



Crested Caracara

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society

January/March 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.

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President's Message

Time for the 14th Annual Big "O" Birding Festival!

Mark your calendars for the 14th Annual Big 'O' Birding Festival to be held March 11-15. Audubon's Okeechobee Scientist, Dr. Paul Gray, is one of the founders of the festival and has participated every year leading boat trips on Lake Okeechobee and taking birders to area birding hotspots plus he has presented programs on a variety of topics.

For the first eight years festival programs were held at the Doyle Conner Building in Moore Haven, then the Clewiston Inn was the host hotel for a few years, and for the past 4 years the Port LaBelle Inn has been the festival's reservation roost.

This year Stormwater Treatment Area 5(STA5) and other Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail sites will be featured during bus trips, swamp buggy rides, carpool trips, and boat trips. An impressive list of some of Florida's most prestigious birders and local birders and will known keynote speakers will be participating in the festival. Check out the website at : www.bigobirdingfestival.com

The 2015 Festival will begin with the first official LaBelle Farm (Mini) Tour with Gene McAvoy in partnership with the LaBelle Chamber. The trips will include visits to farms, a ranch, and a grove. A limited number of seats are still available.

Twelve seats are not available after a group canceled their reservation for the Clewiston Museum's Historical Eco-Tour van trip to STA5 and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Friday March 13th.

Contact: bigobirdingfestival@gmail.com or call: 863-675-0444

Happy Birding!

Margaret England sta5birding@embarqmail.com

STA-5 2015 Schedule

February 28

March 8

March 10 -13 (Big O Birding Festival)

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.

March 9: Butch Wilson "Clewiston Museum Eco-tours"

April 9: Charlie Ewell "Shorebird Identification" and Election

May 11: TBA and Annual Covered Dish Dinner and Installation of Officers

Just some birding humor...

Jody's "Rules" of Birding

Never pass up the opportunity to use the rest room. (Or, in a rather Freudian Slip kind of way one day when I was really, really tired said, never piss off a chance to use the rest room. Everyone who heard that had a great laugh!)

The best birds are in the parking lot!

Woodpeckers are on the other side of the tree.

Ducks are always on the other side of the pond.

If you travel 50 or more miles to chase a bird, someone will see it in your neighborhood.

There is always a better birder than you. Deal with it!

Birds will always make a liar out of you. Birds know more than you.

Beginners have all the luck.

There is no free lunch. Breakfast or dinner, either. Carry cash. Bring a snack.

Kids always have better eyes than you. Better hearing, too! Deal with it!

Always tell someone where you are going.

When in doubt, it's probably a Redstart.

When in doubt, it's probably a Yellow-rump.

When in doubt it's probably a female Red-winged Blackbird.

Don't have an imagination. Rare birds are just that. Rare. Think horses, not zebras.

Trail markers are there for a reason. Being lost sucks!

There are more things out there besides birds.

Butterflies, Dragonflies, Trees, Flowers, to name a few. Notice.

Remember. It's supposed to be fun.

In a group of birders, there's always someone who doesn't shut up!

Having a field guide with you isn't a bad idea.

That's why they make 'em!

If you bring a rain jacket, boots, extra sweater, socks, another lens, knee brace or whatever, you probably won't need them.

If you bring a rain jacket, boots, extra sweater, socks, another lens, knee brace or whatever, you'll probably be glad that you did.

Never eat over your binoculars, especially cantaloupe! (Why do I always break this rule?)

There's always something new to learn. Be open.

Engage brain.

"That's birding!" Feel the wonder.

Submitted by Jody Levin

STA 5 Update: November 2005 to Present: 214 HGAS Lead Trips and 8,264 participants

Over 95 bird species were reported by birders and photographers at the February 28 driving trip to STA5. Some of the highlights included the wintering Tropical Kingbird who is often seen at the small pump station G343F. A solitary Gray Kingbird, Great White Heron, Black Skimmers, Gull-billed Tern, Snail Kites, Roseate Spoonbills, and American White Pelicans delight both photographers and birders. With the recent article in National Geographic Traveler and being featured as one of Florida's top birding spots there has been an increase in bird watchers from to US, Canada, and Europe coming to STA5 for the driving trips. Hikers and bicyclists are exploring over 15 miles of levees in the public access area that can be entered for the Deer Fence Public Access Parking lot at the east of the "undesignated" Deer Fence Road. For information about the STA5 birding opportunities go to: www.hendrygladesaudubon.org or email sta5birding@embarqmail.com

Christmas Bird Count

The 8th Annual STA5-Clewiston Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday January 3rd. Eighty-seven volunteers covered over 180 miles and tallied 125 bird species and 36,636 individual birds. New species added to the count this year were Swainson's Hawk, Willet, and Blue Grosbeak. Snow Geese were reported during count week. The number of American Coots dropped from 130,000 in 2014 to 25,000 in 2015. There were fewer water fowl than previous years, but a record number of Black-necked Stilt (120) and Eurasian Collared Doves (35). Next year's CBC will be held on Saturday January 2, 2016.

