



WISHING YOU
ALL A HAPPY
AND
PROSPEROUS
HOLIDAY
SEASON.



Crested Caracara Hendry-Glades Audubon Society

October/December 2015

Audubon mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitat for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Officers

Margaret England, President
Butch Wilson, Vice-President
Kim Willis, Secretary
Janet Falk, Treasurer

Board Members

Julie Jeffords
Martha Valiant
Rhonda Roff
Sonny Mowbray
Terri Lazar
Add Austin
Ann Starck
Mel Karau

STA-5 2015 Schedule

December 5, 19
January 2 (Christmas Bird Count),
16, 30

Meetings - 7:00 p.m. second Monday
of the month September - May
Meetings held at the Dallas Townsend
Bldg., located at 1085 Pratt Blvd.,
LaBelle.

December 14 – Dr. Ralph Lerman
Demonstrating woodcarving and
displaying his carved bird
collections. Following his
presentation, cake will be served to
celebrate Hendry-Glades Audubon's
10th year anniversary as an Audubon
Chapter.

January 11 – Mark Terrell,
Environmental Specialist, "Florida's
Exotic Species"



President's Message

Greetings:

Hendry-Glades Audubon volunteers and members have participated in recent events and are planning upcoming field trips.

On Saturday November 7th Rhonda Roff and Kim Willis lead an early morning bird walk at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum during the American Indian Arts Celebration on Big Cypress Indian Reservation. On December 3rd I presented a program at St. Lucie Audubon. "Hendry-Glades Audubon Celebrating 10 Years STA5/6 Tours".

We would like to thank US Sugar for providing the December 8th bus tour of US Sugar facilities including Southern Gardens Juice Processing Plant for forty-five birders, hikers, and Florida Master Naturalists. This free tour included a Southern style lunch at Martin's Marina.

There are 6 openings for the birding trip the Friday December 18th Clewiston Museum Eco-Tour. The trip will include a visit to STA 5/6, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Boardwalk, and lunch on your own at Swamp Water Café. Cost \$25. Contact Margaret England for reservation

Upcoming field trip events include the January "Cattle and Birds" and March "Blueberries and Bird" half day bus trips with Gene McAvoy. On Saturday January 23 carpools will be going to the 2016 "Festival in the Woods at Picayune Strand State Forest".

HGAS Goals for the 2015-2016 year include:

Goal 1: Host events to promote interest in Breeding Bird Atlas 2 Surveys in Hendry and Glades County.

Goal 2: Partner with community and government agencies to commit and encourage others to commit to the conservation of roadside native wildflowers on state and county roadways.

Goal 3: Develop birding education/identification program for youth and adults.

Looking forward to upcoming events,

Margaret mleighthouse@embarqmail.com, 863-674-0695 - cell: 863-517-0202, 380,
Riverview Drive, LaBelle, FL 33935

Cuckoo, Yellow-billed or Black-billed? By David Simpson

Strikingly unique in flight, skulking and secretive in the trees, cuckoos are often difficult to observe. By far, the majority of Florida's cuckoos are Yellow-billed. Bill and eye ring color are readily apparent on a perched cuckoo, when seen well. But what of the rest? Most cuckoos flash across the trail and/or disappear among the foliage; no way to tell if they are Yellow-billed or Black-billed.

Maybe not. In good light and at close range, flying cuckoos are more easily separated than you might think. Flying Yellow-billed cuckoos show a distinct rufous flash in the primaries while Black-billed cuckoos have very little or no rufous. Note: Mangrove cuckoos (limited range in south and southwest Florida) also lack rufous in the primaries. Upper parts of Yellow-billed cuckoos are noticeably warm brown. Black-billed cuckoos show a colder, grayer, tone. Both species have white tips on the tail feathers, but these are more prevalent on Yellow-billed. At close range, underpart coloration is surprisingly helpful. While searching for Mangrove cuckoos in the keys, I was struck by the immaculate white underparts of Yellow-billed cuckoos, and by how many Yellow-billed cuckoos are in the keys. Black-billed cuckoos have duller, off-white colored underparts.

