

The Crane

Volume 61 Number 4 March – April 2020

March and April Field Trips

The Winter/Spring 2020 AAS Field Trip Schedule is now on the AAS web site at AlachuaAudubon.org.
Printed copies may be obtained at Wild Birds Unlimited and Sweetwater Wetlands Park.

Saturday, March 7, 2020, 7:30 a.m.

Alligator Lake Recreation Area

We'll meet at the Tag Agency (5801 NW 34th Blvd) and carpool to Alligator Lake in Lake City. Trip leader Jerry Krummrich will lead us along the wooded berm that surrounds this marshy 338-acre lake looking for waterfowl, wading birds, and woodland species. This site has often produced unusual birds. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, March 21, 2020, 8:00 a.m. Austin Cary Forest

Meet trip leader Debbie Segal at the entrance to the Austin Cary Forest at 10625 NE Waldo Road, about 6 miles north of the Gainesville airport on the right. Austin Cary is the University of Florida's teaching and research forest, 2080 acres of pine flatwoods, cypress wetlands, and beautifully fire-maintained longleaf pine and wiregrass habitat. We'll drive the dirt road and then hike through the forest in search of Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bachman's Sparrow, Red-headed Woodpecker, and other pinewoods species. Many birds will be singing, and we might find some early-arriving Summer Tanagers and Great Crested Flycatchers. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, April 4, 2020, 8:00 a.m.

La Chua Trail/ Sparrow Alley

Meet trip leader Felicia Lee at the trailhead of La Chua Trail on Camp Ranch Road in Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. The water has been dropping on Paynes Prairie and we should be able to walk on the trail as far as the old water control structure as well as exploring Sparrow Alley and the power line cut. Summer residents

such as Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, and (maybe) Yellow-breasted Chat should be on territory and singing. Wear boots or old shoes because the Prairie ain't *that* dry yet. Entry fee \$6 per vehicle (\$4 per single occupant vehicle). Difficulty: 2.

Sunday, April 5, 2020, 8:00 a.m. (NOTE CHANGE OF DATE) Little Orange Creek Preserve (CLEP)*

Meet trip leader Anne Barkdoll of Alachua Conservation Trust at the Preserve parking corral on the north side of State Road 20 (Hawthorne Road) 1.5 miles east of Hawthorne (24115 SE Hawthorne Road). This 2868-acre preserve has a two-mile trail that gives frequent views of the creek and an elevated platform that overlooks Fowlers Prairie. We'll be looking for early spring migrants and resident birds engaged in courtship and nesting. Note: trails are uneven and sometimes muddy or wet. Difficulty: 3.

Continued on page 11

Inside this issue:	
Around the County	p. 2
Bob Simons Recognized	p. 3
Meet the AAS Board	p. 4
GREBES in Action	p. 4-5
Events and Programs	p. 6-7
Festivals	p. 9-10
Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation	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 PresidentScott Flamand 352-665-7020
SecretaryFelicia Lee 352-389-1831
TreasurerTrina Anderson 352-363-6810
Membership..AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com
Field Trips Barbara Shea 352-514-3956
EducationEmily Schwartz 352-372-0754
Birding Class ...Charlene Leonard 352-226-1214
FestivalsEric Amundson/Alan Shapiro
Conservation Bob Simons 352-372-7646
Editor/Ads Karen Brown 352-213-4257
WebsiteTrina 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* fulfills the stated objectives and goals of the Alachua Audubon Society. Annual subscription to *The Crane* is included in National Audubon and/or Alachua Audubon membership. Please see the back page for more information.

Additional advertisers are welcome. Please contact the editor for more information at karenpbrown1953@gmail.com

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

The Christmas Count usually uncovers most of the rare or unusual wintering birds and then things settle down a bit. But in the weeks following the count, we had a flurry of interesting sightings that kept birders on the run. Jason O'Connor checked Watermelon Pond December 26th and found a very rare-in-winter Black Scoter.

