

The Crane

Volume 60 Number 4 March – April 2019

March and April Field Trips

The Annual Schedule of 2018/2019 Alachua Audubon Field Trips is on the AAS website under Activities where you may download and print a copy. Printed copies may also be obtained at Wild Birds Unlimited. Please check the website for last-minute changes although these are rare. All trips are free and open to the public. Come join us and bring your binoculars!

Saturday, March 16, 8:00 a.m.

Paynes Prairie Main Entrance: Meet trip leader Felicia Lee at the parking area beside the ranger/pay station at the park entrance off US-441 just north of Micanopy. The woods should be green with new leaves, spring wildflowers should be blooming, and birds should be singing. Entry fee \$6 per vehicle. Difficulty: 2.

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

Morningside Nature Center (CLEP*): Meet trip leader Geoff Parks in the MNC parking lot to visit one of Gainesville’s premier nature parks featuring over six miles of trails through sandhills, flatwoods, cypress domes, and beautifully-restored native longleaf pine 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.

*Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP)

Trips noted as CLEP highlight properties that protect plant and animal life, and focus on their history and uniqueness. Trips emphasize education in addition to birding.

Saturday, March 23, 8:00 a.m.

Mill Creek Preserve: In 2002 the Alachua County Forever program made its first conservation land purchase, the Mill Creek Preserve, 1,190 acres of deep hardwood forest containing the southernmost stand of beech trees in North America. Meet county biologist Steve Hofstetter in the parking lot of Hitchcock’s grocery store on US-441 in Alachua to carpool to the Preserve. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, April 6, 7:00 a.m.

Ocala National Forest: Meet trip leader Karl Miller in the Publix parking lot at SW 34th St. and Williston Rd. 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.

Continued on page 6

Inside this issue:

Around the County	p. 2
Backyard Birding Tour Results	p. 3
Events and Programs	p. 4
Scholarship, Speakers, Book Review	p. 5
Don’t Miss the “Journey...”	p. 7
Alligator Lake Spring Festival; Poem	p. 9
Special Offer to AAS Members	p. 11
Birding Class Offered	p. 12
Cat’s Needed for Collar Study	p. 12
Limpkins Breeding Year Round?	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

President Debbie Segal 352-514-0596
Vice President Scott Flamand 352-665-7020
Secretary ... Felicia Lee 352-389-1831
Treasurer Trina Anderson 352-363-6810
Membership .. AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com
Field Trips Barbara Shea 352-514-3956
Education Emily Schwartz 352-372-0754
Birding Class ... Charlene Leonard 352-226-1214
Festivals Eric Amundson/Alan Shapiro
Conservation Bob Simons 352-372-7646
Editor/Ads Karen Brown 352-213-4257
Website Trina Anderson 352-363-6810
AAS Website www.AlachuaAudubon.org
Facebook ... www.facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/

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 May-June issue: April 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**

interesting sightings at SWP this late winter included a Western Kingbird spotted January 1st by Linda Hensley, and a White-faced Ibis photographed January 25th by Caroline Poli. Bank and Barn Swallows are both rare here in winter but were noted at SWP by several observers, and the Clay-colored Sparrow and Yellow-breasted Chat discovered there in December attracted a steady stream of local and out of town birders.

The trend of neotropical migrants lingering through winter continued this year. From eBird records alone we had at least ten different American Redstarts and two each of Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Nashville Warblers. A dozen years ago any one of these would have been big news. I would include Northern Waterthrush in this list too, but they have become so regular (at least ten this winter) they don't gain much attention. It's worth remembering they were almost unheard-of in winter just fifteen years ago. We also had at least seven Summer Tanagers lingering in the area. Once rare in this season, they now occur so predictably in winter we often joke about changing their common name. Likewise, Western Tanagers are slowly turning into regular visitors. This winter there were two, possibly three of them patronizing local feeders. The number of wintering Indigo and Painted Buntings also seems to be increasing. Speculation as to the cause of these trends can be an interesting exercise – warmer average winter temperatures, increase in the number of birders reporting their sightings, more people maintaining well-stocked feeding stations – but in the end, only the birds know why they do what they do.

