



The Crane

Volume 63 Number 4 March – April 2022

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, March 06, 2022 8:00am
Barr Hammock – Levy Lake Loop

Meet 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 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 Dr. and continue all the way down to the parking area. Difficulty: 1, 2, or 3, depending on how far you walk.

Saturday, March 12, 2022 8:00am (CLEP*)
Mill Creek Preserve

Meet trip leader Stephen Hofstetter in the Preserve parking lot. 14505 NW County Road 236, Alachua 32615. The parking lot is off SR 241. 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 birds! Hopefully some beautiful spring weather as well. Difficulty: 2.

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

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

Saturday, March 19, 2022 9:00am
Special Beginning Birder's Walk – Sweetwater Wetlands Park

Meet trip leader Jacob Ewert for a specialized stroll around one of Gainesville's best birding locations. This trip is specifically designed for beginning birders. We will slow down our pace and focus on some birding basics and on improving identification skills in a relaxed environment. We'll look at herons, egrets, ducks, and other wetland-dependent bird species. \$5.00 entrance fee per vehicle. Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, March 20, 2022 8:00
Watermelon Pond Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA)

Meet trip leaders Kelly and Jason O'Connor at the parking corral of the Watermelon Pond WEA on SW 250th St, approximately 2 miles south of SW 46th Ave-

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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
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 in-
cluded in National Audubon and/
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nue, to experience this interesting “upland wetland” area in southwest Alachua County. We’ll be on the lookout for lingering winter and resident species of open country habitats such as American Kestrels and various sparrows. We may even get a chance to see an eastern fox squirrel or two. Difficulty 3.

Saturday, March 26, 2022

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

Gainesville Target at 06:00am / Apopka Trailhead at 8:00am
Lake Apopka is in the headwaters of the Ocklawaha chain of lakes. It has been the site of significant marsh and floodplain restoration and the creation of a marsh flow-way system that filters Lake Apopka’s waters by circulating lake water through restored wetlands. The wild-life drive meanders for 11 miles through the eastern portion of the property.

Meet an AAS volunteer at the Target Parking lot on Archer Road at 6:00am to caravan to Apopka. We will meet trip leader Alan Shapiro at 8:00 am to explore this birding hotspot. At the Wildlife Drive entrance, gather at the parking area on the right just before the gate. Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, April 3, 2022 8:00am

Poe Springs Park

Meet trip leader Tim Hardin in the parking lot of Poe Springs Park, 28800 NW 182 Ave (Poe Springs Road / NE CR 340) High Springs. Poe Springs is a lovely Alachua County park located on the bank of the Santa Fe River. This park can be one of the better warbler spots in the county during fall migration, but can also be impressive during our brief spring migration period. Never any guarantees, but hard to find in-county warblers such as Canada, Golden-winged, Kentucky, and Cerulean Warblers have been recorded here. It can be a bit muddy in places, so waterproof footwear or old shoes are recommended. Park entrance fee \$5.00. Difficulty: 2

Saturday, April 9, 2022 8:00am

Serenola Forest Preserve – Idylwild Trailhead

Opened in 2019 in partnership with Alachua County and the Florida Communities Trust, Serenola Forest Preserve is a 111-acre nature preserve owned and managed by the Alachua Conservation Trust. This preserve is located in the Idylwild neighborhood in southwest Gainesville, and it is in these same woods where the locally infamous Idylwild Cowgirls galloped their ponies from one mischief to another five decades ago. Join AAS and ACT for a joint outing at this preserve - first, a bird walk led by Sue and Darrell Hartman and Debbie Segal, followed by a short book presentation by author Debbie Segal about the gang of Idylwild Cowgirls. ACT's Outreach Coordinator, Lianne D’Arcy, will also describe the ecology and management of the Serenola Forest Preserve. 4706-4798 SW 20th Terrace. Difficulty: 1.

Cats & Birds

A National Geographic/University of Georgia “Kitty Cam” study used digital cameras on pet cats to document their behavior. They found that 77% of pet cat victims were eaten on the spot or left where killed, leading owners to believe that their pet does not kill while outdoors.

In a retrospective study covering 2000-2010, 21 thousand wildlife patients of the Wildlife Center of Virginia were a result of cat attacks. These attacks were found to be the 2nd leading cause of injury to mammals, and the 4th leading cause of injury to birds. Of all mammals, the death rate from cat attacks was 70%; the death rate for birds was 81%, and *this was at a state-of-the-art wildlife medical center.*

Please keep cats inside and ask others to do the same. It is far safer and healthier for cats to be kept indoors. And far safer and healthier for bird populations!



