



# Crested Caracara

July/September 2011

## Hendry-Glades Audubon Society

### **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 Jeffers  
Martha Valiant  
Ellen Minichiello-Boles  
Rhonda Roff  
Sonny Mowbray  
Terri Lazar  
Add Austin*

### **STA-5 2011 Schedule**

July 16  
August 20  
September 17 NAMC - Fall

### **Meetings**

7:00 p.m. second Monday of the month September - May. Please check for updates and meeting locations. Most meetings will be held at the Dallas Townsend Bldg., located at 1085 Pratt Blvd., LaBelle or Clewiston Museum 109 Central Avenue, Clewiston. (863) 983-2870.

No meetings for July & August

September 12: LaBelle, Bluebird Basics (video) and Bluebird Nest Box Trail



### **President's Message**

HGAS has been busy since the last newsletter. Please continue sending Kim Willis photos and articles of interest for the quarterly *Crested Caracara*. [kim\\_willis@comcast.net](mailto:kim_willis@comcast.net)

Hendry-Glades Audubon's 2010-2011 Conservation Award has been presented to Norm Dillman for his service to the community and Hendry-Glades Audubon. His owl programs and leadership will be long remembered as a lasting memory,

Hendry-Glades Audubon has established a scholarship fund to be awarded to a LaBelle, Clewiston or Okeechobee High senior. Hendry-Glades Audubon awarded the first "Norm Dillman Scholarship" to LaBelle High School Senior, Josie Scannell in the amount of \$300. Invitations to become founding members of the "Norm Dillman Scholarship Fund" will be mailed soon. Please consider becoming a founding member.

On May 14 twelve observers in Clewiston, STA5, Pioneer Plantation, Port LaBelle and LaBelle participated in the Spring North American Bird Count. Ninety-three bird species and 11,355 birds were tallied in Hendry County. The bird count gives a snapshot of birds during late migration in our area. The Florida Ornithological Society is considering moving the Spring Count to April next year in order to get a more accurate count of migrating birds. The Fall North American Migration Count is September 17th. Please e-mail me if you would like to participate with the count in Okeechobee, Hendry or Glades Counties. You may work with a team or do a count from your home or other location.

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society received a \$1000 grant from National Audubon Society for the Hendry, Glades, and Okeechobee Bluebird Nest box Project. Bluebird programs have been presented at libraries and camps. Volunteers have been busy sawing wood and drilling holes for over 160 nest box kits. Quality Electric and Pittman Electric have donated assorted pipe for mounting the boxes. Hendry-Glades Youth Leadership, 4-H Camp Cloverleaf, Glades County 4-H Day Camp and the LaBelle 4-H Nature Club have constructed some of the boxes. Youth chose to monitor the boxes at their homes or donate them to new bluebird trails. The Pioneer Community has partnered with HGAS in planning a trail and other areas are being considered for nest box placement. If you have suggestions for a trail site that can be monitored please contact me. Watch for updates for upcoming nest box workshops.

*Margaret*

863-674-0695 - cell: 863-517-0202

## AUDUBON OF FLORIDA NEWS

### Heartbreak on Lake Okeechobee: Everglade Snail Kite Nests Abandoned due to Rapidly Declining Water

posted on June 1, 2011 in [Everglade Snail Kite](#), [Lake Okeechobee](#)

We were deeply saddened to learn that **six of the remaining nine [Everglade Snail Kite](#)** nests on Lake Okeechobee were found to have failed last week, apparently due to parental abandonment **related to low water**. The loss includes **nine nestlings and four eggs**. Of the three remaining nests, one has young that are starting to fly. The other two are not as old and due to the shallow water around them, have an **ominous future**.

To make matters worse, the **Kites are not out of danger**. If Lake Okeechobee levels decrease further, the availability of the Kite's main food source – **the apple snail** – will decline dramatically. Apple snail populations were **decimated** and took several years to recover after the droughts in 2001 and 2007. If the lake declines to 10 feet this year, it is likely the apple snail populations will suffer a **similar fate**. Newly-fledged young and adult Kites face **starvation** in the short term, and survivors may not be able to use the lake for years, until apple snail populations can recover.

Stay connected: become [Friends with the Everglade Snail Kite on Facebook](#) and learn what you can do to help save this wonderful Florida bird.

The Clewiston News has asked the **Hendry-Glades Audubon Society** to write a weekly feature on Inland Bird watching.

If anyone has high resolution photos that you would like to submit you would receive photo credit for your submittal. In addition, information about location and anything about the photo that might be of interest will be included.

September will feature common birds.

The paper will run a photo checklist in preparation for the Sept. 17 North American Bird Count.

Please e-mail or send photos to Margaret England if you are interested in participating along with your permission to use your photographs for the article.

