



# The Crane

Volume 61 Number 1 Sept – Oct 2019

## September and October Field Trips

*The Fall 2019 Alachua Audubon Field Trips Schedule is now on the AAS web site (AlachuaAudubon.org). Printed copies may be obtained at Wild Birds Unlimited and Sweetwater Wetlands Park.*

### Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP)

Trips designated CLEP are meant to bring attention to local land-conservation efforts, highlighting properties that have been protected because of their ecological value and/or their importance to water resources. CLEP trips are designed to be educational experiences and the emphasis will be on habitats and natural history in addition to birds.

**Saturday, September 7, 2019, 7:00 a.m.**

#### **Flagler Sod Fields**

Meet trip leader Steven Goodman in the Publix parking lot at NW 39th Ave. and NW 13th St. to carpool and-convoy to these agricultural fields about 20 miles southeast of Palatka in search of rarely-seen fall migrants like Upland Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and American Golden-Plover (AKA “grasspipers”). Bring water, lunch, and insect repellent. Difficulty: 1.

**Saturday, September 14, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

#### **Loblolly Woods Nature Park**

Meet trip leaders Ben and Sam Ewing in the parking lot on NW 34th St. directly opposite NW 5th Ave. The diversity of trees growing in the bottomland surrounding Hogtown and Possum Creeks creates a great hunting ground – for birds seeking fuel for the next leg of their migratory flight, and for birders in search of those migrants. Difficulty: 2.

*Note: Cedar Key trip date differs from printed listing.*

**Sunday, September 15, 2:00 p.m.**

#### **Cedar Key by Boat (sign-up required)**

Join trip leaders Scott Flamand and Jonathan Varol 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 21, 2019, 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, but we'll be looking at everything – trees, wildflowers, insects, reptiles, whatever we find. Difficulty: 3.

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**Trip Difficulty 1:** Trip within easy access to the vehicle and/or level terrain one; mile or less. **2:** May involve uneven terrain; one to two miles. **3:** May involve elevation change, uneven terrain, and/or greater than two miles.

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*Alachua Audubon Society's  
mission is to foster appreciation  
and knowledge of birds and  
other native wildlife, to protect  
and restore wildlife populations  
and their habitats, and  
to promote sustainable use  
of natural resources.*

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

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](mailto:karenpbrown1953@gmail.com)



As the dust was settling from the June Challenge, fall migrants were beginning to slip into the county. As usual, Louisiana Waterthrush was the first to check in. Two early reports were literally backyard birds – one at the bird-bath of Carol Willis July 3<sup>rd</sup> and the other a window-collision rescued by Josh Watson July 12<sup>th</sup>. (The bird

recovered and flew on its way.) Also on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Adam Kent, Ben Ewing, and Sam Ewing spotted an American Redstart at Palm Point, setting a new early fall record for that species. Chris Anderson had our first reported Black-and-White Warbler July 6<sup>th</sup> at San Felasco Hammock, Felicia Lee found our first Prairie Warbler July 21<sup>st</sup> at La Chua Trail, and two days later Rex Rowan and Debbie Segal noted an early returning Yellow Warbler along the margins of Orange Lake. Jen Donsky had two Ovenbirds July 30<sup>th</sup>, and Kentucky Warbler, one of the more sought-after birds of fall, returned right on time at mid-August, reported by several observers at San Felasco Hammock.

Shorebird migration remained paltry. Water levels were beginning to drop a little the first two weeks of August, but at mid-month several successive days of rain drowned any hopes of seeing much in the way of peeps and pipers. At the time of this writing there were only two fall reports of individual Pectoral Sandpipers, zero Greater or Lesser Yellowlegs, and not enough of usually numerous Least Sandpipers to use the word “flock”.

We did have some exciting and unusual summer visitors from the coast. A Willet showed up at Sweetwater Wetlands Park (SWP) July 4<sup>th</sup> and was photographed by Hannah O'Malley. Jonathan Mays discovered a Least Tern at Depot Park July 15<sup>th</sup>, and the following day Deena Mickelson noted a Brown Pelican at Lake Wauberg. A Caspian Tern visited SWP August 9<sup>th</sup>, disappeared, and then showed up again on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The same day, Gina and Adam Kent were driving across Paynes Prairie along US 441 and were astonished to see a Black Skimmer flying across the basin. Two days later Tim Hardin discovered a Black Tern doing some rainy-day skimming over the catchment pond at SWP.