Sunday, April 10, 2022 8:00 am

Powers Park/Palm Point

Meet trip leader Barbara Shea in the parking lot of Earl Powers Park on SR 20 Hawthorne Road. We will explore Newnans Lake from the fishing pier and scan the trees and along the boat channel for migrant warblers and tanagers. Then we'll travel to nearby Palm Point and Lakeshore Drive for more migrants in the live oak and cypress trees. Difficulty 1.

Saturday, April 16, 2022 8:00am

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park – Bolen Bluff Trail

Meet trip leader Bubba Scales at the Bolen Bluff trailhead on US-441. Bolen Bluff is one of Gainesville's perennial favorite birding locations, especially during spring and fall songbird migration, which should be peaking now. Entry fee \$2.00/vehicle. Difficulty: 2.

Sunday, April 17, 2022 8:00am

River Stix by Kayak

Bring your own kayak or canoe for this trip. We'll start out by paddling upstream a short distance through cypress swamp. Next, we'll head south through a network of narrow waterways that transect the expansive marsh that dominates the northern portion of Orange Lake. This can be a very good area to get close views of Prothonotary Warbler and many other wetland bird species. Heading south on US-441 from Gainesville, go about two miles past the main entrance for Paynes Prairie, then turn left onto CR-346. Continue for about three miles before reaching a small bridge over River Styx. Park anywhere along the roadside after crossing over to the east side of the bridge and meet trip leader Matt Bruce. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, April 24, 2022 8:00am

Turkey Creek Preserve

Officially opened in 2021, this 376-acre preserve with 5 miles of trails gives us a chance to see many ecosystems. These include basin swamp, depression marsh, bottomland forest, hydric hammock, upland hardwood forest, black water streams and sinkholes. The preserve buffers adjacent San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park. Spring migration should still be active and bringing us a good variety of birds. We will take a casual 2-3 mile walk guided by Tim Hardin. Trails are well-marked, mostly wide and relatively flat. Meet at the main trailhead parking lot at 6300 NW 93rd Ave. Difficulty: 2, 3.

Saturday, April 30, 2022 8:00 am

Chapman's Pond and Nature Trails

Meet trip leader Barbara Shea at the grassy parking lot on the east side of the Pond (behind & east of Veterans Memorial Park). We will start by scanning the pond of this water treatment facility for water birds, swallows, and songbirds. Then we will hike the surrounding 1.5 miles of trail past other water features through dry oak woods and open mowed lawns seeking various passerines and raptors, migrants and returning residents alike. Turn off SW 75th St. (Tower Rd.) onto SW 41 Place. Go east just over 1/2 mile where the road curves and joins 63rd Blvd. and the parking lot will be on the left. Difficulty: 2.

Audubon Evening Programs

The Biggest Day — the World Record Big Day of 1982 in Amazonian Peru
March 23, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

Scott Robinson is the Ordway Professor at the Florida Museum of Natural History and also taught at the University of Illinois after getting his Bachelor's Degree at Dartmouth and his doctorate at Princeton. He teaches Avian Biology at UF and has been a fanatical birdwatcher since his father introduced him to the hobby in 1967. He took a gap year in college to set a new North American Big Year record in 1976. His lab mostly studies birds in South America, but also has projects in Africa and China.



Back in the late 1970s and 1980s, before there were any field guides or other easily available sources of information, ornithologists made pioneering visits to remote sites in the Amazon and Andes where they obtained the first recordings of bird songs, described many new species, and characterized the structure of these hyper-diverse tropical bird communities. This group included John Terborgh, John Fitzpatrick, and the late Ted Parker. When I began my doctoral research on the birds of the Amazon, I was fortunate enough to be taught bird songs by these pioneers and to collaborate with Ted Parker on a research project censusing, for the first time, an Amazonian bird community in 1982. This talk describes how we took advantage of this new knowledge to establish a world record Big Day—331 species—on foot and by dugout canoe in an area of about a square mile, a record that endured until just a few years ago. Here is the [Zoom link](#) for this program, or find it on the AAS website under Events and Activities->[Programs](#).

Fireflies in Florida, Monday April 4, 2022 at 7:00 p.m on Zoom

Dr. Oliver Keller earned his PhD from the University of Florida where he studied fireflies of the West Indies. The West Indies are a biodiversity hotspot, home to almost 10% of the world's firefly species. Currently, Keller is working as a biological scientist in the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) continuing his research on fireflies.