Out-of-town birder Matt Wangerin photographed a Greater Scaup at Sweetwater Wetlands Park (SWP) January 17th. A second Western Tanager turned up December 31st at the feeders of Jason and Kelly O'Connor in Newberry (One had already established itself and continued at a feeding station in west Gainesville). Yet another Nashville Warbler, amazingly our fifth since December, was reported January 1st by Adam Zions at SWP. This was possibly the same Nashville discovered by Rex Rowan in October but hadn't been seen since late November. Adam Zions also had the county's second Wood Thrush of the season in his yard January 27th. Ben and Sam Ewing spotted a Tennessee Warbler along Cone's Dike January 3rd making this the second consecutive year one has wintered here, and Tim Hardin found a Black-throated Green Warbler, our third of the winter, February 14th along the Rail Trail. Winter Wren is always a great bird to find in the county; indeed, some years they don't show up at all. This winter we had a blizzard of them, relatively speaking. In addition to two uncovered at Prairie Creek prior to the Christmas Count, other locations they were found included Sweetwater Preserve, Hogtown Creek, Hatchett Creek Forest, and University Gardens on the University of Florida campus. The bird on campus was especially cooperative.



Fox Sparrow. Photo by Lloyd Davis.

Sparrow luck continued to abound. Tim Hardin, who in December discovered a LeConte's Sparrow between cells 1 and 2 at SWP, incredibly found a trio of them January 15th near the far end of cell 3. And the Fox Sparrow Tim had conjured out of a brush pile in Flamingo Hammock back in December eventually turned into three Fox Sparrows, often accompanied by an adult male White-crowned Sparrow and a brilliant male Painted Bunting! The LeConte's and Fox Sparrows attracted many birders from around the state eager to see and photo-graph these two normally hard-to-find species. Newnans Lake State Forest West continued to hold sparrows as well. In addition to the common species plus relatively high numbers of

Continued on page 12

Honoring Bob Simons

On January 11th, the Alachua Audubon Society (AAS) honored Mr. Bob Simons at our 60th Anniversary as an Audubon chapter event. For 50 years, Bob has been the leading advocate for Alachua Audubon's conservation agenda. His knowledge of ecosystems as a professional forester has been invaluable in providing guidance to AAS and so many other organizations. Jim Buckner, a friend and colleague, told AAS, "Bob Simons is probably the most unsung hero I know for conservation of natural ecosystems in this part of Florida, and he's probably the most knowledgeable about ecosystem management, too." Bob's long-term involvement means that he knows the players at various governmental and non-governmental groups and they all know and respect him.

One of Bob's most important accomplishments was in developing the proposal to the state to acquire San Felasco Hammock as a state park. He was also instrumental in the state acquisition of Silver Springs as a state park. After Florida elected U.S. Senator Paula Hawkins, whose views on environmental protection were unknown, Florida Defenders of the Environment invited her to canoe the Ocklawaha and Silver River so that she would understand what could be lost if the Cross Florida Barge Canal was not deauthorized by Congress. Marjorie Carr was asked to send the most knowledgeable people she had for this effort. She sent Jack Kaufmann and Bob Simons: Jack for the details of the project and Bob for the ecosystems under threat. Archie Carr, one of the best known and respected ecologists in Florida, said, "Whenever I have a question about Florida ecology, I call Bob Simons."

Bob influenced the management practices of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in Florida. Until the late 1980s, there were no USFS biologists assigned to national forests in Florida and managers knew little about non-commercial species. Bob helped educate and inform them and forest management changed, helping a broad spectrum of native species. Bob also nominated many of the big trees that are in the FL Division of Forestry's champion tree database.

In Alachua County, Bob helped conduct an inventory of natural areas and served for many years on the Land Conservation Board for Alachua County, helping identify natural areas to purchase for conservation. He also served for many years on the City of Gainesville's Tree Advisory Board.

Bob has reviewed numerous management plans for public lands and provided input on behalf of AAS. He reviewed the Plum Creek plans for development in east Gainesville and led Alachua Audubon's opposition to them. When the FL Department of Environmental Protection proposed initiating grazing, timbering and hunting on state park lands five years ago, Bob represented Alachua Audubon on the Protect Payne's Prairie coalition that organized activities in opposition to the proposal. When Florida Power and Light (FP&L) asked AAS for guidance in planting native plants and trees on their solar farms in Putnam County three years ago, Bob provided his expertise. This earned AAS a grant from FP&L for a telescoping monitor and field camera for another one of Bob's projects – nest boxes for Southeastern American Kestrels.