Fulvous Whistling Duck was a somewhat regular visitor in the county for a brief period in the 1960s and 70s, but for unknown reasons their range retracted southward. So, when Linda Hensley reported one June 26<sup>th</sup> on Kanapaha Prairie, it was tantalizing to speculate on the possible return of this lovely duck as a breeding bird (Florida breeding records indicate peak nesting time middle to late June). Unfortunately, there were no further sightings, but access to the prairie is restricted and a single nesting pair could be overlooked.

Snail Kites can nest nearly any time of the year if conditions are favorable, but I think it's safe to say that we are past the peak of their

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## New Season of Weekend Field Trips Begins!

The new season of weekend field trips begins September 7th! 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 Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) managed properties such as the Sante Fe River Preserve – South Trail. Find birds within Gainesville's extensive park system starting at Loblolly Woods Nature Park. Learn about local conservation with the Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP) trips to Barr Hammock Woodlands Trail and Mill Creek Preserve.

Special leaders have been selected for each trip and there is always something new to learn from these amazing 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.

### New Field Trip Schedule Available

A printed field trip schedule for September to December 2019 can now be picked up from Wild Birds Unlimited. You may also download a printable version from [AlachuaAudubon.org](http://AlachuaAudubon.org): click on Activities at the top, choose Field Trips from the dropdown box, and click on "download this pdf." Note that the calendar covers only the first half of our field trip season (September-December). The schedule for the second half (January-June) will be available in December. There is a more detailed trip-by-trip calendar on the website in the right sidebar; click on any trip to learn more. 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.

By Barbara Shea

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## FLORIDA BIRDING & NATURE FESTIVAL

**October 17-20, 2019 in West Central Florida  
Hillsborough Community College - Brandon**

Come celebrate the wonders of the birds, wildlife, and natural lands that we enjoy in West Central Florida. Field and boat trips - many to places not otherwise accessible to the public, expert seminars and a special turtle symposium, a nature expo, and outstanding keynote events.

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**Dr. Mark Madison**—U.S. FWS National Historian—Friday Keynote

**Denver Holt**—Owl Research Institute—Thursday Keynote

*Advance tickets now on sale. Visit the website at [floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org/](http://floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org/)*

***SAVE THE DATE  
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Tickets will be available in December for \$15.00 at  
***Wild Birds Unlimited***, 4121 NW 16<sup>th</sup> Boulevard  
Contact Alan Shapiro with questions at  
352-317-0089 or [alangrandiflora@gmail.com](mailto:alangrandiflora@gmail.com)





*Ruby-throated Hummingbird at a butterflyweed. Photo: Dave Maslowski.*

## Plants for Birds

### A program of Audubon's Coleman and Susan Burke Center for Native Plants

The National Audubon Society has provided an excellent source for bird-friendly plant sources with their [Plants for Birds](#) program. Among the reading choices is [Why Native Plants are Better for Birds and People](#). This selection states that, “Your garden is your outdoor sanctuary. With some careful plant choices, it can be a haven for native birds as well. Landscaped with native species, your yard, patio, or balcony becomes a vital recharge station for birds passing through—and a sanctuary for—nesting and overwintering birds. Each patch of restored native habitat is a patch in the frayed fabric of the ecosystem in which it lies. By landscaping with native plants, we can turn a patchwork of green spaces into a quilt of restored habitat. To survive, native birds need native plants and the insects that have co-evolved with them. Most landscaping plants available in nurseries are exotic species from other countries. Many are prized for qualities that make them poor food sources for native birds—like having leaves that are unpalatable to native insects and caterpillars. With 96 percent of all terrestrial bird species in North America feeding insects to their young, planting insect-proof exotic plants is like serving up plastic food. Research by entomologist Doug Tallamy has shown that native oaks support more than 550 different species of butterflies and moths alone. The non-native ginkgo tree supports just 5.”

To use the Plants for Birds program, go to the website at [Audubon.org/PlantsforBirds](http://Audubon.org/PlantsforBirds) and enter your zip code to find plants for your location. Since native plants are adapted to local rain and soil conditions, they generally require less upkeep, therefore helping the environment and saving you time, water, and money. The key to getting started is picking the right plants for your area. You can filter your results for type of plant (tree, shrub, evergreen, annual, succulent, etc.), the types of birds you want to attract (finches, sparrows, woodpeckers), all plant resources (fruit, nectar, seeds, nuts), and more. Each plant listed in your search has both the common and scientific names, a description, attributes (shrub, fruit, butterflies, caterpillars), and birds it is likely to attract (Orioles, Cardinals and Grosbeaks, etc). Perhaps use these remaining dog days of summer to start your plant list for the fall planting season, and the spring season to follow.

