



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES
Serving Palm Beach County, Florida
Volume 46, Number 11
August 2006

CALENDAR

Tuesday August 1

Members' Photo Night and Ice Cream Social. Howard Park Community Center, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday August 12 and 19

Belle Glade: Carpool trip to Duda farms. Leave at 7 a.m. from Kmart on 441/Southern Blvd. 585-7714 for details.

SAVE THE DATE!

Audubon Assembly 2006 **October 19-21**

Location: Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach Oceanfront Resort
Special rate: \$89.99/night. Reserve rooms now at 800-206-2724. (Special Audubon rate good through September 27 only.)

Don't miss it! Plan to attend Florida's largest gathering of conservation-minded citizens. Join chapter leaders and members, Audubon staff, wildlife professionals, environmental advocates, scientists, students, agency and elected officials, and other Floridians to network and learn about the environment.

Details, including registration information, programs, exhibits and field trips will appear in the summer *Naturalist*. They will also be available online soon at www.audubonofflorida.org.

Learn to Draw FL Wildlife

Contact Ginny Lynn, certified FL art teacher, 845-1396

Program for Tuesday, August 1st Members' Photo Night and Ice Cream Social

It is **MEMBERS' PHOTO NIGHT** again and your time to shine! Bring your best nature photos and tell us your stories. Please choose only nature or travel photos (no pix of Aunt Tillie, please!). Photographs are limited to 12 prints or slides per member. We will have a carousel projector, but no digital projector. Please show your digital photos with your laptop. The event will be followed by an **ICE CREAM SOCIAL**, so please join us on August 1st at 7:30 PM at the Howard Park Community Center.

President's Comments

Marcella Munson

As we get further into the long hot summer, we can look back at a few of the things that happened this year. Scripps Florida is finally going in to the right place, but it took a lot of hard work from a lot of people to help the Palm Beach county commission do the right thing. Let's see if we can't build on this success to generate greater environmental awareness throughout the county. One thing you can do to help is participate, either with your time or your money. It doesn't take a lot of time to pick up the phone and call your local representatives, or send them a letter.

If you have the time, we'd love to have you help us survey the birds at the DuPuis management area, which straddles the northern edge of Palm Beach county and the southern edge of Martin county. There are Bachman's Sparrows and Great-crested Flycatchers, along with plenty of good-looking habitat for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers—although the last of them left in the 90s. If we can help the SFWMD get enough data, we might be able to convince them to manage the site for more than just hunting. Let's see what we can do!

We will also be starting new membership drives and membership initiatives in the months to come. In particular, we are restructuring our annual renewal forms to make it easier for members to renew their membership for National Audubon through our chapter directly. Doing so helps our chapter immensely, for in allowing us to keep more of the membership funds you send in, our chapter is given a much greater return on your membership dollars. Please keep your eyes open for this new membership form (on the back of the monthly Kite), and when the time comes for you to renew your annual Audubon membership, we encourage you to do so through our chapter directly.

The Everglade Kite

is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Everglades, published 12 times a year.

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Audubon Society of the Everglades, incorporated in 1966, serves communities in Palm Beach County. Our purpose is to promote the conservation of wildlife and the natural environment and to advance human understanding of our place in the total ecological system.

Conservation Report

Rosa Durando

A major topic of concern amongst environmental groups is, What do we support in the way of land use in Mecca Farms? Remember the original choice for the development of the Scripps project? It is not beyond a few county commissioners, in their anxiety to recoup some of *our* money they so ill-advisedly used to proceed with land alterations while under a legal challenge, to come up with a sprawling residential development that could be equally as disastrous.

The term “affordable housing” has even been thrown out. NO schools, no public transportation, inadequate roads. But the money needs to be recouped as well as justification for county new utilities extended to an area that had survived well as rural and with private well and septic systems.

I’m sure the proposed new western expansion of FPL, between the Refuge and Corbett, could use new development to justify the ability to serve 500,000 new customers.

With fossil fuels.

Plenty of rock will be available for filling wetlands and building roads, because there may be 4000 acres dug up for open mining pits where there was productive farmland in the Everglades Agricultural Area.

A cooperative honest workshop of the county commissioners, the Army Corps of Engineers, the South Florida Water Management District, the Department of Community Affairs, and the Department of Environmental Protection could go a long way with constructive discussion to plan for just what the carrying capacity of this area is if we really intend to restore the northwest fork of the Loxahatchee river, correct our assault on the Refuge, and stop destroying all our estuaries from Saint Lucie to Lake Worth.

Costly dredging a mess and continuing to create a replacement mess is not productive.

New in Print: Brief Reviews

The Shorebird Guide, by Michael O’Brien, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson is one of the best books I’ve seen in recent years. Almost 900 photographs in this volume counter my traditional mistrust of the photographic guide, which often fails to capture the different plumages of each species. Each species is presented in the same order, with a general overview shot, then juveniles, then first summer/winter birds, adults in breeding and nonbreeding plumage. Photo captions include quizzes to keep the reader’s interest. One very nice touch is to group the normally occurring species together, with the vagrants, accidentals, and hybrids coming after the species you’re most likely to be seeing on this continent.