## STA 5 Highlights

It was all about whistling-ducks at STA 5 in April. Over 800 Black bellied Whistling-Ducks and 200 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were observed along with 15 Snail Kites, 30 Bobolinks and a Cassin's Kingbird. Both trips for the month of April totaled 126 individual species.

May brought a few surprises for the North American Migration Count at STA 5. Highlights were 2 Yellow-billed Cuckoos, 1 White-faced Whistling-Duck (exotic), 100 Purple Swamphens, 258 Black-necked Stilts and a variety of sandpipers that included, Spotted, Solitary Semiplumated, Western, Least and Stilt. Other May birds sighted were 50 Wood ducks and 10 Snail Kites. A total of 130 individual species were observed for the month of May.

June of course, holds a far less variety than the spring. As is usual at STA 5 in the summer, Mottled ducks, Black-necked Stilts, Common Moorhens and Common Nighthawks along Blumberg Road top the list. June also brings the newest members to the STA 5 family of species. Chicks are finding their way in the mix. Recently observed have been many Black-necked Stilt chicks and Purple Gallinule chicks. Who can resist seeing that? Complete lists may be viewed by visiting the HGAS webpage at: [www.hendrygladesaudubon.org](http://www.hendrygladesaudubon.org).



Black-necked Stilt chick – Photo courtesy of Ken Schmidt

## Congrats again!

Congratulations to Megan Authement, niece of HGAS member Eric Myer, for again taking 1st Place in the Orange County Audubon Society 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Chertok photo contest in the Natural Florida Youth category for her beautiful photo of the Snowy Egret. Megan took first place last year with her photo of the Florida Scrub Jay. Great Job, Megan!



### **SAVE THE DATE! Big O Birding Festival 2012!**

Planning is underway! The dates have been set for Wednesday March 28- Saturday March 31, 2012.

The 2012 host hotel will be the Port LaBelle Inn in LaBelle. New trips and opportunities in western Hendry and Glades Counties are in planning stages for the ever-growing list of Big O trips using shuttles, boats, busses and vans.

Please e-mail or call Margaret England with your contact information and days available to participate, if you are interested in participating with the upcoming Festival.

We are also establishing a trip planning committee and need suggestions and ideas for returning and new trips in order to make the 4 day event a success.

### **North American Migration Count – September 17**

The NAMC was started in 1992 to give bird watchers the opportunity to enjoy a day's birding during spring migration, with the knowledge that the results of their findings, together with the birds counted by others, would reveal the status of bird migration on a specified date.

The goals of the NAMC are to get a picture of the progress of spring migration, obtain data on the abundance and distribution of each migratory species, create more challenges and goals for birders, and (most important) have fun. No fee is involved. The rules are simple: spend a day in the field counting birds in a specified area, and keep track of hours & miles on foot, car, boat, or feeder watching. The area for any one count is an entire county and is done on just a single day.

Anyone interested in participating in the 2011 North American Migration Count or for more information about the count may contact Margaret England at **(863) 674-0695** or **(863) 517-0202** to volunteer.



## **SPECIES SPOTLIGHT**



### **DID You Know.....**

It is believed that like the Flamingo, the roseate spoonbills pink coloration is due to their diet of organisms, such as shrimp containing carotene, although some research suggests heredity, age and diet.

The Roseate Spoonbill is the only member in the *ajaja* genus.

The Roseate Spoonbill is the only spoonbill species to live in the Western Hemisphere.

Roseate Spoonbills fly with their necks and legs outstretched using long, slow wing beats.

Most spoonbills don't mate until their fourth year.

A group of spoonbills are known collectively as a "bowl" of spoonbills.

### **Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*)**

An odd-looking wading bird of the southern coasts and Central and South America, the Roseate Spoonbill reside in both fresh and saltwater wetlands, tidal pools, ponds, marshes, lagoons, swamps and rivers as well as coastal islands, wherever shallow, open or slow-flowing water occurs.

The roseate Spoonbill is a large wading bird, 28-32 inches in length, weighing 2-4 pounds with a wingspan of 50 inches. It is named for its pink plumage and paddle or spoon-shaped bill. The eyes and legs are red. The unique, pale-grey bill is long, flattened and spoon-like in appearance. Males are slightly larger than females with a little longer bill.

Living in the wild for up to 10 years, Spoonbills feed alone or in small groups in the early morning and evening hours and are often seen with other wading birds such as ibis, wood storks and egrets. This group feeding behavior enables one or more birds to search for and warn of danger while the rest feed safely with their heads down. Feeding is done by sweeping its bill from side to side in the water creating mini whirlpools that disturb small prey from the muddy bottom. Hunting for prey is done by touch instead of sight. Sensitive touch receptors along the bill's length detect vibrations and signal the bill to close quickly on prey swept inside the spoon. Their diet consists of small fish, amphibians, aquatic invertebrates, insects and some plant material.