*(Excerpted from National Audubon's [Plants for Birds](#) website.)*

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Look for Alachua Audubon on Facebook!  
Also see Alachua County Birding and the Alachua County Rare Bird Alert on Facebook.




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**Sweetwater Wetlands Park &  
Alachua Audubon Society**  
Present  
**Wednesday Bird  
Walks at the Wetlands**



**When:** Every Wednesday @ 8:30 am  
from September - May

**Where:** Sweetwater Wetlands Park -  
**Entrance Pavilion**

Walks are free with park admission fee (\$5/vehicle)  
Bring water, binoculars, sunscreen, and walking shoes



# 2019 Audubon Assembly

## October 24-26, 2019

Join us in Gainesville for Florida's premier conservation gathering, where grassroots leaders from around the state join Audubon's professional staff and partners to grow their knowledge and skills to protect Florida's precious natural resources.

**Location:** Hilton University of Florida Conference Center Gainesville  
1714 SW 34th St., Gainesville, FL

**Theme:** Water and Land for Florida's Future: Science Based Strategies for Clean Water and Healthy Watersheds

**Keynote Speaker:** State of Florida Chief Science Officer Dr. Tom Frazer

Registration is open! Visit the website for updates:

[fl.audubon.org/about-us/audubon-assembly](http://fl.audubon.org/about-us/audubon-assembly)

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### Around the County

(Continued from page 2)

season. From the six airboat surveys conducted, an astonishing fifty-five nests were detected on the basin, and a high count of...wait for it...eighty-four individual kites! According to researcher Caroline Poli, this was a significant portion of Snail Kite nesting activity *in the state* this year. Birds that chose to spend much of the breeding season here were from a variety of locations farther south, including the Lake Kissimmee area, the upper St. Johns watershed, Lake Okeechobee, and the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area.

By the time this issue of *The Crane* reaches your inbox or mailbox, fall migration will still be gearing up. Veerys will have arrived, and we will be on the lookout for Blue-winged, Golden-winged, and Blackburnian Warblers. Kentucky Warbler and the rarer Cerulean Warbler will still be possible. Mid-September will bring Swainson's Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and a fresh assortment of warblers including Black-throated Blue, Magnolia, and Tennessee. Hope to see you out there!

Thanks to all who shared their sightings through August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

By Mike Manetz



Suspect a crime against Florida's birds, fish, wildlife or natural resources? See an injured animal? Report incidents to FWC's [Wildlife Alert Reward Program](#) online or call 888-404-3922. From your cell phone call \*FWC or #FWC, or send a text to [Tip@MyFWC.com](mailto:Tip@MyFWC.com). Learn more at [MyFWC/contact/wildlife-alert](http://MyFWC/contact/wildlife-alert).

## 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](http://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.

## 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 a.m. on the fourth Sunday of the month at the covered pavilion at Possum Creek Park, 4009 NW 53<sup>rd</sup> 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 next meetings will be on Sundays, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> and Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.**



*Great Blue Heron—doing yoga perhaps? Photo by Trina Anderson.*

## SPEAKER'S CORNER

### AAS Library Programs - New Hours!

Millhopper Library where our Audubon programs are held has changed their evening hours. They are now closing at 8:00 p.m. This means that evening programs will now begin at 6:30 p.m. with socializing starting at 6:00 p.m. Kindly make note of this on your calendar and add the upcoming programs:

### Safari to Namibia and Beyond

Tuesday, November 5, 2019.

Adam and Gina Kent will share photos and stories from their three-week trip through Southern Africa. This presentation will highlight birds and other wildlife from five countries, three World Heritage sites, and countless beautiful landscapes.

### Birding Alaska, Tuesday, December 3, 2019.

Alaska is a destination of unparalleled scenery and exciting birds and wildlife. Anne Casella will give a presentation based on her 12-day birding trip to Nome, Denali and Seward in June 2018.

