers, landscape architects and engineers. The ordinance required that developers pay a mitigation fee if they remove High Quality Heritage Trees in developing land to incentivize preservation of large trees. The ordinance required that mitigation fees be used “for new tree plantings associated with public improvement projects and for the preservation of conservation lands but shall not be used for tree maintenance or installation of new trees that would already be required for a development.”

Although many trees have been preserved due to this ordinance, many developers prefer to pay the fee and remove trees to facilitate development. By March 2018 the tree mitigation fund contained \$2.6 million. The city Department of Doing initiated meetings in 2016 to discuss changes to the tree ordinance. These meetings included many tree advocates who opposed revisiting the issue. Subsequently, a select stakeholder group was formed and charged with developing recommendations for changes to the Land Development Code. Only one tree expert was included on the committee and no environmental organizations were represented. The League of Women Voters has reviewed the minutes of the meetings and found that often the only dissenting vote on issues was that of the tree expert.

On July 24, Bob Simons and Anne Casella of the Alachua Audubon Society (AAS) Conservation Committee met with City Commissioner Helen Warren to discuss concerns about the ordinance and the process being used to consider changes. AAS is pleased that tree mitigation funds were used to help fund the city share of the Weiss tract in northwest Gainesville that was recently purchased jointly with the county (which is consistent with the language in the current ordinance). Although we might support using some of the funds for maintenance of trees in public parks, we are opposed to using funds to pay staff or to perform tree maintenance such as trimming branches away from power lines that should be part of the operating budget. We also urged the city to schedule a meeting for public input before any changes to the tree ordinance were approved.

On July 26, the City Plan Board voted to accept the recommendations of the Tree Advisory Board rather than those of the select stakeholder group, affirming the language in the current ordinance opposing use of the mitigation fund for tree maintenance. At the August 16 City Commission meeting, Anne Casella and a number of other citizens requested that the city use tree mitigation funds as intended. The Commission subsequently voted to adopt the Tree Advisory Board and Plan Board recommendations.

By Anne Casella

Audubon's Plants for Birds Initiative

The surest way to attract birds to your backyard is to install native plants that birds need for food, nesting and shelter. But which plants do best in our area? Now you can go online to the Audubon website -www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds - click on **Search for Bird-Friendly Plants Now**, punch in your zip code, and tap into their native plant database.

Audubon is hoping that birders will plant one million native plants in their yards this year to help our winged friends. Many of the nurseries around Gainesville carry the plants listed in the Audubon database, so let's get planting and do our part!



Cedar Waxwing with sugarberry fruit. Photo by Bob Simons.

Lubee Bat Festival Coming Soon!

The Lubee Bat Conservancy is an international non-profit organization dedicated to saving bats and their habitats through research, conservation, and education with a focus on children and community engagement. Lubee undertakes and supports fundamental research, conservation science, and education programs both in the U.S. and in strategically selected regions where bat diversity is high, endangered species are on the brink of extinction, and where species and habitats fall outside protected areas. Since 1989, Lubee has been a global leader in fruit bat conservation. Lubee collaborates with the University of Florida and provides a training center for residents and students in UF's Zoological Medicine Program. They also host student interns who earn academic credit as part of the Santa Fe College Zoo Technology program. Once each year around Halloween, Lubee opens to the public for the Lubee Bat Festival. This year's **14th Annual Bat Festival** will take place **October 20th from 10am – 5pm**. Find them on Facebook.

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 Bitterns, Limpkins, and Purple Gallinules 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 entrance.

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.

NEWS FLASH! We have just seen a YouTube video about the park in which AAS President Debbie Segal is interviewed and several local birders can be spotted. See it at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83iFPm0jSWk0>

Introducing the Island Apple Snail *(Continued from page 5)*

When Hurricane Irma passed by on September 11, 2017, breaching the Prairie Creek dike and turning the Prairie into a lake, the snails completed their takeover – a pincer maneuver from both north and east. By the following summer, there was no part of Paynes Prairie that wasn't overrun with Island Apple Snails.