We usually have one or two Vermilion Flycatchers visit us each winter. In addition to one found on the Christmas Count, Linda Hensley discovered another January 1st at Cones Dike. The Rusty Blackbirds that habituated themselves behind Magnolia Parke the past several winters were not reported there this year; however, four were seen by Jonathan Mays at Prairie Creek January 13th, and a flock of fifty was noted in the woods near the FWC Lab two days later by Caroline Poli and Joe Marchionno.

Sweetwater Wetlands Park (SWP) continued to attract more than its share of rare and unusual birds this winter. Park ranger Danny Rohan was making his early morning rounds December 17th when he noticed a small bird on the dike of Cell 2. He took a quick photo of what turned out to be the county's second-ever record of Horned Lark! Other



Clay-colored Sparrow.
Photo by Mitch Walters.

Continued on page 10

Backyard Birding Tour Breaks Record!

The Alachua Audubon Backyard Birding Tour set a new record for 2019 with over 300 tickets sold! A huge thank you to the generous people who allowed visitors to surround their homes and ask questions for six hours on Saturday, February 9th: Dede and Mike Whitehead, Laura and Patrick Hare, Marilyn Powell and Patrick Sucher, Tom Hocter, Michelle Jensen, Katy Sieving and David Pais, and Glenn and Carol Israel. Those who were still on their feet at 3 PM had the bonus of visiting the home of Sherri and Eric Amundson, where an abundance of elegant snacks and drinks awaited both tourists and AAS volunteers. All were welcome to roam the large wooded yard and marvel at the many unique bird feeders and plentiful birds at the Amundson home.

This well-planned event required the participation of almost every single AAS board member for help with staffing tables at each home and other tasks. And, as always, **Wild Birds Unlimited** lent their support with advertising and ticket-selling at the store. **But most of all, this event required Alan Shapiro's heroic effort.** It is the primary fund-raiser for AAS and Alan spends many weeks organizing the event to make it run smoothly and efficiently. We couldn't ask for more! **Thank you, Alan!! And thank you to all who attended our annual Backyard Birding Tour!!**



*Downy Woodpecker by
Tedd Greenwald.*



*Above photos by
Duncan Kabinu:
(Left to right):
Carolina Wren;
Pine Warbler;
and Eastern
Bluebird.*

*Left photo by
Tedd Greenwald:
Red-shouldered
Hawk (juvenile).*



The Whiteside home and yard were filled to capacity.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Wednesday Morning Bird Walks at Sweetwater Wetlands Park

Meet AAS volunteers each Wednesday at 8:30 am from September through May to search for wetland birds such as Least Bitterns, Purple Gallinules, and ducks 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 Williston Road. We'll meet at the covered shelter by the entrance.

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



Third Thursday Bird Walks

Alachua Audubon offers 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. If you are interested in attending this trip in March and/or April, please contact Bob Carroll for details at gatorbob23@yahoo.com

Zen Birding: A Yoga and Birding Experience

Zen Birding combines yoga and birding for a unique experience. All are welcome regardless of yoga or birding experience. We meet at 9 am on the fourth Sunday of the month at the covered pavilion at Possum Creek Park, 4009 NW 53rd Avenue in northwest Gainesville. We start with a beginning yoga workout led by a certified instructor, then enjoy a short stroll around the park to listen and watch for birds and other wildlife. The experience lasts about 90 minutes. Binoculars and yoga mats are available for loan if needed. *Previous yoga or birding experience is not required.*

Our instructor is out for March so our next meeting will be Sunday, April 28th at 9 am.

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 am.

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 **March 3rd** we will meet up at **4:45** for a **5 pm departure** to Depot Park. On **April 7th** we will meet at **6:15** for a **6:30 pm departure**. It's a lovely time of day for a leisurely stroll around the ponds to look for birds. Then we'll return to First Magnitude for an optional cold brew and good conversation.

All birding skill levels welcome.

