

The Crane

Volume 61 Number 2 Nov – Dec 2019

November and December Field Trips

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

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

La Chua Trail / Sparrow Alley

Meet trip leader Caroline Poli at the trailhead on Camp Ranch Road. 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 Street 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.



*Don't miss special events coming up!
Check out pages 9, 10 & 11!*

Saturday, November 23, 2019, 8:00 a.m.

Kanapaha Prairie

Meet trip leader Rex Rowan in the Publix parking lot at the corner of Tower Road (SW 75th Street) and Archer Road. The Kanapaha Prairie, a 700-acre grassland dotted with marshy ponds, is co-owned by The Conservation Fund and several surrounding land-owners. 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. Sandhill Cranes may have arrived by now, and they like the Kanapaha Prairie. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, November 30, 2019, 8:00 a.m.

Levy Lake Loop

Meet field trip leader Matt Bruce for a walk along the Levy Lake dike trail at Barr Hammock Preserve. You'll have the option to walk the whole 6.5-mile loop, but Matt will announce a good turn-around point for those who don't want to go the whole way. We'll be birding

Continued on page 10

Inside this issue:

Around the County	p. 2
Audubon Florida comes to Gainesville	p. 3
Events and Programs	p. 4-5
Sparrows and more Sparrows	p. 6-7
Audubon FL Eagle Watch Program	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 greater than two miles.

Alachua Audubon Officers &
Chairpersons of
Standing Committees

PresidentDebbie 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 TripsBarbara Shea 352-514-3956
Education Emily Schwartz 352-372-0754
Birding Class ... Charlene Leonard 352-226-1214
Festivals Eric Amundson/Alan Shapiro
ConservationBob Simons 352-372-7646
Editor/AdsKaren Brown 352-213-4257
Website Trina Anderson 352-363-6810
AAS Websitewww.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
Jan-Feb issue: December 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



Hot and humid conditions made birding a labor of love through the first week of October, and while warblers seemed at times few and far between, those birders who persisted were rewarded. Geoff Parks found our only Cerulean Warbler this fall on August 20th at Loblolly Nature Center. There were a minimum of

nine different Golden-winged Warblers reported, and Blue-winged Warblers seemed a little more common than usual with at least thirty different individuals accounted for. A Swainson's Warbler was a good find at Poe Springs September 12th. Luckily for several area birders it stuck around in the same spot for over a week. There were two Wilson's Warblers reported. One of these was first seen October 4th by Harrison Jones and Mitch Walters at the exact same spot near the entrance of Bolen Bluff where one had wintered the previous four years. Wilson's Warblers will often return to the same wintering locations from one year to the next. If we assume this year's bird is the same individual, five years in a row at the same location would have to be a record! The other Wilson's was found at Chapmans Pond October 10th by Trina Anderson and Barbara Shea. Chapmans has been another favored wintering spot for this species over the last several years.

Normally a cold front the first week of October brings in new birds and ushers in the grand finale of fall migration. The front didn't materialize until after mid-month, but apparently the birds got tired of waiting. By October 10th warblers were becoming plentiful, especially American Redstarts. Several parties were reporting warbler species in the double-digits, with twenty or more Redstarts tallied at three different locations. Also on the 10th Frank Goodwin found a rare-in-fall Philadelphia Vireo. An Alachua Audubon field trip to Bolen Bluff October 13th accounted for seventeen warblers species, including Black-throated Green, a first-of-season Bay-breasted, the above-mentioned Wilson's Warbler, and over fifty Redstarts! Rex Rowan added another rarity to the fall list by discovering a Nashville Warbler October 15th at Sweetwater Wetlands Park.