## 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 St. Arrive early as parking can be scarce. There will be an Alachua Audubon table set up and loaner binoculars will be available. On **September 1<sup>st</sup>** we will meet up at **6:15** for a **6:30 p.m. departure** to Depot Park. On **October 6<sup>th</sup>** we will meet at **5:45** for a **6:00 p.m. 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 are welcome!*

**Next event: Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:15 p.m.**



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## Field Trips

(Continued from Page 1)

**Saturday, September 28, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

### **San Felasco Hammock**

Meet trip leader Steve Hofstetter in the trailhead parking lot on Millhopper Rd. 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 29, 2019, 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, October 5, 2019, 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. Trip leader Rex Rowan 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 6, 2019, 6:30 a.m.**

### **Dixie Mainline Trail**

Meet trip leader Steven Goodman in the Publix parking lot at Newberry Road and NW 143rd Street (Jonesville) to carpool/convoy to this coastal Dixie County site within the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge. The Mainline is a nine-mile driving trail that passes through hardwoods, pinewoods, swamps, and marshes. There are plenty of spots to park the cars and look for fall migrants. We'll end the trip at beautiful Shired Island on the Gulf of Mexico. Bring water, lunch, and insect repellent. Difficulty: 1.

**Saturday, October 12, 2019, 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. Trip leader Rex Rowan 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 should be around. Difficulty level: 3.

**Sunday, October 13, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

### **Bolen Bluff Trail**

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

**Saturday, October 19, 2019, 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 20, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

### **Mill Creek Preserve (CLEP)**

Meet county biologist Andi Christman in the preserve parking lot on County Road 326 0.3 mile west of its junction with County Road 241 (in Google Maps, 14505 NW CR 236, Alachua). This was the first purchase of the Alachua County Forever program: 1,190 acres of deep hardwood forest containing the southernmost stand of beech trees in North America. We'll walk through this beautiful and ecologically valuable tract of conservation land, enjoying its flora and fauna and hopefully enjoying some beautiful fall weather as well. Difficulty: 3.

*Continued on page 11*

## Field Trips

(Continued from page 10)

**Sunday, October 27, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

### Chapmans Pond and Nature Trails

Meet trip leader Trina Anderson at the grassy parking lot next to Chapmans Pond. We will start by scanning the pond of this water treatment facility for water birds, swallows and flycatchers. Then we will hike the surrounding 1.5 miles of trail past other water features through dry oak woods and open mowed lawns seeking American Kestrel and late migrants. Difficulty: 2.

**Saturday, November 2, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

### La Chua Trail / Sparrow Alley

Meet trip leader Caroline Poli at the trailhead on Camp Ranch Rd. La Chua is one of the best spots for close study of a variety of sparrows and other brush-loving birds. Entry fee \$4 per vehicle. Difficulty: 3.

**Saturday, November 9, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

### Hague Dairy

Meet trip leader Howard Adams at the Tag Agency on NW 34th St. just south of US-441 to carpool 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.

**Sunday, November 10, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

### Camps Canal / Cones Dike

Meet trip leader Rex Rowan at Powers Park to carpool to the Camps Canal gate, where parking is limited. Paynes Prairie has given Alachua Audubon access from Camps Canal through to Cones Dike, which extends out into the rarely visited marshes on the east side of Paynes Prairie. We'll be looking primarily for sparrows and other winter birds. Difficulty: 3.

## Weekday Birding with Bob!

Alachua Audubon offers mid-week bird walks led by Bob Carroll for anyone who would like to attend. Lunch is an option for those who would enjoy extra socializing. The next trip will be on Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Bob will send out details as the date approaches. Please contact Bob if you are interested at [gatorbob23@yahoo.com](mailto:gatorbob23@yahoo.com).

## Alachua Audubon 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 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.

For more information, please visit our website at [AlachuaAudubon.org/scholarship/](http://AlachuaAudubon.org/scholarship/)

## Annual Lubee Bat Festival

**L**ubee Bat Conservancy is excited to welcome you to our **15th Annual Florida Bat Festival** to be held **Saturday, October 26th**, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This year, Lubee is celebrating our 30th anniversary! Come celebrate with us as we continue to spread bat conservation awareness and enjoy all the batty festivities! Our family friendly festival promises to be an even bigger, more fun-filled event this year.

ADMISSION/DONATION:  
\$5 AGES 5-12 | \$8 AGES 13 & up  
KIDS 4 AND UNDER FREE



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.

**WE HOPE TO  
SEE YOU  
THERE!!**



Alachua Audubon Society  
P. O. Box 140464  
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[AlachuaAudubon.org](http://AlachuaAudubon.org)

*The Crane*  
Sept – Oct 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

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