Next event: Sunday, March 3rd at 4:45 pm



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. The expenditure of the scholarship is not limited to academics and may be used in any fashion the student finds desirable. The award will be based upon the following criteria:

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

Eligibility Requirements:

To be considered, 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. **The deadline to apply is March 22, 2019.**

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 e-mailed separately to:

scholarship@AlachuaAudubon.org

Good luck, applicants!

SPEAKER'S CORNER

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

What is Being Done to Preserve Endangered Species, Wednesday, March 20, 2019.

Aimee Pritchard will share her experiences of working in Texas to support the increased reproduction of a threatened bird.

BOOK REVIEW—The Feather Thief – Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural Heist of the Century, by Kirk Wallace Johnson. Thorndike Press, 2018.

In June 2009, after performing at London's Royal Academy of Music, American flautist Edwin Rist boarded a train for a suburban outpost of the British Museum of Natural History. The Tring Museum housed rare bird specimens whose gorgeous feathers were worth staggering amounts to those who shared Edwin's obsession: the Victorian art of salmon fly-tying. Once inside, he grabbed hundreds of bird skins – some collected 150 years earlier by a contemporary of Darwin's – and escaped into the darkness. What became of Edwin and the missing skins? Find out in this intriguing account of an unusual assortment of characters and the author's attempts to learn more about the crime.



Woman with an entire Greater Bird of Paradise mounted on her hat. Photo from Harper's Bazaar circa 1900.

“In the late 19th century, a ‘feather fever’ in fashion swept through Europe and the U.S. As a result, between 1883 and 1898, bird populations in twenty-six states dropped by nearly half. Historians have described the craze as the greatest direct slaughter of wildlife by humans in the history of the planet.” “...when the *Titanic* went down in 1912, the most valuable and highly insured merchandise in its

hold was forty crates of feathers, second only to diamonds in the commodities market.”

Field Trips

(Continued from Page 1)

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

Prairie Creek and Newnans Lake by Canoe and Kayak: Meet trip leader Matt Bruce at Kate's Fish Camp on Hawthorne Rd. at Prairie Creek. Going east on Hawthorne Rd., drive past Powers Park and 0.7 miles later, turn left just before the bridge into Kate's. If you have a canoe or kayak, bring it (\$5 launch fee); if you don't, Kate's has a limited number for rent (one-person kayak \$15, canoe \$20). Email Matt at mattbrucefl@gmail.com if you plan to rent. Depending on the water level, we'll paddle along the lakeshore and/or down Prairie Creek, looking for Prothonotary Warblers, Limpkins, and other swamp-loving birds. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, April 13, 7:00 a.m.

Bell Ridge Longleaf Wildlife and Environmental Area: Bell Ridge is a 720-acre property with a 3.1-mile trail winding through what has been described as "one of the highest quality longleaf pine sandhill forest tracts in Florida." Join trip leader Deena Mickelson in the parking lot of the Publix at NW 53rd Ave. and NW 43rd St. to carpool. We'll be looking for Summer Tanagers, Bachman's Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers, American Kestrels, and other longleaf-savannah species. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, April 14, 6:30 a.m.

Cedar Key: Meet trip leader Rex Rowan in the Target parking lot on Archer Rd. at I-75. The emphasis of this trip will be spring 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 for lunch. Difficulty: 1.

Saturday, April 20, 8:00 a.m.

Powers Park and Palm Point: Meet trip leader Barbara Shea at Powers Park on Hawthorne Rd. 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 such as American Redstart, Cape May and Blackpoll Warblers, and Scarlet Tanager. Difficulty: 1.

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

Bolen Bluff Trail: 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. We'll be watching for spring migrants such as Cape May, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Blue Warblers as well as recently-arrived residents like Summer Tanager and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Entry fee \$2 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

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

Green Acres Nature Park: Meet trip leader Noah Frade in the parking lot of the Royal Park Stadium 16 movie theater at 3702 W. Newberry Rd. The trail beginning at Green Acres Park skirts the Sugarfoot Prairie, an undisturbed expanse of woodland and swamp. The spring migration of warblers and other songbirds should be at high tide at this time, and we'll try to see as many as we can before they continue north. Difficulty: 2.