Nesting is done in colonies alongside other water birds. Females build strong deep cup nests made from sticks and twigs brought to her by her mate. 2-4 cream colored eggs marked with darker brown spots are laid and incubation lasts 22-24 days and is done by both parents. Chicks fledge in about 6 weeks but continue to be fed by both parents until they are about 8 weeks old. Juvenile birds are white with a hint of pink and a yellow bill.

Globally, Roseate Spoonbills are estimated to be in the range of 250,000 individuals.

# Photos



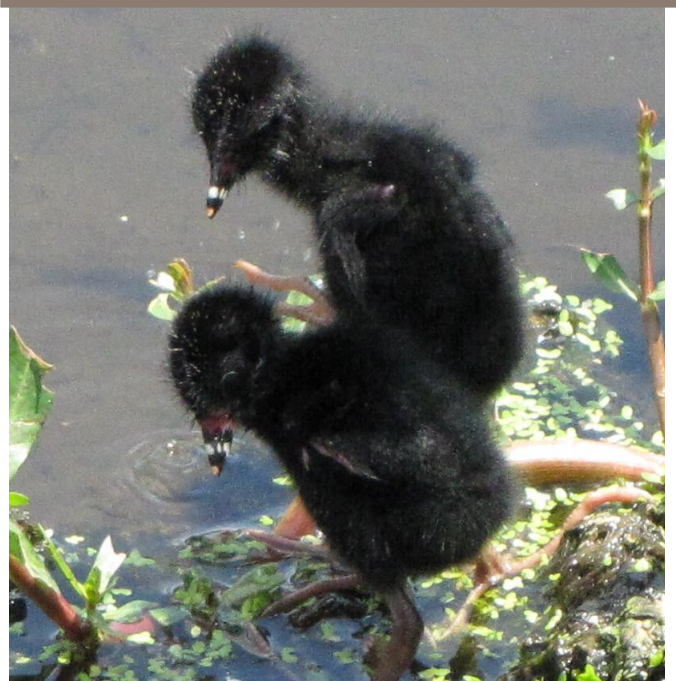
"I thought mating season was over for most of the egrets. However, this guy hasn't gotten the message yet. He was even building a nest for a potential mate, as of yet though, no luck!"  
– Larry Photo by Larry Frogge



No, not a bird, but I wanted stray a little bit to share my influence on my 3 year old granddaughter, Cricket. She thinks every time we go out to the yard, she needs her binoculars to look at "Mamaw's birds". I hope it continues as she gets older. Kim Willis

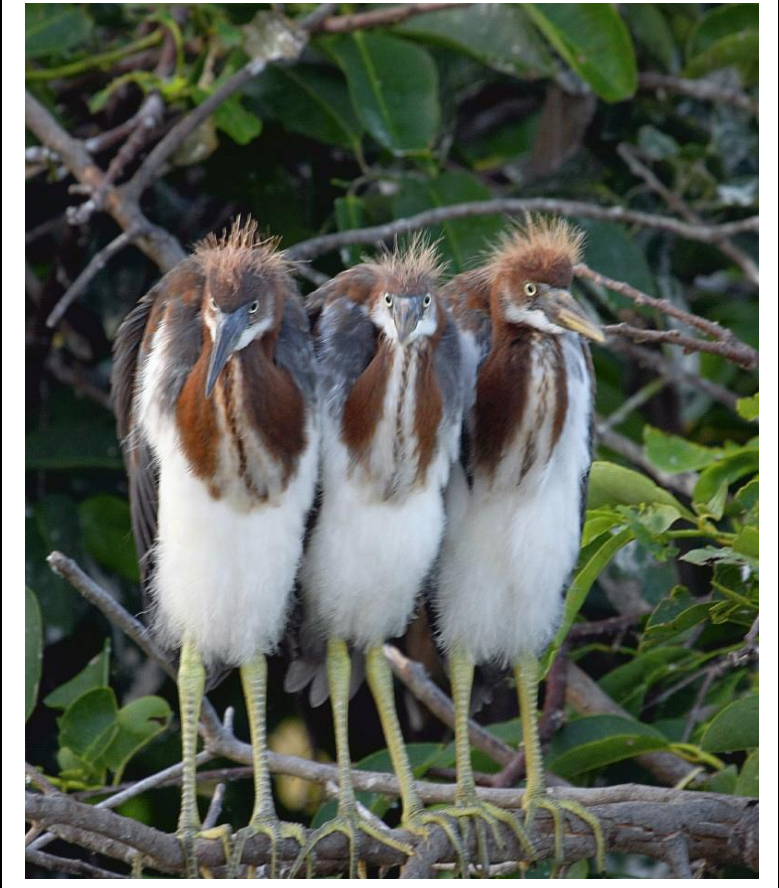
Babies are booming at STA 5!