The long awaited cold (or cool, if you prefer) front passed during the night of October 16th and made the following several days outstanding for migrants. Harrison Jones covered Bolen Bluff on the 17th and found nineteen species of warblers, including one of three Golden-winged Warblers that would be seen that day. The other two were noted at San Felasco Hammock and Newnans Lake State Forest. The same morning, Debbie Segal reported a minimum of twenty Tennessee Warblers and at least eleven Rose-breasted Grosbeaks on her property north of Gainesville, and Bob Wallace got a quick look at a super-rare Connecticut Warbler near Alachua. On the 18th a party at Bolen Bluff saw twenty

Continued on page 8

Audubon Florida Celebrates Conservation and Birds in Gainesville

The 2019 Audubon Assembly, Audubon Florida's premier conservation gathering, was held in Gainesville October 24–26. The theme for this year's assembly was Water and Land for Florida's Future: Science-based strategies for clean water and healthy watersheds. The Alachua Audubon Society served as the host chapter and assisted Audubon Florida staff with many tasks. The Assembly kicked off on Thursday evening with a Birds and Brews gathering at First Magnitude Brewery and a birding stroll to nearby Depot Park. Thanks to Birds and Brews leaders Michael Brock, Rex Rowan, Adam Kent, Jonathan Mays, Mike Manetz, and Felicia Lee for guiding the large group in search of afternoon birds. And kudos to Rex for spotting a Painted Bunting during the birding stroll. Eight field trips convened the next morning and all were led by Alachua Audubon volunteers. We are grateful to Adam Zions, Alan Shapiro, Jonathan Mays, Chip Deutsch, Mitch Walters, Adam Kent, Mike Manetz, Rex Rowan, Steve Hoffstetter, Camya Robbins, and Debbie Segal for leading the bird walks and helping to showcase Alachua County's conservation lands to Audubon visitors from around the state.

Alachua Audubon board members Anne Casella, Felicia Lee, Jonathan Varol, Eric Amundson and Christina Opett also made a one-year commitment as mentors in the Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI). Audubon's CLI offers year-long leadership, networking, training, and volunteer opportunities for selected college students to learn and grow with Audubon. Each volunteer board member was paired with a student to network, share, and learn from each other over the next year.

City Commissioner (and past president of Alachua Audubon Society) Helen Warren provided remarks at the welcome luncheon preceding the learning sessions. One of the values of the Assembly is to learn of conservation and environmental education projects that other Audubon chapters are doing throughout the state and to gather ideas for our own chapter. In addition, three educational programs were presented at the Assembly: Treatment Wetlands: Bird Habitat That Improves Water Quality; Trees, Cows, and Wetlands: The Role of Agriculture in Florida's Watersheds; and Community Science Advocates. Alachua Audubon Society members Geoff Parks, Bob Knight, and Debbie Segal were among the panel experts who gave presentations during these programs. Dr. Tom Frazer, the first Chief Science Officer for the State of Florida, was the keynote speaker at the evening banquet. Awards were presented to individuals and Audubon chapters for outstanding achievements. Our neighboring Audubon chapter, Marion Audubon, was awarded the Outstanding Education Program Award for their commitment to creating a diverse conservation community with their program of introducing college students from nearby Central Florida College to birds and conservation. Joyce King from nearby Santa Fe Audubon in Melrose was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her many decades of service to birds and conservation. Joyce received a standing ovation.

Eric Amundson, Karen Brown, Alan Shapiro, Anne Casella, Jonathan Varol, and Bob Simons spent many hours preparing Alachua Audubon's new booth, exhibits, and flyers for the Assembly. The new materials were popular among attendees, and many of the educational flyers describing the soon-to-fledge bird banding station, sparrow habitat restoration project, and backyard birding tour were of great interest.

Again, many thanks to all the people from Alachua Audubon Society who volunteered their time and efforts in making the Assembly such a success.

Eastern Screech Owl on display from the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. Photo by Karen Brown.



The John Hintermister High School Scholarship Program

To encourage youth activities consistent with the Alachua Audubon Society mission, AAS is pleased to announce the availability of scholarships (\$300) to Alachua County high school seniors who demonstrate an interest in wildlife or conservation. The expenditure of scholarship funds is not limited to academics and may be used however the student wishes. The number of awards may vary annually.

The award will be based upon the following criteria:

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

To be considered for a scholarship, an applicant must:

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

To learn more about the program and to apply online, go to www.alachuaaudubon.org/scholarship/.

The deadline to apply is March 31, 2020.
Scholarships will be awarded in April 2020.

Good luck, applicants!

Christmas Bird Counts Coming Up!

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is an annual census of birds administered by the National Audubon Society. CBCs are intense, day-long surveys for experienced birders.

Gainesville: Sunday, Dec. 15 Contact Andy Kratter at kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu, 352-226-2462 or Bob Carroll at gatorbob23@yahoo.com, 352-281-3616.