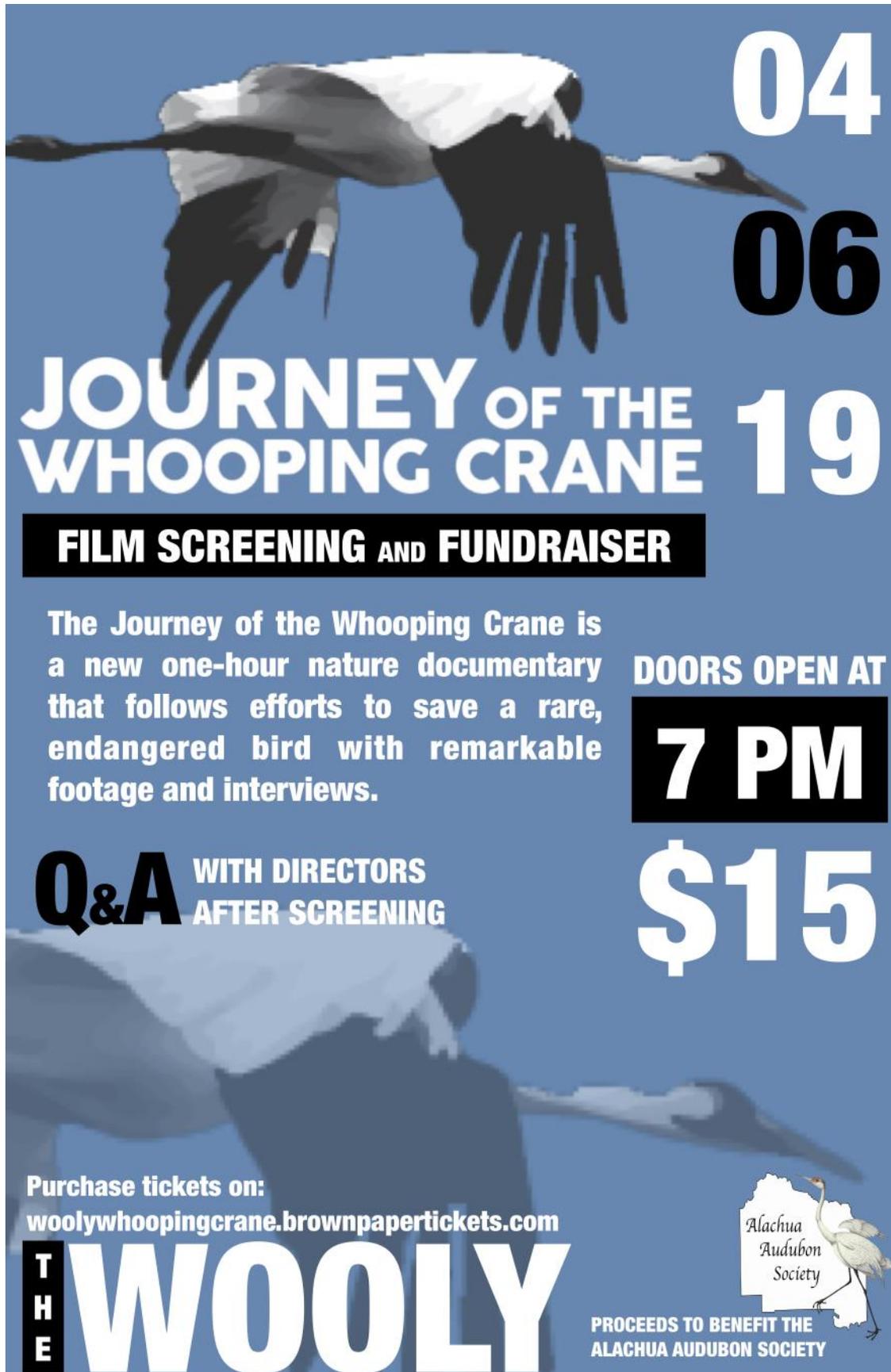
Saturday, May 4, 8:00 a.m.