What have been the effects? Though Lake Munson in Tallahassee had been “completely stripped of aquatic plants” by the snails ten years earlier, nothing like that seems to be happening here (at least not so far!). I recently spoke to Ranger Danny Rohan at Sweetwater Wetlands Park, and he said that the snails mostly stay on the bottom and don't damage the living plants.

A happy by-product of the snails' population explosion has been a return of Limpkins to Alachua County. Limpkins had long been resident here, though in low numbers. But a four-year drought that began in 1998 reduced local bodies of water to a fraction of their usual sizes, all but extirpating the native apple snails the Limpkins fed on. By the time the drought ended, Limpkins had essentially vanished from the county. But the Island Apple Snails brought them back in numbers like we'd never seen before. The highest number ever counted on the Christmas Bird Count had been 7 in 1987. But on the 2015 CBC we counted 66, and on last year's we counted 235! And of course, the nesting of Snail Kites on the Prairie – there have been at least three nests this summer – is an added bonus.

It's impossible to predict what the future holds. Populations of invasive species often explode and then crash. Perhaps the snails' numbers will decline and then level off, and the Limpkins with it. Or maybe we'll learn that the snails have been doing some kind of dreadful ecological damage. Or ... well, tomorrow's problems tomorrow. Today let's just enjoy the Limpkins and Snail Kites that the snails have brought us. Thanks, snails!

By Rex Rowan

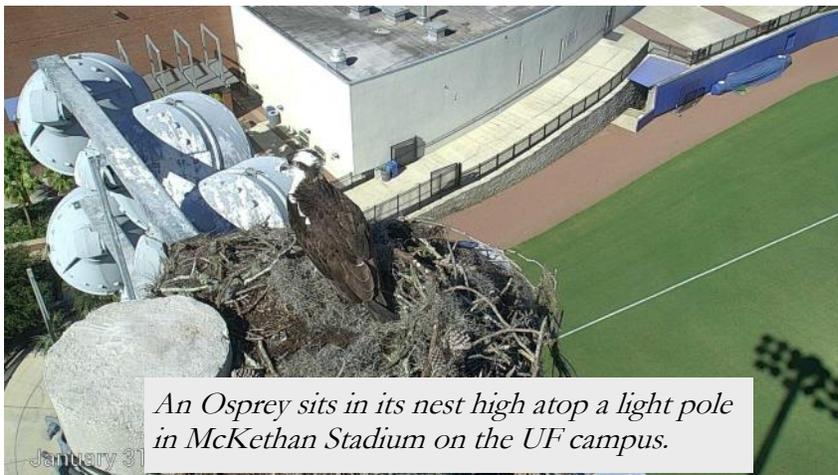
Osprey Cam Needs Help

McKethan Stadium is home not only to the 2017 College Baseball World Series Champion Florida Gators, but it is home to several families of Osprey as well. These beautiful birds have been a delightful focal point during baseball games. One particular pair, nesting atop the light pole in right field, have been the host of their own webcam since 2017. It was wildly popular with over 130 thousand streams in more than 10 countries when disaster struck, literally, in the form of lightning. The webcam has been offline since then and the equipment can't be examined until the final Osprey leaves the nest.

The UF Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation is responsible for this project but does not have funding to provide camera repair or replacement, if needed, plus maintenance and streaming fees. A

GoFundMe page has been set up to raise money to put the webcam back online. It would be a wonderful thing if our combined contributions could make this happen before the next nesting season when the Osprey pair should return and provide more entertainment and education to so many fans.

The GoFundMe site can be found at: www.gofundme.com. Use the **Search** tab at the top and enter **Osprey Cam Florida** to find the fundraiser page for this project.



An Osprey sits in its nest high atop a light pole in McKethan Stadium on the UF campus.

Songbirds by Eric: An Exhibition

Friday, Sept. 28, 2018 6:30pm-8:30pm, Santa Fe College's Center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED), 530 W. University Ave., Gainesville, FL

Don't miss the debut exhibit of up-and-coming artist Enrique "Eric" Estores. *Songbirds by Eric* features 25 colored pencil and watercolor prints from Eric's collection of more than 90 songbirds found in 13 states. Under the tutelage of Muralist/Printmaker/Painter Turbado Marabou, this young artist has taken his love of art from hobby to profession. Eric found inspiration for his songbird collection from various books on the birds of North America. Estores (who is diagnosed with Autism) quickly found his niche and works hard to perfect his ever-growing collection.