I have seen about a dozen Black-billed cuckoos in Florida. Only two were perched, allowing me to observe the diagnostic bill and eye ring. I first recognized a Black-billed cuckoo in flight at Sebastian Inlet State Park. I was struck by the lack of rufous in the wings and the drab upper parts. The first thing I notice on flying cuckoos is the flash of rufous in the wings, or lack thereof. Next is spotting on the tail feathers. Many flying cuckoos are heading away from me, making it impossible to see the underparts. Underpart coloration, if you can see it, is a surprisingly good mark and a useful supporting characteristic. Altogether, these traits give Yellow-billed cuckoos a distinctly more contrast look than the more uniform appearance of Black-billed cuckoos. Cuckoos often flush at close range, allowing close observation, if only for an instant. With some practice and good conditions (sun at your back, bird in good light), wing flash, upper part coloration and tail spotting can be noted quickly. Cuckoos flying in the shaded canopy or toward the sun are probably best left unidentified or with the safe assumption of Yellow-billed.

The next time a cuckoo flies by, look at the wing tips, look at the tail, and assess the tone of the upper parts, and the underparts, if you can. You will see lots of bright, contrast Yellow-billed cuckoos. Keep looking; eventually **one** of them will be a dull, boring, old Black-billed!

David Simpson

www.BirdingwithDavidSimpson.com

321-720-5516

STA 5/6: Ten Years of Data Submission to Ebird

Over 10 years of bird observations at STA 5/6 are available on the Ebird website at ebird.com.

eBird's goal is to maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made each year by recreational and professional bird watchers. It is amassing one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence. For example, in May 2015, participants reported more than 9.5 million bird observations across the world!

During the past 10 years STA 5/6 rarities have included Ruff in 2004, a Flamingo in 2008, and record numbers of American Coot, Snail Kites and Gray-headed Swamphen (formally Purple Swamphen). On November 28 and December 5th three Tropical Kingbirds were observed during the escorted driving trips

Clouds and rain did not stop forty-two birders and photographers from participating in the December 5th trip where over 75 species were tallied at STA5/6 including a solitary Great White Heron.

For reservations for the scheduled driving trips go to: <http://tinyurl.com/sta5-6> or

www.hendrygladesaudubon.org



Bulletin Board

Thank you!

Big O Birding Festival Committee, Staff, and Volunteers,

Thank you for making the 2015 Big "O" Birding Festival a success. Our goals to cover the expenses and introduce birders/photographers to birding opportunities in our area were met.

Approximately 50 birders/photographers were new to our area and 75 were returning participants to the festival.

This year's goal with the 2016 Big "O" Birding Tourism Advertising Grant is to promote year-round birding and photography in our area.



Audubon *Christmas Bird Count*

Participation in the Christmas Bird Count is free. Click the link below to locate and register for a Christmas Bird Count near you.

Hendry/Glades Audubon will be participating on January 2, 2016. Contact Margaret England for information and details. 863-674-0695 or by email: sta5birding@embarqmail.com

Birders of all levels are welcome to participate as well as photographers.

We would love to see you there!

<http://netapp.audubon.org/cbc/public/>



Hendry-Glades Audubon – Celebrates 10 Years leading STA 5/6 Birding Tours

November 2005 – November 2015

And what an amazing journey it has been!

Beginning with walking tours in November 2005, to recognition as a South Florida Birding Trail site in January 2006, to escorted driving trips in April 2006. We have certainly come a long way. April 2009 brought a feature in "Birder's World" magazine. November 2012 access moved to SFWMD owned Deer Fence Canal Road and a new public access trail head, and parking area. 205 confirmed species of birds, and our list keeps growing! STA 5/6 has now become premier birding destination for inland birding.

Thank you for the time and dedication of our tireless volunteers, and most especially to Margaret England for her hard work and dedication. We truly could not have come this far without you. Thank you to our all of our amazing visitors, we appreciate each and every one of you for keeping STA 5/6 a must-see destination. Looking forward to the next ten years!

Osceola Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo osceola*)

The Osceola Turkey can only be found in the state of Florida and for that reason they are a highly sought after game species. Not only do humans hunt them, but they are also a food source for many other species such as bobcat, fox, raccoons, coyotes, owls, hawks bald eagles and a variety of snakes. Because they are such a sought after prey species, they have adapted by having a high reproductive potential. The Osceola Turkey are a polygamous species, with one male breeding with many females, further aiding in their reproductive potential.

Named for the 19th century Seminole war leader, they are also known as the Florida Turkey. Osceola Turkey are recognizable to most everyone; this large, ground-walking bird is iridescent dark brown overall with black and green bars. They have a small, featherless blue head that changes color with their mood. The male bird has a black breast beard and legs with spurs. The female is smaller, duller, and lacks spurs and beard. The eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) is found north of the peninsula of Florida where it intergrades with the smaller Osceola subspecies. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) only recognizes birds as Osceola's if they are taken south of a line drawn between Taylor and Dixie counties on the Gulf coast of Florida to a line running between Nassau and Duval counties on the Atlantic coast of Florida.