Sweetwater Wetlands Park: Meet trip leader Becky Minnick in the SWP parking lot on Williston Road about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile east of US-441. By early May, our marsh birds should be involved in courtship and nesting. We'll be looking for Purple Gallinules, Least Bitterns, Limpkins, and a variety of wading birds, as well as some late migrants such as sand-pipers, swallows, and Bobolinks. Entry fee \$5 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, May 5

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 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.





**04
06
19**

JOURNEY OF THE WHOOPING CRANE

FILM SCREENING AND FUNDRAISER

The Journey of the Whooping Crane is a new one-hour nature documentary that follows efforts to save a rare, endangered bird with remarkable footage and interviews.

**DOORS OPEN AT
7 PM**

**Q&A WITH DIRECTORS
AFTER SCREENING**

\$15

Purchase tickets on:
woolywhoopingcrane.brownpapertickets.com

**T
H
E WOOLLY**

Alachua Audubon Society

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT THE ALACHUA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

SweetBerries

Eatery & Frozen Custard

505 NW 13th St
352-378-4972
Sweetberries.com

11am - 10pm Su-Thurs
11am - 11pm Fri-Sa
Frozen custard only for the
last hour each day

**Sandwiches, soups, salads, and
frozen custard ice cream.**



KESTREL
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

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

Erick D. Smith
erick@kestreleco.com
(352) 380-0648
Certified Arborist FL 5376A

Michael Meisenburg
michael@kestreleco.com
(352) 339-0701
www.kestreleco.com



Sweetwater Branch Inn
LODGING & EVENTS
CIRCA 1885



Conservation & Preservation
is in Our Hearts
Sweetwaterinn.com

Call directly
352-373-6760

625 E University Ave
Gainesville, FL 32601

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

FOUR RIVERS AUDUBON PRESENTS
the 10th annual
○ **Alligator Lake Spring Festival** ○

Featuring the "Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission"

Free; Saturday - April 13th, 2019

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Live falconry show, "Birds of the Gauntlet" at 1:00 p.m.

Join us for :

Food, Music,

Bird Walks, Butterfly Walks,

Fishing Derby,

Beginning Kayak Lessons,

FWC K-9 unit demonstrations,

Reptiles, Mammals, Birds of Prey,

Native Plants, and Garden Plants,

Environmental Displays and Vendors,

Scouts BSA Bird Study Merit Badge Workshop,

and Childrens' Activities.

Alligator Lake Park,

420 SE Alligator Glen,

Lake City Florida 32025

Bird Walks begin at 8:00 a.m.

Sign up by calling 386-466-2193

More information at:

www.fourriversaudubon.org

and Four Rivers Audubon Facebook.

Sponsors:

Bass Pro Shop

Florida Gateway College



© 2019 Robin Brimley

Sparrowing

we fan
out in
a human
line and
scrabble
through
shrubs and
high grasses
and keep
our eyes
skint
for little
brown
explosions
which might
mean vesper
or grasshopper
savannah
or song
depending on
eye ring
or size
on brow
streaked
or unstreaked
on color
bright or
duller
and habit—
an Easter
egg hunt
for the grown
up set
a feast
of conundrum
sans rabbit

by Sidney Wade

Around the County

(Continued from Page 2)

The invasion of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins this year was the most impressive I've seen in my nearly thirty years of birding here. Birds were widely reported all winter at feeders and among flocks of Goldfinches foraging in sweet-gum trees, but numbers seemed to really spike in February with several yards having five or more of each. We had several Dark-eyed Juncos in the area. Bill Pirzer had one visiting his feeders, Linda Terry had two in her yard, and another was spotted January 6th at Lake Alice by Courtenay Harding. We had pretty good numbers of wintering hummingbirds, but no unusual species were detected. Hummingbird banded Fred Bassett came to town January 20th and was able to capture and band several, but all of them were the more-or-less expected Rufous and Ruby-throated. Ron Robinson and his neighbor Tina Greenberg had multiples of both species, plus a very rare wintering Orchard Oriole in their yards.