For the past 15 years, Bob has spearheaded a project to build, erect and monitor more than 100 American Kestrel nest boxes in suitable habitat, contributing greatly to their nesting success. When the AAS internship program began, Bob took interns under his wing and has given them a high-quality experience working with the kestrel nest box program. Bob's most recent contribution has been working with the Florida Department of Forestry to restore sparrow habitat at the Newnan's Lake East property. Bob worked with Forestry staff to identify native plants with which to seed the property and has helped to keep the project moving forward.

Jim Buckner added: "Another reason that Bob has been so successful in influencing land managers is his easy-going personality. People feel comfortable with him. He never comes across as judgmental or condescending. He is demonstrably knowledgeable and experienced, but he is also nice, friendly, intelligent and kind. He is modest to a fault. Bob is generous, wise, and an outstanding mentor. He is well-known, well-liked and well-respected, particularly in forestry and conservation circles. But on top of all that, he is not perfect – which to the rest of us mortals fortunate enough to know him well, probably makes him seem . . . just about perfect."

Alachua Audubon is so very grateful to Bob for his 50 years of involvement with AAS and everything that he has done to preserve and protect natural areas. Alachua Audubon enjoys a strong reputation in the Gainesville community and is a respected conservation advocate and that is in large part due to Bob Simons' contributions.

By Anne Casella

Meet the AAS Board! Potluck Dinner and Annual Meeting

Please join us on **Wednesday, April 8th at 6:30 pm** for Alachua Audubon's annual potluck dinner and meeting. Help us welcome our newest AAS board members and celebrate the return of existing board members. This event will be held at the home of Katie Sieving and David Pais at 1826 NW 10th Terrace, Gainesville (look for the AAS signs!) Bring some food to share and a drink of choice and enjoy visiting with other Alachua Audubon members and the Board of Directors. This will be a fun gathering and an opportunity to learn more about the important conservation and environmental education programs in which AAS is involved.

The Alachua Audubon Society is an all-volunteer organization. The Board of Directors is comprised of four officers: President: Debbie Segal, Vice President: Scott Flamand, Secretary: Felicia Lee, and Treasurer: Trina Anderson, and 15 board members: Emily Schwartz, Bob Simons, Anne Casella, Barbara Shea, Karen Brown, Katie Sieving, Charlene Pringle, Adam Zions, Michael Brock, Jonathan Varol, Eric Amundson, Christina Opett, and Chris Burney. We sincerely appreciate the involvement of outgoing board members Alan Shapiro, Steve Goodman and Cindy Boyd but look forward to their continued participation in AAS-sponsored activities.

GREBES to Install Native Plant Garden

Research released by National Audubon found that over 75% of North American birds are at risk of extinction due to climate change. Audubon chapters across the nation are doing what they can to help and the UF GREBE (Gators Ready for Exceptional Birding Experiences) Audubon Campus Chapter is no different. With help from the Alachua Audubon Society, the members of GREBE will be installing a native plant demonstration garden on the University of Florida campus right outside of Newins-Ziegler Hall to educate community members about the importance of native vegetation for bird species and other wildlife. The garden will consist of over 20 native species ranging from wildflowers to trees and will include interpretive signs and brochures for visitors to learn how they can help birds at their homes.

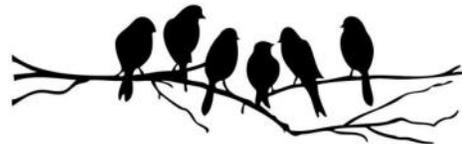
The grand opening for the garden will be on Sunday, April 19th, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day happening later that week. We highly encourage all members of the Gainesville community to come out and learn how to plant for birds!

By Jacob Ewert,
President, UF GREBE Audubon Campus Chapter

Field Trip Schedule Available

A printed field trip schedule through June 2020 may be picked up from [Wild Birds Unlimited](#). You may also download a PDF file from our website at [AlachuaAudubon.org](#): Click on [Activities](#) at the top, choose [Field Trips](#) from the dropdown box, and click on "download this pdf." 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 Field Trips" section for a list of the many and varied recurring and new offerings by AAS.



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](#).

Big Day Fundraiser for GREBE Audubon Campus Chapter

On March 28th, the GREBE (Gators Ready for Exceptional Birding Experiences) Audubon Campus Chapter at the University of Florida will be hosting a Big Day event! For those of you who are not familiar with the concept of a big day, allow me to explain: during a 24-hour period, you try to see as many species of birds as possible, pushing both your mind and body to its limit (or a fun day committed to birding; either definition works). The cost to enter will be \$5.00 for students, \$10.00 for non-students, and the person who sees the most birds will receive a \$50.00 gift certificate to Wild Birds Unlimited!