Dr. Keller's presentation will include an introduction to fireflies, their diversity, natural history, and life cycle. He will then cover the firefly diversity of Florida, where to find them, the consequences of light pollution, and tips and tricks to help preserve their habitat.

Email and twitter accounts: okeller1977@gmail.com and [@dr_firefly](https://twitter.com/dr_firefly)

Zoom link: [https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86149743214?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86149743214?pwd=VWtiSUtSYjJNS1gyR2tlM1ZWMndodz09)

[pwd=VWtiSUtSYjJNS1gyR2tlM1ZWMndodz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86149743214?pwd=VWtiSUtSYjJNS1gyR2tlM1ZWMndodz09)

or find it on the AAS website under Events and Activities->[Programs](#).



Would you like to be reminded when our programs are nearing? If so, send an email to programs@alachuaudubon.org and you will be sent an email reminder prior to each program.

Past AAS Programs Available Online

Miss one of the AAS evening programs? Watch them online at your leisure from the [Programs](#) page of our website at www.alachuaudubon.org/programs/

PINTS AND PREDATORS!



Join your local wildlife rehabilitation community at **First Magnitude Brewing Co.** for the **8th Annual Pints and Predators** educational festival and fundraiser featuring live birds of prey, creatures of the night, and more!

Wildlife rehabilitators do the hard work of rescuing sick and injured wildlife. Many of those birds and other animals live through their trauma but are not healthy enough to be released back into natural

environments. They become educational ambassadors that rehabilitators and educators care for indefinitely. Pints and Predators is an opportunity for you to see ambassador birds of prey like Bald Eagle, Barred Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, and creatures of the night like Virginia Opossum and bats. There are always a few snakes including a venomous rattlesnake in a fully-locked safety enclosure and, new this year, a spider exhibit!

Ticket prices at the full donation level of \$25 for adults of drinking age include one fill voucher (year-round selections on tap) and an 8th Annual Pints & Predators logo glass, while supplies last. If the commemorative logo glass supply is exhausted, First Magnitude logo glasses will be used.

Ticket/donation levels:

* \$25 - includes one fill voucher and logo glass

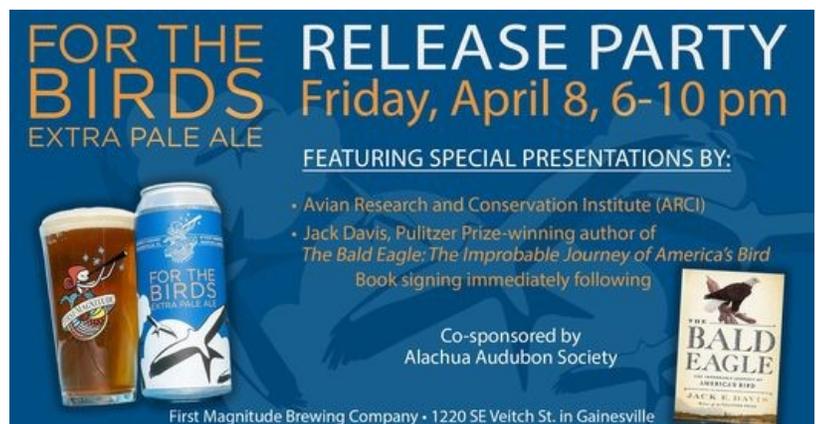
* \$10 - general entry *\$5 - ages 1-12

Visit <https://pintsandpredators8.eventbrite.com/> for tickets! Tickets may also be purchased at the door using cash, credit card, or Eventbrite.

All proceeds benefit participating wildlife organizations.

In addition to 18 taps of beer, 2 wines, 2 ciders, and some non-alcoholic options at the bar, we will have several food vendor options too!

Pints and Predators will be preceded by the **For the Birds Extra Pale Ale** release party featuring a presentation and book signing by Jack Davis, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Bald Eagle: The Improbable Journey of America's Bird* and a presentation on the Swallow-tailed Kite by Gina Kent and Ken Meyer of the Avian Research and Conservation Institute. **Friday evening's release party and events begin at 6:00pm and end when the brewery closes.**



Check out our latest educational tool! Alachua Audubon delivered 500 copies of this two-sided bird ID-chart to the Alachua County Library District for their Take and Make Nature Bags, available March 1st, one bag per family, while supplies last. Learn more at your local library branch or at www.aclib.us/

LOOK!
LISTEN!