By the time this issue of *The Crane* reaches your inbox or mailbox the beginnings of spring migration will be evident. Newly-arrived Northern Parulas will be mixing their cheery voices with those of our resident songbirds. Our more adventurous birders will be searching shady stream beds for early Louisiana Waterthrushes, and all eyes will turn upward to catch a glimpse of our first returning Swallow-tailed Kites. Hope to see you out there!

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through February 16th, 2019.

By Mike Manetz



Male (top) and female Purple Finch.
Photos by Bob Carroll.



Photo by Pat Foster-Turley.

The Aninga pictured here had the worst looking feathers I had ever seen! It was spotted at La Chua Trail on February 22nd. I sent the photo to Rex Rowan who replied, "According to Steve Howell's *Molt in North American Birds*, Anhingas are a species that undergoes a simultaneous molt of all flight feathers. Ducks do it too, and supposedly loons, rails, and Least Bitterns. You can see that all the new flight feathers are coming in."

By Karen Brown

Special Offer from Local Native Plant Society Chapter

The Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) is celebrating 30 years of native plant sales this Spring! Their Spring sale will be a special event with music, food, nature walks, and more at Morningside Nature Center. Because Alachua Audubon Society (AAS) has been a good native plant advocate and has been educating the public about the connection between native plants and birds, the Paynes Prairie Chapter has extended a special invitation to AAS members to attend the Friday night sale, normally open only to members of FNPS or Friends of Nature Parks. This is a great opportunity to preview the multitude of native plants for sale from local growers, get first pick of the plants you want, and make your purchases without the crowds on Saturday.

The Friday afternoon sale will be April 19 from 4:30 to 6:30.

If you are a paid member of AAS and wish to take advantage of this special invitation, please send an email to AlachuaAudubon@gmail.com with a message that you would like to attend the FNPS event on Friday afternoon. Your name will be put on a list and you will be checked in upon your arrival at Morningside. We hope to see you there!



*Cardinal eating native pokeweed fruit.
Photo by Erika Simons.*

Pints and Predators Event Soars!

Bubba Scales of **Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU)** put the estimate of attendees at the Fifth Annual Pints and Predators event at somewhere between 3000-4000. He said, “We earned more than ever for the rehabbers. Sunrise [Wildlife Rehabilitation] gave me some perspective on the effectiveness of this event as a fundraiser. The money people donated on Saturday was enough to feed all of their educational owls for about a year and half.” WBU organizes the annual event as a benefit for wildlife rehabilitators and a family-friendly educational presentation. It features live birds of prey and other wild animals and is hosted by **First Magnitude Brewery**.

The licensed rehabilitators who participated were **Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation, Florida Wildlife Care, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, A Wing and a Prayer Bird Conservation, Lubee Bat Conservancy, Ashton Biological Preserve, and The Rattlesnake Conservancy**. Exhibitors/artists were Michael Allard Photography, Joyce Lotinville Quilting, Bernadette King Spirit Animal Reader and Alachua Audubon Society.

If you haven't been to the WBU Nature Shop, it's the place to go for everything you need to enjoy birds in your yard, plus many other fun and unusual bird-related items. They're also very friendly, knowledgeable and have all the latest local birding information. Visit their website or find them on Facebook.

And stay tuned for next year's event on Saturday, February 15, 2020.



Winston the Eastern Screech Owl.



Christina from SWR with Ruby Begonia, an Eastern Screech Owl.



Alan and Ellen Shapiro set up a popular children's table at the AAS booth.