Ichetucknee/Santa Fe/O'Leno: Tuesday, Dec. 17. Contact Ginger Morgan at 386-586-8249 or ginger.morgan@myfwc.com Volunteers needed.

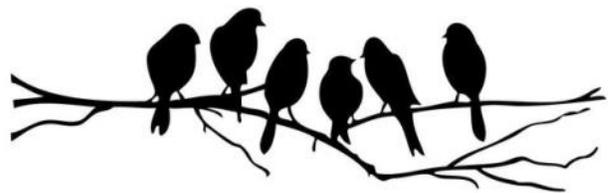
Melrose: Thursday, Dec. 19. Contact Joyce King at sjoyceking@comcast.net or 352-475-1999. Volunteers needed.

Lake City: Saturday, Dec. 28. Contact Valerie Thomas at v.thomas57@gmail.com or 386-466-2193. Volunteers needed.

Cedar Key Thursday, Jan. 2. Contact Ron Christian at ronrun@embarqmail.com or 850-567-0490.

Weekday Birding with Bob!

Alachua Audubon offers mid-week bird walks led by Bob Carroll. Lunch is an option for those who would enjoy extra socializing. The next trip will be on Thursday, November 21st with the location to be announced. Bob will send out details as the date approaches. Please contact Bob if you are interested at gatorbob23@yahoo.com or 352-281-3616.



College Student?

Check out the GREBES—a club focused on teaching college students about the importance and beauty of the avian world. University of Florida and Santa Fe students are eligible to join. Find them on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/ufGREBE/

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.

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 next meetings will be on Sundays, Nov. 24th and Dec. 22nd at 9:00 am.



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

SPEAKER'S CORNER

AAS Programs at Millhopper Library - New Time!
Programs start at 6:30 pm., Social time at 6:00 pm.

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 endless 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 last summer.

Urban Mockingbird Song Diversity, Wednesday, January 15, 2020

The Northern Mockingbird is our state bird and Floridians love hearing its rich repertoire of calls and songs. UF researcher Mitch Walters is studying this bird in Gainesville neighborhoods. Is there more song diversity in urban or rural Mockingbirds?

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 Brewing Company**, 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 **November 3rd** we will meet up at **4:15** for a **4:30 pm departure** to Depot Park. On **December 1st** we will meet at **4:15** for a **4:30 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 are welcome!

Next event: Sunday, November 3rd at 4:15 pm.



Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Reintroductions Are Underway

The critically endangered Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, one of the rarest songbirds in North America, is now receiving reinforcements from a captive breeding program. After years of planning and preparation, state and federal agencies began reintroducing captive-reared Florida Grasshopper Sparrows on May 9th, 2019. Sparrows were raised in captivity at White Oak Conservation Center in Yulee, Florida, and translocated to Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area in south-central Florida. During spring and summer, we released a total of 105 sparrows which effectively doubled the size of the wild population!

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff have been monitoring the fate of these sparrows. All were banded with unique color band combinations, and a subset of them were fitted with tiny radio transmitters. By design, transmitter batteries lasted for only 4-5 weeks, which was long enough to allow us to confirm that captive-bred birds survived the stress of transport and subsequently foraged normally and interacted with local birds. We are excited to see how many of these Florida Grasshopper Sparrows will survive and establish breeding territories next spring.



Photo by Karen Parker.

The captive-breeding program will continue for several years, with pre-release health screening and post-release demographic monitoring. The goal of the program is to enhance the wild population while ongoing research identifies management solutions to potentially limiting factors for the sparrows. The next pulse of reintroductions will occur in February 2020.

by Karl Miller and Juan Oteyza

AAS Interns Building Bluebird Nest Boxes



Bailey Zohar (left), Camya Robinson (middle), and Joelle Carbonell-Bierbaum (right) learn woodworking skills under the tutelage of long-time AAS Conservation Committee Chair Bob Simons. They are building Bluebird nest boxes for installation at Sweetwater Wetlands Park. Our fourth intern for the fall semester is Cameron Ramey. The four will be helping with our soon-to-fledge bird banding station, kestrel nest box maintenance and monitoring, eagle nest monitoring and more under the guidance of UF Professor Dr. Katie Sieving and other mentors.