Find the Common Birds of Gainesville Alachua Audubon Society

Check the
birds you find!



1
The small Downy Woodpecker perches straight up and down.



2
Carolina Chickadees say "dee-dee-dee."



3
Carolina Wrens say "tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle."



4
Eastern Bluebirds perch on fences and power lines in open fields.



6
Northern Mockingbirds mimic other birds.



7
The Tufted Titmouse says "Peter, Peter, Peter."



5
The Northern Cardinal is a common red-crested bird in yards.



8
The Pileated Woodpecker (Woody the Woodpecker) is 16" long!



9
The Red-bellied Woodpecker is common in yards.



10
The Red-headed Woodpecker is uncommon but can be seen.



11
Mourning Doves make sad, cooing sounds.



12
The Blue Jay yells, "Thief! Thief!"

Each bag includes a family nature journal, sun-printing paper, pocket magnifying glass, and Seed Library packet, plus resources from our community partners. Nature Tales on [Facebook](#) and Zoom in March and April will teach new ways to enjoy Alachua County's natural wonders. Birding 101 is Tuesday, March 29 at 4 p.m.



13

American Crows yell "CAW-CAW-CAW!"



14

Common Grackles gather in noisy groups.



15

Sandhill Cranes are over 40" tall!



16

Turkey Vultures eat dead things on roadsides and soar high in the air.



17

The Barred Owl calls "who cooks for you?" at night.



18

The Red-Shouldered Hawk is our most common hawk.



19

The large Great Egret hunts in the water with its sharp, pointed beak.



20

Cattle Egrets eat insects and are seen in cow pastures.



23

White Ibis probe for worms with their long bills.



21

The Great Blue Heron hunts for food in the water.



22

The Anhinga dives deep for fish.



24

Common Gallinules are seen in ponds.



Visit AlachuaAudubon.org for local birding activities. Visit AllAboutBirds.org for bird identification information. Borrow a Birding Kit from the [Alachua County Library](#) for binoculars and a field guidebook.

Photo credits: Bob Simons^{11, 14-15, 17, 19, 22-23}, Erika Simons^{5, 7, 20}, Tom Tompkins¹³, Susan Ambrosino-Clontz¹², Robert Thomas^{9, 18}, Xiao Hu¹⁶, Duncan Kabinu^{3, 4}, Dick Bartlett^{2, 6}, Tedd Greenwald¹, Danny Shehee¹⁰. K. Brown, Ed. 2022.



Weekday Bird Rambles Offered

Some of you may remember the Third Thursday birding trips offered by veteran birder Bob Carroll. These pre-Covid trips would often include a communal lunch at a local restaurant after a leisurely morning of birding. Bob managed to assemble quite a following with his enthusiasm and friendly nature. Unfortunately, he is no longer up to committing to lead trips but several people have recently requested simpler, more leisurely outings than our more energetic weekend fare. Therefore, we are once again offering weekday field trips, or bird rambles, when we can garner a field trip leader. A dozen of us kicked off the first trip to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, taking the Lake Trail past the Lake Wauberg overlook and a bit farther down the trail. We saw a nice assortment of birds before heading over to the observation tower by the visitor center. We viewed the very large and plainly visible eagle nest next to the path to the visitor center with an adult eagle sitting next to it. From the tower we saw a Whooping Crane flying about and landing with some of the Sandhill Cranes. For some, this was their first sighting ever (a “lifer”) of a whooper! There were also horses and bison moving about.

If you would like to be added to the email contact list for these weekday “bird rambles,” or if you’d like to lead one, please send an email to AlachuaAudubonMembership@gmail.com. Membership is not required to participate (but individual membership costs just \$15 and strengthens our voice in conservation efforts).

By Karen Brown



An adult Bald Eagle and a wild horse and bison at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. Photos by Dottie Dreyer.

BIRD WATCHING CLASS



Develop your skills in identifying the birds in our region. Whether you are a beginner or have some experience in bird watching, this field course will increase your knowledge of our feathered friends. The class is provided via Santa Fe College’s Community Education program. It is taught by a variety of our local birding experts. The next birding class session will begin on April 3rd and run through May 14th. **Registration will begin online March 10th.** Course Fee: \$49.00. *Register early as this class fills quickly. Note: Must be at least 18 years old to register.* <https://www.sfcollge.edu/cied/communityed/index>

GHS BIRDING CLUB VISITS THE BANDING LAB

Students from the Gainesville High School Birding Club were treated to a morning at the Prairie Creek Bird Banding Lab recently with their teachers, Maggie Paxson and Leigh Larson. UF Professor Katie Sieving was there with lab director Jonathan Varol, and AAS college interns. Below are some highlights.