Birding Class Offered at Santa Fe College

Alachua Audubon offers birding classes two to three times per year through the Santa Fe College Community Education Program. The next class will be held during the Spring 2019 session by AAS board members Charlene Leonard and Cindy Boyd. The dates are March 30 – May 4 with no class Easter weekend (April 20). Typically the Santa Fe website will show the Spring schedule 2-3 weeks prior to the class. Look for the notice on the Santa Fe College Community Education website in March: www.sfcollege.edu/cied/communityed/index

Most recently, volunteer instructors Charlene Leonard and Cindy Boyd taught the Fall class with volunteer trip leaders Ron Robinson, Matt Bruce, Glenn Israel, Darrell and Sue Hartman taking them on Saturday morning outings to Lake Alice, Sweetwater Wetlands Park, Chapman's Pond, Bolen Bluff and Cedar Key. Each of these experts graciously spent a Saturday helping 13 aspiring birders learn to find, identify and enjoy birds, and Charlene and Cindy truly appreciate their assistance with the class.

Class participants saw most of the species expected in these habitats and a few nice surprises including a greenie (female) Painted Bunting and a few Northern Waterthrush at Chapman's Pond, a nice preening Clapper Rail and a Broad-winged Hawk in Cedar Key.

Do cats hunt birds in your neighborhood?

Abby Powell, Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida, needs 50 cat participants in order to test the effectiveness of a novel cat collar in preventing bird deaths. If you know of a cat that goes outside and brings back unwanted feathered "gifts," please have the cat's owner contact her by March 15th. The cat would wear the collar for two 2-week on and 2-week off periods over 8 weeks while continuing its daily routine. Cat owners must be able to collect, bag and label any dead birds. Specimens will be collected and identified. The collar may be kept at the end of the study. Potential participants can learn more about the collar by going to BirdsBeSafe.com. *Note: this is not an endorsement of this product but a study of its effectiveness.* Contact Abby Powell at abbypowell@ufl.edu.



*Ruby-crowned Kinglet.
Photo by Tom Tompkins.*

Late Season Breeding of Limpkins

A late November brood of downy Limpkin chicks at Sweetwater Wetlands Park was noted by Audubon member Tom Wronski, who was puzzled by the seasonal lateness of the breeding. His companion on the outing, John Hintermister, was also surprised. Tom's photos were sent to Rex Rowan, who noted that at least two broods had been observed in mid-November. Anyone who has been to the park recently can't help but notice the abundance of Limpkins. There were 544 Limpkins counted on this year's Christmas Bird Count, "smashing the all-time high count for the US of 235 (set by us in 2017)." Bob Simons, who subscribes to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "The Birds of North America," found that most of the data on the seasonal breeding of Limpkins is from south Florida, where the timing is mostly determined by water levels and the availability of apple snails. There is often more than one clutch, with second and even third clutches recorded. The breeding season usually starts in January, or more often February, and goes through August. However, extra seasonal breeding has been observed in every month of the year. Bob suggests that breeding of Limpkins is timed by food availability and water levels, and since both have been constant here in Alachua County for the past two years, breeding might be expected to occur any time of year. And indeed, it has.



Photo by Pat Foster-Turley.



Limpkin photos by Tom Wronski.



The Cornell Lab of Ornithology now provides online access to the *Birds of North America* by subscription. It is considered the definitive source of life history information for the more than 760 species of birds that breed in Canada and the United States (including Hawaii). Each species account is authored by an expert on that species and includes information on identification, distribution, behavior, breeding biology, habitat, food habits, migration, conservation and populations. Each species account includes multiple photos with identification tips, examples of sounds, and behavioral videos as well as a comprehensive bibliography of published research. As an online resource, BNA is continually updated.

Besides a new mobile device compatible page design [viewable on your phone], the new *Birds of North America* includes significantly more photos, videos and audio selections through the Macaulay Library (the world's largest and oldest scientific archive of biodiversity photos, videos and audio recordings). It also now includes eBird data for more precise species distribution information and migration animations. Learn more at <https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/home>. Print editions are also available.

Compiled by Karen Brown

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

The Crane
March – April 2019

**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)

New! Join online with PayPal at
www.alachuaaudubon.org/membership/
or send your application and 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 visit the website where you may use PayPal to pay by credit card. You may also complete the membership form to the left, or print a form at [Alachua Audubon.org/Membership](http://AlachuaAudubon.org/Membership). Choose the membership 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. Your introductory membership (\$20 or more) 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