The Osceola Turkey nest on the ground in dead leaves at the bases of trees, under brush piles or thick shrubbery. Females begin laying eggs in late March or early April. The clutch size varies from 8 to 20 eggs. The incubation period is from 25-31 days and is done by the female. After hatching, fledgling birds are feeding within 10 days, traveling with the female. Poults will roost on the ground for the first 14 days after hatching. This is the period of the highest mortality rate through predation.

Osceola turkeys forage almost continuously on the ground in flocks and roost in trees at night. Being omnivorous, they have a varied diet consisting of insects, frogs, lizards, fruit, berries, grain, seeds and nuts. Scratching is often done on the forest floor for acorns. They prefer mixed open and forested habitats. Osceola turkey do not migrate but tend to be a bit nomadic, depending on food availability.

To observe Osceola Turkeys it helps to get up early in the morning, when flocks are often out foraging in clearings, field edges, and roadsides. Keep an eye out as you drive along forest edges, particularly forests with nut-bearing trees such as oak trees. Often they may even be seen from the comfort of your car. During spring and summer, listen for gobbling males. Usually they will be found on the ground, but don't be surprised if you run across a group of turkeys flying high into their treetop roosts at the end of the day.



Photo by

Did you know...

Turkeys are powerful fliers, especially for short distances. Their top speed in flight is 55 miles per hour.

Young female turkeys are called jennies and young males are called jakes.

A group of turkeys has many collective nouns, including a "crop", "dole", "gang", "posse", and "raffle" of turkeys.

An adult turkey possess 5000 to 6000 feathers on It's body.

The average life span of a turkey is 3-5 years.

There are five distinct subspecies of wild turkeys: Eastern, Osceola, Rio Grande, Merriam's and Gould's. Each have subtle plumage differences and different ranges. In some classifications, a sixth subspecies-the south Mexican wild turkey-is also recognized.

Wild turkeys have very powerful legs and can run at speeds up to 25 miles per hour.

Photos



What a beautiful pair of Red-shouldered hawks. Photo by Larry Frogge



Black Vultures-the "Clean-up Crew" Keeping our roads free of roadkill. Photo by Larry Frogge



What could be better than a Tropical Kingbird at STA 5/6? How about two! Two of the current three tropical Kingbirds wintering at STA 5/6. Photo by Bill Lang, Saskatchewan, Canada.



Heavily cropped photo of a leucistic Common Gallinule at STA 5/6. Photo by Kim Willis



STA 5/6 Swamp Sparrow. Photo by Dan Scolaro

Join Hendry-Glades Audubon Society, Inc. (HGAS)

You may choose between two types of membership:
"HGAS Chapter Only Voluntary Member" or both National Audubon and HGAS

1. "Voluntary" memberships receive the quarterly Crested Caracara newsletter by e-mail. Voluntary membership funds and donations support local educational and program opportunities.

YES! I want to become a "Voluntary" member of HGAS.

"Voluntary" Hendry-Glades Audubon Individual Membership \$10 Annually

"Voluntary" Hendry-Glades Audubon Household Membership \$15 Annually

Please send my Crested Caracara via e-mail.

Additional Tax Deductible Donation to HGAS (501c3) is enclosed.

Enclosed is my check payable to HGAS (Hendry-Glades Audubon Society)

2. You may join or renew your HGAS membership through the National Audubon Society using a print form or online at:

<http://support.audubon.org/> Select Chapter Code: E51 Hendry-Glades AS

With this type of membership, you receive the quarterly Crested Caracara (via e-mail), 6 issues of Audubon Magazine, the Florida Naturalist magazine and membership in the National Audubon Society and Hendry-Glades Audubon Society.

All dues for new memberships through the National Audubon Society and a portion of renewal dues are returned to HGAS if the Chapter Code C5ZE510Z is on the membership form or the Chapter E51 Hendry-Glades AS is selected from online menu.

National Audubon Society Membership \$20 Annually C5ZE510Z

Enclosed is my check payable to the National Audubon Society.

Mail to:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society Chapter Code C5ZE510Z

380 Riverview Dr. LaBelle, FL 33935

863-674-0695