Pete Dunne’s Essential Field Guide Companion, by Pete Dunne. All text and no pictures make Pete a dull read? Not at all. This is an entertaining and informative account of nearly every species in North America. His nickname for the Merlin? “Falcon with attitude.” Green Heron? “Dart gun with feathers.” This book is fun, and very useful in preparing for a field trip.

Birds of the Southeastern States, by John Rappole. A nice listing of species, but only one photo of each species make this less useful in the field than as a reference for those planning to visit our region.

Bird of the Month: Stilt Sandpiper

Ben Kolstad

Calidris himantopus, L 8–9.25” W 17.25–18.75” Long legs, long, fine, slightly drooped bill. Pete Dunne describes this bird as “a structural and behavioral hybrid between a Lesser Yellowlegs and a dowitcher.” It has longer legs and is taller than a dowitcher, but it has a smaller head and body, and a shorter, darker, finer-tipped bill. It is smaller than a Lesser Yellowlegs, with shorter legs, a bolder supercilium, and a more “capped” appearance, according to O’Brien, Crossley, and Karlson. Both the dowitchers and the Stilt Sandpiper have a white supercilium, but their feeding behavior, not to mention their noticeably different body structure, should make it easy to separate them: the sandpiper has a much more active feeding style. According to O’Brien, “also probes with dowitcher-like ‘sewing-machine’ motion, but

usually with head under water and tail tilted up,” because its bill is so much shorter than the dowitchers. Stilts, with their longer legs, may also stand a bit apart, in deeper water than the ir common feeding companion dowitchers. *Tip: When feeding, Long-billed Dowitchers look like they swallowed a grapefruit; short-bills tend to have a flatter back when feeding.*

Migrants start to leave the tundra breeding grounds in late June, peaking in August, but can linger in the U.S. through October. In migration, they enjoy freshwater shallow pools, small ponds, and flooded fields (think Duda).

References

Dunne, P. *Pete Dunne’s Essential Field Guide Companion*. NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
Stevenson, H., Anderson, B. *Birdlife of Florida*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1994.
O’Brien M., Crossley R., and Karlson, K. *The Shorebird Guide*. NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

Purple Martin Project

We need your help in conserving roosting habitat for the Purple Martin (*Progne subis*), a familiar species that breeds in North America, migrates through Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, and winters in South America.

Prior to migration from North America, and during the wintering period in South America, Purple Martins form large communal roosts where they sleep at night. In North America, these roosts typically are associated with larger water bodies. Reed beds or islands with low, thick brush are commonly used. They provide sanctuary from predators and a micro-environment warmer and less windy than land roosts which can also form in clumps of trees in urban and suburban settings. Martins also roost on man-made structures, particularly bridges over water.

Regardless of their location or associated problems and/or opportunities, martin roosts are critically important to the annual life cycle and ecology of Purple Martins. The Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA) has developed Project MartinRoost to locate, protect and promote Purple Martin roosts in North and South America. Project MartinRoost relies on volunteers to verify and report martin roosts via the PMCA web site at <http://www.purplemartin.org/roost/>

If you are interested in helping, please contact John Tautin at the Purple Martin Conservation Association:

Tom Ridge Environmental Center,
Ste. 6

Erie, PA 16505 USA

Email: jtautin@purplemartin.org

Phone: (814) 833-7656

Fax: (814) 833-2451

Web: <http://purplemartin.org>

MESSAGE BOARD

Seen About Town

In early July, a steady diet of easterly winds brought several pelagic species to the Boynton Inlet, where they delighted local birders for a day or two. Nearly two dozen Cory’s Shearwaters were seen in early July; later in the month, several Audubon’s and Greater Shearwaters were also to be found there for a brief period.

Reminder: Duda Farms Field Trips

Where’s the best place in Florida, with our miles of shoreline, to find shorebirds? Inland, of course! Our annual visits to Duda Farms will be Saturday August 12 and Saturday August 19. The fewer number of cars involved in these trips, the more enjoyable they are for everyone, so please plan to carpool and to limit your participation to one trip only!

For questions, call 561-585-7714. Please DO NOT Call Duda!

Volunteers Needed for Bird Survey at DuPuis

We’re still looking for volunteers interested in helping us establish a baseline survey of bird populations at the DuPuis management area. Tentative Fall dates are either Labor Day weekend or the last weekend in September (the only non-hunt weekends until mid-November). If you are interested in helping, please let me know at 561.367.7689, or benkolstad@adelphia.net.

Memberships in the National Audubon Society make great gifts!

In Florida, a special 3-way membership automatically makes you a member in the National Audubon Society, Audubon of Florida, and Audubon Society of the Everglades. Your membership will include subscriptions to AUDUBON magazine and the EVERGLADE KITE.

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The Audubon Society of the Everglades General Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at Howard Park Community Center in West Palm Beach. The phone number for the Community Center is (561) 835-7055. The public is welcome to attend.

GET PUBLISHED! The deadline for submissions for the **September 2006** issue is **August 10th**

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