Alachua Audubon Society Sparrow Field Enhancement Project

The Alachua Audubon Society has partnered with the Florida Division of Forestry (DOF) to enhance an approximately 20-acre area at the Newnans Lake State Forest West Tract for wintering sparrow habitat. This site has attracted an abundant and diverse group of sparrows in past years, however, it has become overgrown with undesirable plants and, consequently, less attractive to wildlife.

Audubon members Bob Simons and Rex Rowan developed an enhancement plan that creates vegetative strips using plant species that are more attractive to seed-eating birds. While this enhancement plan targets wintering sparrows, it will also benefit other species such as buntings, grosbeaks, quail, and doves.

Kestrel Ecological Services herbicided 29 strips that are 20 feet wide and of varying lengths. The DOF will burn the entire 20-acre enhancement area. Southern Habitats, LLC will then seed the strips with a mix of native groundcover plants consisting of yellow Indian grass (*Sorghastrum elliottii*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*), blazing star (*Liatris* sp.), and partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*). The seed will be planted using a Grasslander seeder. The planted area within the linear strips is about 9 acres. The enhancement plan is being implemented during fall (2019) and winter (2020) and is expected to have established plant strips by the following winter (2021).



Savannah Sparrow. Photo by Bob Simons.

by Bob Simons



Swamp Sparrow (left) and Vesper Sparrow (photographed at site). Photos by Bob Simons.

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

BK Cedars

Selling potted Christmas trees! 1-30gal; 1-10'; \$5-\$75
AZ Cypress & Native Southern Red Cedar
Fridays-Saturdays, 10-6, 11/29-12/22
Kettle Corn popped on site for sale;
Free Pecans and Sugar cane w/purchase



SUSAN KOSSUTH
(386) 462-2060 farm (352) 474-1885 cell
www.bkcedars.com bkcedars@aol.com
20926 N.W. 75th Street, Alachua, FL 32615



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 Sand 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

***SAVE THE DATE
FOR THE
2020 ALACHUA AUDUBON
BACKYARD BIRDING TOUR***

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2020 from 9 AM – 3 PM

*Explore some of Gainesville's premier backyard birding habitat
on a self-guided tour of 6 yards!*

Learn how to attract birds to your own yard!

- ✓ See brightly colored winter visitors such as Baltimore Orioles, American Goldfinches, and many others
- ✓ See how the masters attract unusual birds to their backyard habitats
- ✓ Learn how to keep squirrels and other varmints off your feeders
- ✓ Learn how to choose and present foods that attract a wide variety of birds and keep them healthy
- ✓ Find out what vegetation to plant and where to plant it in your own yard to attract more species of birds
- ✓ See how to provide water so birds can quench their thirst and bathe in safety
- ✓ Educational displays and bird experts at each tour stop to answer your questions

Tickets will be available in December for \$15.00 at
Wild Birds Unlimited, 4121 NW 16th Boulevard
Contact Alan Shapiro with questions at
352-317-0089 or alanguardiflora@gmail.com.

Don't miss this exciting one-day event!



Field Trips

(Continued from Page 1)

marsh, wet prairie, and woodland edges in search of wintering warblers, wrens, and sparrows. To reach the trailhead, drive south from Gainesville on US-441. Across from Lake Wauberg, turn right onto Wacahoota Road (County Road 18). Go roughly half a mile and, just after the I-75 overpass, turn left on SE 11th Drive and continue all the way down to the parking area. Difficulty: 1, 2, or 3, depending on how far you walk.

Sunday, December 1, 2019, 8:00 a.m.

Orange Lake/McIntosh Bay by Canoe/Kayak

Meet trip leader Matt Bruce at Heagy Burry Park in the town of Orange Lake. From Gainesville, head south on US-441 to the Alachua/Marion county line. From the county line, continue on 441 another 4.5 miles and turn left just past the Sunoco station onto NW 191st Place which dead-ends at the park. You'll need to bring your own canoe or kayak. We'll paddle along the shores of McIntosh Bay to the point where it opens up to the main lake. Gulls, terns, ducks, and other open-water birds are possible, as well as marsh-dwelling species. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, December 8, 2019, 8:00 a.m.