A

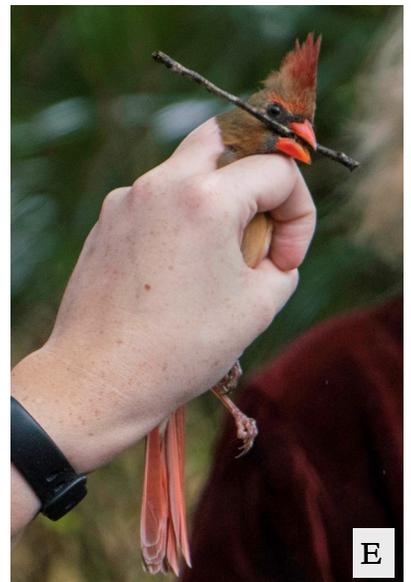


D



B

A) Dr. Sieving shows students a captured bird. B) Birds are given some sugar water for energy before being released. C-D) Birds often become “hypnotized” when cupped in the hands. They will sit still for a moment before flying away. E) Cardinals BITE! They are often given a small stick to bite down on rather than a finger. F) Jonathan watches as a student gives sugar water to a Chickadee. Photos by Alexis Quesada.



E



C



F

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 (\$250) 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:

1. Be a resident of Alachua County
2. Be a student at the 12th grade level
3. 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 18, 2022.** Scholarships will be awarded in April 2022.

Need Binoculars?

If you have a friend or colleague you would like to introduce to birding but lack that extra pair of binoculars, we have the solution for you! Alachua Audubon has donated ten birding kits to the Alachua County Public Library (ACLIB). You or your friend can check out a kit with a backpack, a pair of good binoculars, and a field guide. Your kit can be delivered to the library branch nearest you for your convenient pick up.

Just type aclib.us and in the search bar type "birding kit". If you have a library card number and password, you can place a hold online and you will be notified when the kit is at your library. You may not return them to a drop box; the kit must be returned in person.

If you need help, please ask your local librarian – the ACLIB personnel are happy to help you.



Kids 4 Birds / Birds 4 Kids

Do you have a child, grandchild or neighbor's child who has expressed an interest in birds? This is your invitation to arrange a personal bird walk. Contact Alachua Audubon Society to set up a date and place to bird. We will provide someone to bring loaner binoculars and help that child or children identify some birds. Suitable for youth ages 5 to 18 as individuals or in a small group. Adult must attend with youth. Call Emily at 352-339-2201 to arrange your walk.



Would you like to partner with Alachua Audubon and support specific programs?

If so, here are some suggestions.

Donate a New or Used Pair of Binoculars to the GHS birding club and help us introduce more high school students to birding. Binoculars cost approximately \$125, however, your extra set of used binoculars will be gladly accepted. If you would like to help, please send an email to Contact@AlachuaAudubon.org.

Sponsor a College Intern – AAS provides valuable internship experiences to college students who learn and practice mist-netting, bird banding, nest box monitoring, and more. Interns receive a \$400 scholarship at the completion of their program. Consider contributing to the AAS college internship fund with any amount. Read about the positive impacts of this internship on the students in this recent [issue of The Crane](#).

Contribute to the Bird Banding Lab – We are continually improving and expanding this facility. Any donation to this important project is greatly appreciated. **We are currently seeking a used but working golf cart to cover the long distances between banding nets.** *Donors will be treated to a tour of the Bird Banding Lab.*

To donate any amount, scroll down to the **Donate** button on our [Membership Page](#), choose or enter an amount, and add a note (the note option is available once you are logged in to PayPal) stating the program to which you are donating. You may also send a check and a note to AAS at the address on the last page of this newsletter. Please send an email to AlachuaAudubonTreasurer@gmail.com if you would like assistance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Osprey Cam Live at UF!



Female Osprey with two eggs from 2018 nest. This camera was destroyed by lightning.

The new (and revised) Osprey cam is brought to you by the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida. The nest is located atop a pole at the Southwest Recreation Center (3150 Hull Road) ball fields at the University of Florida. Nesting pairs of Ospreys have been coming to this site for a number of years. The camera is available 24/7 with infrared viewing at night. The male has been seen recently bringing fish to the female on the nest. This courtship ritual is promising that this pair will use the nest this season. Go to <https://wec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/ospreycam/>. To donate toward the cost of the cam, contact Mark Hostetler at hostetm@ufl.edu.