Here are a few rules:

1. All birds that you report for your daily total must be from March 28th. I don't care if you heard or saw something on March 27th at 11:59 PM or March 29th at 12:00 AM—those won't count.
2. Captive birds do not count. This includes those in a rehabilitation center and escaped pets. If you see a bird you suspect to be included in this category, but are unsure, take a photo and send it with your list with as much detail as possible about the behavior, location, and condition of the bird.
3. You can bird with a friend (or friends) but, if reporting your total under a single name (the Millers, for example), please only report birds you saw as a group. It wouldn't be fair if a group of people split up and saw a bunch of birds compared to a single person who can't be in multiple places at the same time. Also, regardless of your party size, only one gift certificate will be awarded to the winner or winning group. Ties will be broken based on species per hour, then the number of individual birds seen.
4. Please save your totals in the form of A) a photograph of a LEGIBLE hand-written list; B) link(s) to eBird checklists or; C) a Word, Excel, or PDF document. Send to grebeuf@gmail.com by April 1st (anything received later than April 1st will not be counted.)
 - a. If you are not submitting lists via eBird, please be sure to include your total time (ex: from 8:12 AM to 6:03 PM). If you stop birding at any point in the day, please break your time up (ex: 8:12 AM to 11:30 AM; 3:00 PM to 6:03 PM).
 - b. If you are not submitting lists via eBird, please be sure to include the location(s) where you were birding.
 - c. While counts of individual species are not required (ex: 51 Red-winged Blackbirds), this is helpful information and will be used as a last resort for breaking a tie.

The winner will be notified by email by April 8th, and arrangements will be made to deliver their prize.

Students can pay in cash at any GREBE meeting. Meetings are held the first and third Tuesday of every month (for times and locations, see our Facebook page at GREBE Audubon Campus Chapter). Otherwise, please pay (cash or check) at Wild Birds Unlimited located at 4212 NW 16th Boulevard, Gainesville, FL. We also accept payments via Venmo to grebeuf.

I hope you will consider joining us for our Big Day event. Not only is it a fun challenge, but a good way to get acquainted with your local birds. If you have any questions, please email us at grebeuf@gmail.com.

by Gabriel Gonzalez, Treasurer of GREBE Audubon Campus Chapter

College Student?

Check out the GREBES (Gators Ready for Exceptional Birding Experiences)—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 by scanning the QR code or go to facebook.com/groups/ufGREBE/



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.

Birding Class Offered

Alachua Audubon offers birding classes two to three times per year through the Santa Fe College Community Education Program. Volunteer instructors Charlene Leonard and Cindy Boyd teach the class with volunteer AAS trip leaders leading them on Saturday morning outings to locations such as Lake Alice, Sweetwater Wetlands Park, Chapman's Pond, Bolen Bluff and Cedar Key. Aspiring birders learn to find, identify and enjoy birds.

The next class will be held from March 28 through April 25. We anticipate that Santa Fe will open registration approximately 10-14 days prior at www.sfcollege.edu/cied/communityed/registration/index. More information will be available on the AAS website once it becomes available. Visit alachuaaudubon.org/birding-classes/. Look for the Santa Fe College notice that will be mailed out or visit the Santa Fe College Community Education website in March.

www.sfcollege.edu/cied/communityed/index

Mid-Week Birding with Bob!

Alachua Audubon offers a monthly guided bird walk led by Bob Carroll during the middle of the week. Lunch is an option for those who would enjoy extra socializing. The next trip will be announced around the second week of March. To be added to Bob's list, please contact him at gatorbob23@yahoo.com or 352-281-3616.

Thanks from Alachua Audubon!

The Alachua Audubon Society would like to thank all the homeowners, volunteers, and Wild Birds Unlimited for helping to make this year's Backyard Birding Tour a success once again. More than 230 tickets were sold raising more than \$3,000 for AAS. These funds support our many education and conservation activities throughout Alachua County. The Backyard Birding Tour is our main fundraising event each year.

Participants spotted 42 species at the five houses that turned in species lists. Some of the most exciting were Summer Tanager, Bald Eagle, Coopers Hawk, and multitudes of Eastern Bluebirds at the Lante home.