Lake City Treatment Wetland

Meet trip leader Debbie Segal in the parking lot of Hitchcock's grocery store on US-441 in Alachua to carpool to the treatment wetlands near Lake City (you can also meet us at 8:30 at the SS Food Store a block west of I-75 at Exit #423). The Lake City Treatment Wetlands, opened in 2016, is a series of nine wetland cells constructed to treat Lake City's wastewater. We hope to see a plethora of waterfowl, wading birds, and perhaps some rarities as we walk the dikes separating the cells. This site is not open to the public and the gate will be closed after we enter the site, so please don't be late! Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, December 15, 2019, SPECIAL EVENT

Gainesville Christmas Bird Count

Contact count organizers Andy Kratter (352-226-2462 or kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu) or Bob Carroll (352-281-3616 or gatorbob23@yahoo.com) if you're interested in participating in this all-day event. Please sign up early. Difficulty: 3.



**Alachua Audubon's 13th Annual
Holiday Social
Friday, December 6th; 6:30 – 9:00 pm
Mill Pond Clubhouse
240 NW 48th Blvd**

Come celebrate birds, conservation, and the holidays with the Alachua Audubon Society! Please go through your shelves and donate bird and nature-related books, CDs, and DVDs that others might enjoy but you would like to send on to new homes. Others may purchase these items for a donation of any amount to AAS. You may call 372-0754 to have your items picked up or you may bring them with you to the social.

Please bring a food or drink item to share with your birding friends or make new friends if you're joining us for the first time. Let's celebrate another good year of exciting activities with Alachua Audubon.

The holiday party will be held at the Mill Pond Clubhouse. Directions: From Newberry Road, turn south on NW 48th Blvd (across from Gainesville Health and Fitness Center). Drive south about 2 blocks. The Clubhouse is next to the tennis courts on the right. Look for the Alachua Audubon signs! The parking lot may be full. You are free to park on one side of NW 48th Blvd.

We hope to see you there!



Alachua Audubon Society 60th Anniversary Celebration!

Please join us as we celebrate 60 years of community education, conservation, partnerships, and birding!

What: Anniversary Celebration and Inaugural Tours of the Newly Fledged Prairie Creek Bird Banding Station - Refreshments - Guided Field Trips - Displays - Prizes!

When: Saturday morning, January 11th, 2020 - Time TBA (check our website for updates at AlachuaAudubon.org)

Where: Alachua Conservation Trust Prairie Creek Lodge, 7204 County Road 234, Gainesville, FL 32641

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



Pints and Predators—Save the Date!

Join **Wild Birds Unlimited** as they host the Sixth Annual **Pints and Predators** educational festival and fundraiser for local wildlife rehabilitators.

WHEN: Saturday, February 15th, 11 am - 4 pm
WHERE: First Magnitude Brewing Company
1220 SE Veitch Street, Gainesville.

This popular outdoor family event features birds of prey, creatures of the night and assorted reptiles.



Suggested donations will be collected at the door. ALL donations benefit Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation, Florida Wildlife Care, Lubee Bat Conservancy, Florida Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, and Wing and a Prayer Bird Conservation. Be sure to bring the kids!

Around the County

(Continued from page 2)

warbler species, possibly a record there, and the following day Jason and Kelly O'Connor picked out our only Canada Warbler of the season at Palm Point. In addition to warblers, migrant thrushes seemed to finally break through in numbers as multiple Wood, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes were reported from several different locations, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were appearing at feeders all over town. The fall finale was definitely worth the wait!

We had at least two Alder Flycatchers pass through this fall, and both were discovered by Adam Zions. The first was August 31st along Cones Dike, which is the same location where Alachua County's first confirmed fall Alder Flycatcher was discovered in 2012, and they have been noted there most years since. Adam found the other Alder September 3rd at Chapmans Pond. Rex Rowan had mentioned he thought he had seen a Least Flycatcher along Cones Dike early in October so I went out to check October 14th and was lucky to find it calling and posing nicely.

Falling water levels at two locations finally began attracting some shorebirds. The lagoon at the Hague Dairy had been slowly drawing down through August and when David Alvarez visited September 1st he discovered several species had settled in there. Most exciting was a Western Sandpiper, which is considered rare inland, plus several Semi-palmated and Least Sandpipers, a small flock of Pectorals, plus the usual smattering of Solitaries and Spotteds. Around the same time, the pond at Home Depot off Tower Road was also in the process of drying up. Jen Donsky checks the pond regularly and often finds interesting birds there; on October 3rd she reported a large conglomeration of waders, a few shorebirds, and more importantly, a White-faced Ibis!