Great Backyard Bird Count Highlights

One hundred twenty birders and photographers participated in the February 14, 15, and 16th Great Backyard Bird Count at STA5. They reported 94 bird species including Redheads, Cooper's Hawk, Gull-billed Tern, Hummingbird species, and 2 Tropical Kingbirds. The 2016 GBBC will take place the 4 days of President's Day Weekend. .



Bulletin Board

Big "O" Birding Festival

On the Southwest Shores of Lake Okeechobee

Only 1 more week! Get ready for the 14th Annual Big "O" Birding Festival March 11 – 16, 2015. Join local bird guides at 9 Hendry & Glades counties birding locales, enjoy photography workshops, programs, keynote speakers & Eco-tours. Find rural Florida's Specialty birds. For information email: bigobirdingfestival@gmail.com or call 863-675-0444.



Butch Wilson "Historical Eco-Tours"

Learn about the Clewiston Museum's Historical Eco-Tours which feature the Clewiston Museum, Stormwater Treatment Area 5 "One of Top 5 Florida Birding Hotspots, and the famous Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Don't miss Butch Wilson's program "Historical Eco-Tours" which will begin at 7 p.m. on Monday March 9 at the Hendry County Cooperative Extension Dallas Townsend Building located at 1085 Pratt Blvd. in LaBelle.

Butch Wilson is a sixth generation Floridian who grew up on the southern shores of Lake Okeechobee. As a young boy, he enjoyed listening to stories of ole Florida, told to him by his great grandmother, grandparents and other Glades pioneers. This early heritage fascinated Butch and gave him an early appreciation for Florida History, Lake Okeechobee, and the wonders of the Everglades. Butch graduated from Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee with a Bachelor of Arts in History. He was employed with United States Sugar Company for 32 years before retiring and starting a new career at the Clewiston Museum. The museum has given Butch the opportunity to share his passion for nature and the area's heritage with others. Photo submitted by Butch Wilson

Tamiami Trail "Try"athlon

Mark your calendar for April 4th and come out and participate in the Tamiami Trail "Try"athlon in Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve! This is not a race! It is a ranger guided group activity for a fun leisurely paddle, hike and bike in our closest National Park areas. You must call and register at the Gulf Coast Visitor Center, 239-695-3311.

Volunteers needed!! March 7th (Saturday) -FL Panther Day @ Naples Zoo- shift from 9-1:00 (1 Volunteer needed)
Contact Margaret England for more information.

Save the Panther Day

Each year, Naples Zoo hosts Save the Panther Day March. You'll meet Florida panther experts, enjoy fun activities for kids, and hear the latest updates on our state mammal! Sign up for our [free e-newsletter](#) and we'll let you know about all our upcoming events.

Audubon's complete set of The Birds of America on exhibit in Miami - February 27, 2015 - May 31, 2015

For the first time, History Miami will display the entire Elephant Folio in one exhibition. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see all 435 prints in one blockbuster exhibition. The prints will be arranged as John James Audubon intended them to be seen, in their original order, in the sets of five he selected for their aesthetic appeal. The show will open with print 1, the Wild Turkey, and work its way to the final set of five prints—including the spectacular American Flamingo (print 431) and the improbable American Dipper (print 435).

In addition to the complete first edition of The Birds of America, the second edition will be shown. The seven volumes of the Octavo Edition will be displayed in cases, each open to one of the lithographs. Every few days, a curator will turn the pages, so that by exhibition's end, all 500 lithographs will have been shown.

<http://www.historymiami.org/museum/exhibitions/details/the-complete-audubon/>

Mark your calendars for a wild Colombian experience – Santa Marta and Caribbean Specialty Tours March 22-30 2015 – Tour is limited to 10 participants

Book your flights with our friends at Capricho Travel, who specialize in trips to Colombia, feel free to also contact Ernest Leupin in case you have any questions regarding the Festival or the Colombia trip by email at eleupin@colombiawild.com.

Species Spotlight



Photo by Justin Gould

Did you know...

When clenched, the great horned owl's talons require a force of 28 pounds to open. Their deadly grip is used to snap the spinal cord of their prey.