Photo by Tedd Greenwald



Family Birding Program

The Alachua Audubon Society partners with Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park to offer family walks at La Chua Trail on the first Saturday of the month. Interested families may register under *Upcoming Events* at the Friends of Paynes Prairie website at www.prairiefriends.org. We walk at a leisurely pace for about 2 hours from 9–11 am.

A family is not required to join us – anyone is welcome! Bring a child, a grandchild, a neighbor, or just yourself. 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.

Upcoming events: March 7th and April 4th.

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 work-out 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.

**Next meeting: Sunday,
March 22nd at 9:00 am.
No meeting in April.**



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

SPEAKER'S CORNER

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

A Fight Against Time, Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Nordmann's Greenshank is one of the most endangered shorebirds on our planet. Listen to Philipp Maleko tell of his adventures in Eastern Russia working with Russian ornithologists wading through bog and forest to study this rare bird.

Adventures and Discoveries Through Photography, Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Over the last 15 years, Drew Fulton's photography has taken him to some incredible and unexpected places. From the swamps of Florida Everglades to the outback of Australia, from the sea floor in Turkey to the high forest canopy of Borneo, join Drew as he takes you on a journey through his lens and shares some of the natural history stories he experienced along the way.

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 **March 1st** we will meet up at **4:45** for a **5:00 pm departure** to Depot Park. On **April 5th** 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 are welcome!

Next event: Sunday, March 1st at 4:45 pm.



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

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




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 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

a **FESTIVAL OF**
BIRDS 
BEES 
NATIVE PLANTS AND TREES
 THE NATIVE PLANT CONNECTION
MARCH 21, 2020 • 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Melrose Heritage Park
 300 FL- 26 in Melrose, FL

LIVE MUSIC * FOOD TRUCKS * VENDORS
NATIVE PLANTS * NATURE BASED ART
CHILDREN'S CORNER
NATURE TALKS * CONSERVATION GROUPS
LIVE BIRDS * BEE DEMO

*** FREE NATIVE PLANT TO THE FIRST 150 VISITORS**

Contact: Gina Hopen 954-802-0922 or ghendurocat@yahoo.com

**PARTY FOR THE
 PLANET! SPRING
 INTO ACTION!**



In honor of Earth Day, the Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo hosts **Party for the Planet: Spring into Action!** Explore the zoo and enjoy crafts, face painting, training demonstrations, keeper talks, animal encounters, and more! Visit local conservation organization booths and enjoy fares from local food trucks.

April 18-19, 9 am-3 pm Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo, 3000 NW 83rd Street, Gainesville. \$8 for adults | \$5 for children (ages 4-12), Active Military and Veterans, Seniors (60+), Teachers, Firefighters, Police, First Responders, EMS/EMT, and UF staff and students with ID. Free for children 3 and under, Zoo Members, and Santa Fe College students or staff members with ID.

Don't miss out on the wildest party of the year!

www.sfcollege.edu/zoo/visit/events/party-for-the-planet



**Kanapaha Botanical Gardens
 Spring Garden Festival**

March 21 & 22 (9am - 5pm), 2020

Kanapaha's Spring Garden Festival features approximately 125 booths offering plants, landscape displays, garden accessories, arts and crafts, educational exhibits and foods. Also featured are live entertainment and live auctions. The children's area activities include potting up a plant to take home, a photo opportunity, a bean bag toss, and many arts and crafts.

\$10 Adults; \$5 children three to thirteen. Cash only! Free parking. No pets please!

ENTRANCE ON S.W. ARCHER ROAD (SR 24) 1 MILE WEST OF I-75
 (EXIT 384) 4700 SW 58th Dr, Gainesville, FL

Be sure to visit the Alachua Audubon booth inside the Summer House!!

Spring Native Plant Sale

Take advantage of a wide offering of native north Florida plants during the annual **Spring Native Plant Sale at Morningside Nature Center Saturday, April 18, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Native plants are adapted to drought and the heat, which helps reduce water consumption from irrigation, requires less upkeep and helps save money. They also support native wildlife.



The Spring Native Plant Sale features beautiful native shrubs, trees, wildflowers, ferns, grasses and vines grown at area nurseries. Vendors are members of the Florida Native Plant Society and certify that plants are nursery propagated and grown.