Alachua Audubon sends our condolences to the family of Robert Norton. Rob passed away on January 11, 2022. He spent his life loving birds and working to foster knowledge and conservation of them, especially in Florida and the Caribbean. He graciously assisted AAS with our annual Christmas Bird Count. He will be missed.

Monthly Birds and Brews

The AAS Birds and Brews event continues to be popular with 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 **March 6th** we will meet up at **4:45** for a **5:00 p.m. departure** to Depot Park. On **April 3rd** we will meet at **6:15** for a **6:30 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 brew and conversation.

All birding skill levels are welcome!

Next event: Sunday, March 6th at 4:45 p.m.



Spring is Coming! Time to Create Your Own Park!

If you haven't heard Doug Tallamy's entertaining and enlightening presentation, *Creating a Homegrown National Park*, you really should. It was presented by Orange Audubon Society and is now available on YouTube [here](#).

Dr. Tallamy is engaging and upbeat. He has great pictures and a lot of them. Although our natural world is declining, he presents hopeful solutions that each one of us can do starting today. He states that living with nature, and not separate from it, is the only viable option left to us. Nature must be able to thrive in human dominated landscapes. If we change how we landscape, we can save insects, birds, nature. We can't rely on isolated parks to do the work of nature for us. 85% of the land east of the Mississippi is privately owned. Therefore, we must create homegrown parks in our own yards. He cites examples such as a couple who replaced invasive plants with natives on their 0.6 acre, installed a water feature, and have now recorded 149 bird species (including 35 warbler species). A woman on 0.1 acre close to an airport and an expressway and not connected to any preserved land added 60 native plant species and a water feature and has recorded 117 species of birds. Caterpillars dominate nestling diets in 16 out of 20 bird families. Tallamy described a study that compared native landscapes to yards dominated by non-native plants; the non-native landscapes produced 75% fewer caterpillars, were 60% less likely to have breeding chickadees (in spite of installed nest boxes), chickadee nests contained fewer eggs and were 29% less likely to survive. Carolina chickadees rear their young almost exclusively on caterpillars. To rear one clutch of nestlings until they fledge, chickadees must catch from 6 to 9 thousand caterpillars. They need landscapes with plants that support more caterpillars. We typically garden for plants that always look nice and we avoid plants that are eaten by caterpillars. This is supported by the nursery industry that offers non-natives that don't support insect life for this very reason. But, according to E.O. Wilson, "Life as we know it depends on insects." Tallamy points out that caterpillars transfer more energy from plants to other animals than any other plant-eaters.

Where to start? Shrink your lawn (there are 40 million acres nationwide). Use "keystone plants": ecologically productive, 5% of our native plants make 75% of the caterpillar food that drives food webs; native oaks, cherries, willows, blueberries, hickories, maples, and elms are keystone tree species that support huge numbers of insects; Goldenrods (*Solidago*), Aster genera, sunflowers (*Helianthus*), nightshade (*Solanum*), morning glory (*Ipomoea*), plantain (*Plantago*), wild lettuce (*Lactuca*) are keystone herbaceous plants. Put flower beds under your trees or let leaves accumulate to allow caterpillars to complete their life cycle in the soft soil (this is also better for the soil, the trees and the birds).

Tallamy makes it clear that nature is not just important, *it is essential*. Nature and humans must co-exist (and not just in parks). Not just a few scientists but *all* humans are responsible for good earth stewardship because *all* humans are dependent on earth's ecosystems. One person can't save the world's biodiversity but we can save it where we live. This idea empowers each one of us and makes the problem something manageable for each one of us. Who among us doesn't want that? So Dr. Tallamy says to shrink your lawn, remove non-productive invasive plants, plant keystone plant species, add a pollinator garden. You will have helped to make the world a better place for all.

Helpful sources:

Audubon Plants for Birds www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds

National Wildlife Federation Native Plant Finder www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder

A Step-by-Step Guide to a Florida Native Yard by Ginny Stibolt and Marjorie Shropshire. University Press of Florida, 136 pp.

Florida Native Plant Society www.fnps.org

Plant Real Florida www.plantrealflorida.org/

Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard by Doug Tallamy. Timber Press. Available in hardcover, audiobook, Kindle and audio CD. 257 pp.

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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.

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