According to Turbado, "In the short time I have worked with Eric he has proven to be an exceptional student and a prolific artist. He takes his subject matter very seriously. It is a privilege to be his teacher and I see bright things for this young man's future as an artist."

In addition to the show on September 28, Eric's work will hang in the CIED lobby throughout the month of October. Prints and notecards will be on sale the night of the exhibit.

For more information contact Turbado at 352-792-8247 or dpwellsprings@gmail.com



Around the County

(Continued from Page 2)

Caspian Tern is another coastal species considered fairly rare inland, so when Danny Rohan reported one July 20th it was expected to be a “one-day-wonder”; however, the bird lingered four days at Sweetwater where it often loafed upon the dikes offering close views for birders and photographers.



Caspian Tern. Photo by Dick Bartlett.

An airboat team of researchers discovered a second Snail Kite nest July 20th on Paynes Prairie basin. It contained a single egg at that time. Another check August 8th found two nests still active. Snail Kite researcher Caroline Poli recently estimated that over the past six months there have been at least sixteen individual

Kites present on the basin. Photos of banded kites are very useful in determining where our kites are coming from so, if you've photographed one with bands that are fairly visible, please share with park rangers or post on either Alachua Audubon or Alachua County Birding Facebook pages. One recent photo showed bands identifying a kite that had fledged this March at Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area south of Lake Okeechobee!

Meanwhile, fall migration continued its upward momentum. Rex Rowan found our first returning Louisiana Waterthrush June 30th along Camps Canal, and as July unfolded there were widespread reports of Black-and-white Warblers. Our first reported Prairie Warbler was spotted at Chapman's Pond July 21st by Adam Zions. Geoff Parks had our first American Redstart at his home July 22nd, and a Kentucky Warbler was found at Poe Springs August 3rd. These species, along with Northern Water-thrush, Ovenbird, Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers, fill out the roster of warblers making their first appearances during the “early phase” of fall migration. By the first week of September we will be entering the great “middle phase” when, along with most of the above-mentioned early-birds, we will begin to see the likes of Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Blue- and Golden-winged Warblers, along with our earliest thrush, the Veery. By mid-September they will be joined by Tennessee, Magnolia, and Black-throated Blue Warblers and Swainson's Thrush. The final phase, Late September to mid-October, is the grand finale when species such as Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Gray-checked and Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Bay-breasted and Black-throated Green Warbler pass through. Some of fall's most sought-after rarities like Black-billed Cuckoo and Philadelphia Vireo will also be possible at that time. Most of Alachua Audubon's fall field trips are scheduled at locations that optimize chances of seeing some of the migrants. Hope to see you out there!

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

By Mike Manetz





Celebrating
THE YEAR of THE BIRD

EXPERT SEMINARS, FIELD TRIPS, KEYNOTE
SPEAKERS, EXHIBITS AND VENDORS!



Experience Central Florida's peak migration with **over 180 species.**



Field trips to the best wildlife sites in West Central Florida led by experienced and engaging experts.



Workshops on identification, nature photography, and conservation and research initiatives.



Birds, butterflies, dragonflies, reptiles, mammals **and more!**



Nature products, artwork, binoculars, bird boxes, unique products for wildlife lovers **available for purchase.**



Exciting **evening dinner programs** with engaging keynote speakers.



October 12-14, 2018

HCC BRANDON CAMPUS
10451 NANCY WATKINS DR. TAMPA, FL 33619

KEYNOTE SPEAKER MAC STONE, PHOTOGRAPHER OF
THE EVERGLADES, FLORIDA BAY AND AMERICA'S SWAMPS

Learn more at

fbnfestival.org



Alachua Audubon Society
P. O. Box 140464
Gainesville, Florida 32614-0464
AlachuaAudubon.org

The Crane
September–October 2018

**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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

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

Alachua Audubon (AAS) is an official chapter of **National Audubon** and **Audubon Florida**. If you belong to National Audubon and live in 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