Two hours of power-shopping are available on Friday, April 17, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. for members of the [Friends of Nature Parks \(FNP\)](http://www.friendsofnatureparks.org), and the [Florida Native Plant Society \(FNPS\)](http://paynesprairie.fnpschapters.org). To join the Friends of Nature Parks, please visit www.friendsofnatureparks.org. To join the Florida Native Plant Society, please visit <http://paynesprairie.fnpschapters.org>. Memberships may be purchased at the gate (cash, checks and debit/credit cards are accepted).

The sale is hosted cooperatively by the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department, the Friends of Nature Parks (FNP) and the Paynes Prairie chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS).

An Alachua Audubon Society member will be leading a birding/wildflower walk at Morningside Nature Center at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 18, in conjunction with the Native Plant Sale. Meet at the Alachua Audubon Society table and bring binoculars if you have them. Loaner binoculars will also be available.

Alachua Audubon's 60th Anniversary Party a Big Success!

By all accounts, Alachua Audubon's 60th Anniversary Party and the launch of the Prairie Creek Banding Lab was a huge success and we were thrilled. Not knowing how many to expect, we were pleasantly surprised when well over 100 members and friends showed up for the birding tours, an introduction to the new banding lab, wildlife ambassadors from Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation and Florida Wildlife Care, and lunch in the Prairie Creek Lodge. After the meal, we heard presentations from Debbie Segal, Bob Wallace, Andy Kratter, Anne Casella, and Bob Simons. *Photos: Leslie Straub of Florida Wildlife Care (top*



right) by Karen Brown; Dr. Katie Sieving demonstrates a mist-net (left); Bob Simons (and his shadow) points out what Bob Simons does when checking kestrel nest boxes (center); Jonathan Varol demonstrates one of the hazards of netting and banding a cardinal (they bite!) Bottom photos by Erika Simons.



Field Trips

(Continued from Page 1)

Saturday, April 11, 2020, 8:00 a.m.

River Styx by Kayak

Join trip leader Matt Bruce for an exploration of the river that connects Newnans Lake and Paynes Prairie with Orange Lake. We'll start by paddling a short way upstream through cypress swamp. Then we'll head south through a network of narrow waterways that traverse the marsh that dominates the northern arm of Orange Lake. American White Pelican, several duck species, and Prothonotary Warbler are possible. Directions: A mile south of the flashing light in Micanopy, turn left onto County Road 346 and go 2.8 miles to the small bridge over River Styx. Park on the shoulder beyond the bridge. Note: this trip is subject to last-minute cancellation due to inclement weather or adverse river conditions. Check AlachuaAudubon.org for updates. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, April 18, 2020, 6:30 a.m. Cedar Key

Meet Rex Rowan in the Target parking lot on Archer Road and carpool to Cedar Key, a quintessential Florida birding destination where birders can often view shorebirds over one shoulder and songbirds over the other. We'll be looking for newly-arrived spring migrants as well as coastal specialties such as Gray Kingbird and Magnificent Frigatebird. Difficulty 1.

Sunday, April 19, 2020, 8:00 a.m.

Mill Creek Preserve (CLEP)*

In 2002 the Alachua County Forever program made its first conservation-lands purchase, the Mill Creek Preserve, 1190 acres of deep hardwood forest containing the southernmost stand of beech trees in North America. Depending on the trails we take, we'll be walking two and a half or three miles looking for spring migrants and enjoying other elements of the Preserve's flora and fauna. Directions: From US-441 in Alachua go north on State Road 241 (keeping left when 235 splits off) six miles to County Road 236. Turn left, go 0.3 mile, and turn left into the trailhead parking lot, where we'll meet our trip leader, county biologist Steve Hofstetter. Difficulty: 3.

Saturday, April 25, 2020, 8:00 a.m.

San Felasco Hammock Yellow Trail

Meet trip leader Bubba Scales at the trailhead on Millhopper Road. This should be the peak of spring migration, and the Yellow Trail's 5.7 miles (actual distance hiked may be less) of pine and hardwood forest will give you plenty of opportunities to find Black-throated Blue, Cape May, and Hooded Warblers, Eastern Wood-Pewees, Acadian Flycatchers, and Broad-winged Hawks. Entry fee \$4 per vehicle (plus \$2 for each extra passenger). Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, April 26, 2020, 8:00 a.m.