Great horned owls are known to live as long as 38 years in captivity. In the wild, great horned owls live up to 13 years of age.

Great horned owls are cryptically colored so they blend with their surroundings while they rest because they remain largely inactive during the day.

The great horned owls are known as the "tigers of the sky".

A group of owls has many collective nouns, including a "bazaar", "glaring", "parliament", "stooping", and "wisdom" of owls.

In frigid areas, where larger prey cannot be eaten quickly, they may let uneaten food freeze and then thaw it out later using their own body heat.

There are more than 20 subspecies of the Great Horned Owl.

Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*)

Easily recognizable by their size and earlike tufts, their piercing yellow-eyed stare, and deep hooting voice, the Great Horned owl is a powerful predator and one of the most common owls of North America. They are the second heaviest of all owls, second only to the Snowy Owl.

Great Horned owls live in a variety of habitats including deserts, wetlands, forests, cities, agricultural areas and backyards but prefer open and secondary-growth woodlands. They are found everywhere except very dense forests and treeless prairies and are absent from the Florida Keys. No other owl in North America lives in so many habitats and climates.

During mating season, the male and female hoot back and forth to each other. Other ritual mating behaviors include bowing to each other and rubbing bills. When the pair is ready to nest, they do not build their own; instead they seek out the nests of other birds, squirrels nests, and crevices in rocks and holes in trees. The great horned owls are monogamous breeders and begin their nesting period in the winter in January or February. The female incubates the eggs which are typically a clutch of 1 to 5 eggs, for approximately 30-35 days. Both parents share in the responsibility of caring for the owlets.

Fearless and aggressive, Great Horned owls will attack prey that is larger and heavier than their 3 pounds. They enjoy a diet of small to medium sized mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. They are primarily nocturnal and hunt from perches in silence watching and listening for their prey before taking flight in attack. They are extraordinarily opportunistic fierce predators that can take large prey including raptors and other owls. They respond to threats and intruders with bill-clapping, hisses, guttural noises and screams and have been known to even kill members of their own species.

The Great Horned owl's population is currently healthy and stable. Because of the aggressiveness of the Great Horned owl they have few natural predators. Common dangers are vehicle collisions, power line collisions and being poached by man.

Photos



More than just birds like to call STA 5 home. This curious little raccoon stopped to pose for his 15 minutes of fame. Photo by Kim Willis

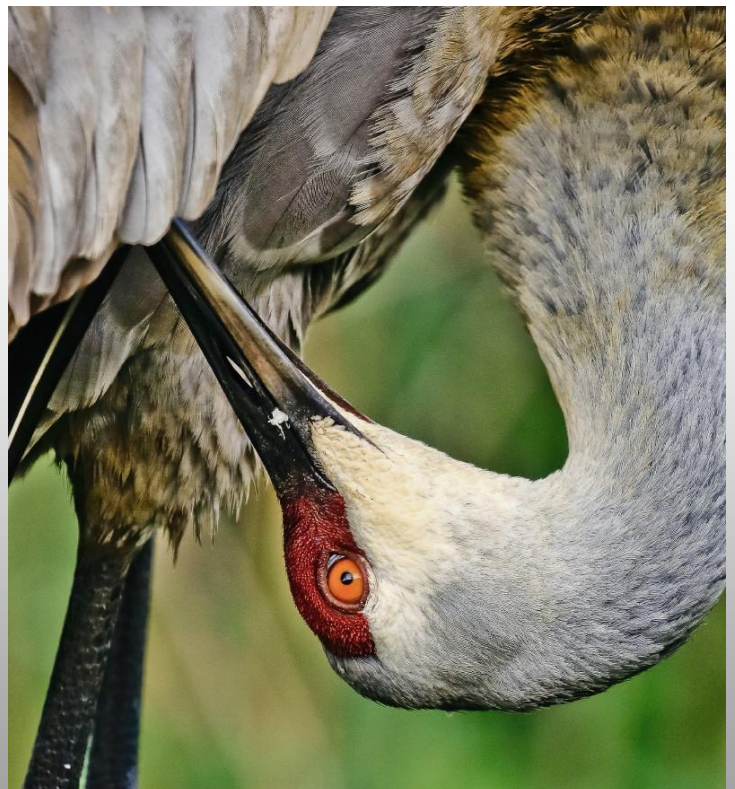


Great Blue Heron in white form at STA – 5.

Photo by SFWMD



Great Egret enjoying a crayfish snack. Photo by Larry Frogge



Sandhill Crane getting an upside down bird's eye view of things. Photo by Larry Frogge

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 member ship 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

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