Purple Gallinule chicks – Photo by Nancy Price





Summer Babies photos by Larry Frogge



# Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

## Ghost Orchid

The Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Ghost Orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii* or *Ployrrhiza lindenii*) is once again blooming. Growing on the trunk of a Bald Cypress that is over 400 years old, this Ghost Orchid coined "Super Ghost", has been observed from the boardwalk blooming annually since 2007. It is estimated to be 30-35 years old and is approximately 45-50 feet above the ground.

The Ghost Orchid's only known pollinator in the hot, humid swamp is the Giant Sphinx Moth (*Cocytius antaeus*). It is theorized that the Giant Sphinx Moth is drawn to the white glow and the scent of the flowering orchid at night. The moth extends its long proboscis deep into tube of the Ghost Orchid to sip the nectar during the moth's nightly passage. Such symbiotic relationships are mutually beneficial to both organisms.

Most Ghost Orchids typically have 1-2 blooms but can have as many as 10, sometimes blooming twice in one season. Ghost Orchids are found in hardwood hammocks, sloughs and cypress domes. The orchid is most commonly attached to pop ash trees and pond apple trees but also attaches to bald cypress, maple and oak trees. Leafless, and epiphytic, its roots are approximately 20 inches in length and are gray-green in color with a white to creamy green colored flower that is usually 4 ½ to 5 inches in size. Individual blooms last from 10 to 14 days.

The blooming season for the Ghost Orchid is May through August with peak season being in July. The first Corkscrew Swamp bloom opened the weekend of June 11 with more buds ready to blossom.

The Ghost Orchid is an endangered state and federally protected species making it illegal to remove.

Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is open for visitor's everyday of the year except during violent weather. Hours of operation and other information can be found at [www.corkscrew.audubon.org/Visit/Visit\\_Us.html](http://www.corkscrew.audubon.org/Visit/Visit_Us.html) or by calling 239-348-9151.



At the April **HGAS** meeting attendees expressed interest in a photo workshop in our area.

Hendry-Glades Audubon has invited award winning photo instructor John J. Lopinot to present a 3 day photo workshop August 12-14. Cost is \$100 per person for 10 participants (fee will be reduced if more than 11 register).

Workshop is limited to 15 participants. Send payment to address below and registration information and questions to John J. Lopinot at [johnjlopinot@mac.com](mailto:johnjlopinot@mac.com)

### Schedule

**Friday, August 12, 2011: 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

#### **Clewiston Museum**

Presentation: What Makes a Great Photograph?

Presentation: ISO, Shutter Speeds and Aperture or f/stops. What does it all mean?

**Saturday, August 13, 2011: 1 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

#### **Clewiston Museum**

Presentation: Photographing Landscapes

Presentation: Photographing Birds

**4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **Dinner Island Ranch**

Field Trip: Photographing barred owls

Field Trip: Photographing landscapes and sunset

**Sunday, August 14, 2011:**

**Noon to 4 p.m. or 5 p.m.**

#### **Clewiston Museum**

Review of participant's photos from the field trip. Each person may bring 5 to 8 photos for critique.

Mail check for \$100 workshop fee to:

John J. Lopinot  
211 Parkwood Drive South  
Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411-8202  
E-mail the following information and questions to:  
[johnjlopinot@mac.com](mailto:johnjlopinot@mac.com)

Name, Address, Email Address, Home Phone,  
Cell Phone, Camera and model being used in the  
workshop

## Join Hendry Glades Audubon Society

When you become a member of Hendry-Glades Audubon Society (HGAS) using the form below, all of your membership fees are put to use supporting local projects: Educational programs, Christmas Bird Count, North American Migration Counts, field trips and conservation activities "Voluntary" memberships receive the quarterly **Crested Caracara** newsletter either e-mail or in print if requested. Make check payable to Hendry-Glades Audubon Society, Inc. (HGAS)

YES! I want to become a member of HGAS.

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

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

Enclosed is my check payable Hendry-Glades Audubon Society.

I would like to save HGAS postage and printing costs. Please send my **Crested Caracara** via email.

Additional Donation to HGAS Enclosed

National Audubon Society Membership \$20 annually (**C0ZE510Z**) Enclosed is my check made payable to National Audubon Society.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### National Audubon Society Membership

When you join HGAS through the National Audubon Society, you receive the quarterly **Crested Caracara via e-mail unless print copy requested** 6 issues of **Audubon Magazine**, Florida **Naturalist** and membership in Hendry-Glades Audubon. Membership dues sent to **NAS** for new members are returned to HGAS if Chapter Code C0ZE510Z is on the form. Less than \$2 per membership is returned to HGAS for renewing memberships. Mail the completed form and check to:

**Hendry-Glades Audubon Society**

**380 Riverview Dr. LaBelle, FL 33935**