Newnans Lake State Forest - East Trail

Meet in the parking corral for the Pithlachocco Trail, 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 Jonathan Mays will lead us along a 2.5-mile trail through a variety of habitats that include pine-woods, open oak woodlands, wetlands, and a bit of lakeshore in search of spring migrants. Difficulty : 3.

Saturday, May 2, 2020, 8:00 a.m. Palm Point Park

Meet trip leader Barbara Shea at Palm Point Park to search for spring migrants like American Redstart, Cape May and Blackpoll Warblers, and Scarlet Tanager. We can scan Newnans Lake from the point for Bald Eagles, Laughing Gulls, and unexpected visitors from the coast. Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, May 3, 2020, 8:00 a.m. Bolen Bluff

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

***Conservation Lands Education Program (CLEP)**

Trips noted as CLEP highlight lands that protect plant and animal life and focus on their history and uniqueness.

Around the County

(Continued from page 2)



Fox Sparrow. Photo by Lloyd Davis.

description, was almost certainly an adult male Rufous Hummingbird, and Bob Carroll had one sporadically in his yard beginning January 29th.

Research on the ghastly decline of bird populations in North America has been well publicized over the past year, and one of the hardest hit species is Rusty Blackbird. We've been fortunate to have a small flock wintering behind Magnolia Parke off NW 39th Avenue for the past several years. Another place small numbers of them have been seen occasionally is SWP, usually in the swampy area off the SW corner of cell 1, and a few have been noted this year in University Gardens on campus. But birders over this winter discovered something interesting. Apparently a rather large number of Rusties, close to a hundred at times, have been flying into the tree line along the west end of SWP each evening near sunset, along with hundreds to thousands of other blackbirds, before going to roost in the marsh. Of course, we don't know exactly where they are coming from, but it's heartening to know there is such a large flock in our area.

If you have been visiting SWP this winter, you would have noted the massive buildup of day-roosting Black-Bellied Whistling-Ducks. They can be difficult to count as they are skittish and move about quite a lot, but Rex Rowan, who visits the park regularly and makes a real effort to accurately tally them, reported a high count on February 17th of two-thousand one hundred ninety-five. And the number of the much rarer Fulvous Whistling-Ducks has inched up to four individuals, which bodes well for a possible nesting attempt later in the year. A more ominous potential breeder at SWP is the Gray-headed Swamp-hen. The single individual first discovered by Rex in October has now turned into two. As much as we may delight in seeing these uncommon visitors from south Florida, they are highly invasive and destructive to marsh vegetation. If the two at SWP are of opposite sex and reproduce, they are potential trouble for the park and adjacent prairie.

By the time this issue of *The Crane* reaches your inbox or mailbox, spring will be peeping through. Northern Parulas will have arrived in force, singing along with all the resident breeding birds in your neighborhood, and quite unseen to all but the most avid birders will be the arrival of Louisiana Waterthrushes creeping along dark forested stream banks at places like San Felasco Hammock. Wouldn't you just love to see one?!!

Thanks to those who shared their sightings through February 13th 2019.

By Mike Manetz

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



Northern Cardinal and Baltimore Oriole during the Backyard Birding Tour. Photo by Tedd Greenwald.



Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation

Alachua Audubon participants were recently treated to a field trip at Sunrise Wildlife Rehabilitation (SWR) in High Springs. We were invited there to learn about the rescue, rehabilitation and release of orphaned, injured or displaced wildlife in North Central Florida. Nan, Joe and Adam Soistman run this non-profit, all-volunteer facility for birds and small mammals. Some of the creatures that can not be returned to the wild are used as wildlife ambassadors at educational events around the area. AAS donated funds to build a mews last year and it was a treat to see the completed structure being used by a hawk. Falconer Leanne Betts was on hand to show us a Red-tailed Hawk being trained to eat while on her arm. She answered questions about the training process and the practice of falconry. Later we were taken on a birding tour of the lovely



Merlyn, a Barred Owl



Falconer Leanne Betts with a Red-tailed Hawk. Photos by Tedd Greenwald (L) and Karen Brown (R).

20-acre property surrounding the SWR facility.

To learn about temporary emergency care until a permitted wildlife rehabilitator can be reached, visit this [link](#). To learn more about SWR, visit their [website](#). Donations are always appreciated.

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

The Crane
March – April 2020

**Join Alachua Audubon!
Membership Application**

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

Gift Memberships Available!

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)

Join online with PayPal

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 AAS 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 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