By the time this issue of *The Crane* reaches your inbox or mailbox fall migration will be in the history books and it will be time to start looking for ducks, sparrows, and stray western flycatchers. Sweetwater Wetlands Park is usually the best place for ducks; for sparrows and possible western flycatchers and, maybe, Yellow-headed Blackbird or Bronzed Cowbird, try the Hague Dairy. Just remember you have to sign in, park in the designated place, travel on foot, and keep clear of tractors and other active operations. Hope to see you out there!

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through October 18th, 2019.



Normally, male Scarlet Tanagers in fall are lemony yellow with jet-black wings. This individual, photographed by Becky Enneis in her Alachua yard, has a rare genetic mutation which blocks yellow pigment in its feathers, leaving the body of the bird plain gray.



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. Learn more at [MyFWC/contact/wildlife-alert](#).

Audubon Florida's EagleWatch Program

For 26 years, Audubon Florida's EagleWatch Program has mobilized community science volunteers to monitor Bald Eagle nests throughout Florida, collecting important Bald Eagle nest data that enables staff, scientists and agency personnel to assess eagle productivity, population trends, impacts of changing land use practices, and identify factors associated with nest failure. Eagle-Watch works with both state and federal wildlife agencies regarding nest verification, reporting illegal activities and promoting the long-term conservation of this species.

Florida has one of the largest populations of Bald Eagles in the continental United States (~1500 active pairs) and one of the fastest growing human populations in the nation. Nesting eagles in Florida face many challenges, including habitat loss and fragmentation from steady urbanization, nest disturbance due to development, and death from disease, electrocution, lead poisoning, vehicle strikes and territory fights as preferred breeding areas decrease for nesting pairs. As human-related impacts continue to alter Florida's natural landscape, eagles are being forced to adapt. Audubon's EagleWatch Program is investigating what effect these changes may have on eagle behavior, nest site selection and nest productivity to promote the long-term success of this species.

EagleWatch seeks to ensure a sustained population of Bald Eagles in Florida through nest monitoring, data collection and analysis, documentation, and public education. For the 2019 nesting season, over 400 volunteers monitored 740 nests in 45 counties, donating 6000 volunteer hours and submitting 12,000 nest observation reports. Analysis of the season's data indicated that nest productivity (number of fledglings per occupied nest) remained stable at 1.32 fledglings per occupied nest compared to 1.31 fledglings per occupied nest last season. The fledge rate this season was 94%, up slightly from last season's fledge rate of 92% last season. Despite concerns about red tide along our coasts, nests monitored by EagleWatch near affected waters were just as successful as non-impacted nests around the state.

Volunteers reported 821 hatched chicks, of which 770 survived to successfully fledge!

Approximately 20% of the nests monitored by EagleWatch occur on man-made structures such as cell towers or power line transmission towers. EagleWatch seeks to understand how nest substrate may impact nesting success and nest site choice through analysis of monitoring data and the Auxiliary Banding study which began 3 years ago. The goal of the Auxiliary Banding study is to determine if the type of nest structure a chick hatches in influences its future nest site choice once it reaches maturity and begins nesting. Through a partnership with the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, all juvenile eagles treated and released by the Raptor Trauma Clinic are auxiliary banded with a colored leg band with an easy-to-read unique alphanumeric code. The color of the band is related to the type of nest the chick came from: green bands for chicks from natural nests and black bands for chicks from nests on artificial structures. So far, 41 juvenile eagles have been banded and released and 4 have been re-sighted in the state and along the Atlantic flyway. The juveniles banded during the inaugural year of the study should begin nesting in about two years. We are eagerly anticipating future findings from this study!

Florida's eagles nest from October to May and volunteers are already out collecting vital nest data for the 2020 season. If you are interested in joining our efforts, let us know by completing the information request form at eaglewatchflorida.org/signup.html or emailing Shawnlei Breeding, the program manager, at eaglewatch@audubon.org.

By Shawnlei Breeding

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

The Crane
Nov – Dec 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 Naturalist** magazine, and Alachua Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Crane*.

Please send any questions to
AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com