



Crested Caracara

April/June 2012

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 Jeffords
Martha Valiant
Rhonda Roff
Sonny Mowbray
Terri Lazar
Add Austin*

STA-5 2012 Schedule

April 7
April 21
May 12 North American Migration Count
June 16

Meetings

7:00 p.m. second Monday of the month
September - May. 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.

April 9 – Clewiston
Bob Montanaro, Administrative Assistant for the Pelican Island Audubon Society - Ospreys of Pelican Island: An Exploration into the Life of the Fish Hawk

May 14 – LaBelle
C. Michael Knight, Ph. D. "A Naturalist Exploration of Tropical Trinidad"



President's Message

Hendry-Glades Audubon is a 501c3 Florida non-profit organization established in 2006 with a little over 100 individual and family members in Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee County. Officers and board members are elected in April and there are long and short term volunteer positions available including 4-H Bird Club volunteers, Bluebird Monitors, "New" Christmas Bird Count Circle Compiler/Contact, Scholarship Committee, Trip Committee and Membership Committee.

Annual Elections for the 2012-2013 Hendry-Glades Audubon officers and board will be at the April 9th meeting at 7:00 p.m. being held at the Clewiston Museum. The current officers and board members have agreed to serve an additional term if elected. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor for offices and board positions. Please consider serving as an officer or board member. There are 2 open board positions.

Volunteers are needed to help with the 4-H Bird Club and monitors for the Mudge Ranch Bluebird Trail, Ortona Community Park and Fisheating Creek Trail. There were over 170 Bluebird nest boxes were built and installed this past year.

There are other volunteer positions available including the Christmas Bird Count Compiler. There have been inquiries about adding additional Christmas Bird Count Circles for the December 14– January 5 annual counts. Applications would need to be submitted before the September deadline. At least one person would need to agree to be the compiler and contact for the 15 mile diameter circle and guarantee that there would be at least 10 participants who would do the annual survey. The data is entered online.

Last year the First Annual Norm Dillman Scholarship was awarded. The Scholarship Committee is seeking additional members who will help plan a mail campaign plus develop requirements for the scholarship that can be distributed to the local high school counselors in the fall.

Volunteers are invited to lead and schedule mini-trips to some of the local birding hotspots including parks, public land and private homes. Are you are interested in leading a trip in LaBelle, Port LaBelle, Clewiston, Muse, Ortona, Moore Haven, Lake Port, Okeechobee, Fisheating Creek, Big Cypress or Felda? We could meet at the site or carpool. Some chapters plan weekday, early morning or later afternoon trips from November to March.

As members of HGAS we can all promote membership and participation in activities; however, a committee is needed to order the free membership materials, place flyers at various locations and participate in some local events to promote membership.

Please consider helping promote Hendry-Glades Audubon opportunities in our area.

Margaret

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

eBird Changes

The new version of eBird has a tool under "add details" which features a pull down menu which explains all the breeding codes and allows you to add this information to your list. Remember you still have to adhere to safe dates. Also under "comments" you can add your pictures. eBird is always improving. Take a look.

(www.eBird.org)

Calling all Shutterbugs!

Do you have a great photo taken of your family and friends at the beach, hiking, canoeing or cooking your favorite meal during a recent camping trip?

The **2012 Florida State Parks and State Trails Photo Contest** allows visitors to share their experiences at state parks and on state trails. Register and submit your favorite photos for a chance to win a Florida State Parks Passport. Follow the link below for information, rules and eligibility.

http://ht.ly/8Odqf? sm _au =iVVfV1JHR1RMSWNR

STA 5 Highlights

January through March is the busiest time of the year at STA5. Over 600 birders and photographers participated in trips. Clewiston, which includes STA5, is Number 8 for the most birds reported during the February 17-20th Great Backyard Bird Count for the U.S and Canada. Visit <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc> for details. The quest is on to add species number 199 and 200 to the STA5 checklist! SFWMD is planning media coverage when the 200th bird species is discovered. The STA5/Clewiston Christmas Bird Count results are online. Visit <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count> to view the 123 species reported in the 15 mile diameter circle. Unusual species reported were a Snow Goose flying with American White Pelicans and a White-throated Sparrow. Rare bird reports were submitted for Cassin's Kingbird and Gray Kingbird. The popular Friday Eco-tours being offered by the Clewiston Museum include a visit to STA5, the Hoover Dike, and Clewiston Museum. Some of the March highlights at STA5 include Swallow-tailed Kites and Eagles flying overhead, nesting birds including Killdeer and Tree Swallows. Between 65 and 85 species are being reported during scheduled visits. Schedule and complete lists may be viewed by visiting the HGAS webpage at: www.hendrygladesaudubon.org.



Zebra Long wing (*Heliconius charitonius*)

Found throughout the State of Florida in hardwood hammocks, gardens and thickets, the Zebra Long wing was designated the Florida State butterfly in 1996.

This graceful flyer makes a creaking sound when alarmed. Nectar and pollen are the foods of choice for this species, the only butterfly known to feed on pollen which may attribute to its long 6 month lifespan. Most other butterfly species live for about one month.

Eggs are laid on the host plant, the passion vine and the caterpillars feed on the toxins from the vine making the adult butterflies poisonous to predators.

Photo courtesy of Add Austin.

Spring is in the Air! By Kim Willis

It is that time of year again when April showers bring May flowers and love is in the air for many of our resident species of flora and fauna. Here are a few events that will be sure to peak your interest and have you tramping about in search of these spectacular wildlife occurrences.

April brings nesting Bobwhite Quail, Osceola turkey and Swallow-tailed Kites. Migrant warblers will begin congregating on the coast with each passing weather event and will begin their pilgrimages back home to points north. Florida Sand hill Crane chicks begin foraging about in the open with mom and dad not far from their side. Manatees are beginning to disperse around coastal waterways changing the Florida waterway speed zones for these slow-moving, gentle giants. Florida Soft-shell turtles begin laying eggs through July and American Alligators are moving about in search of new territories and mates. Bobcat kittens are born in April and into May.

May begins the lively courtship rituals of alligators with their loud, rumbling bellows and slapping of water for the attention and favors of females. White Swamp Lilies dot wetlands, prairies and sloughs with a dash of yellow of the American Lotus in for good measure. May begins the breeding season for many resident and summer songbirds and is the peak of coyote denning season. Non-resident Bald Eagles will begin their journey home and Alligator Snapping turtles begin nesting.

June is the height of the Gopher Tortoise nesting season and also is the peak month for wildfires. Indigo snakes begin laying their eggs, sometimes even in Gopher Tortoise burrows. Female alligators are busy constructing their massive nests in preparation of their new arrivals. Least Tern, Black Skimmer and American Oystercatcher nesting season begins. The quintessential, often deafening sound of Florida summer begins with the emergence of the Cicadas.

These are but a few of the wonders awaiting your journeys into the splendor of what is Southwest Florida springtime. Enjoy!



Spring North American Migration Count 2012

May 12, 2012 - Contact Margaret England for specific details and meeting times.

863-674-0695 - cell: 863-517-0202 <mailto:sta5birding@embargmail.com>

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



Photo by Kim Willis

Did You Know...

Storks have been known to fly at altitudes of 6000 feet and will fly up to 50 miles in search of food.

An average nesting pair, with two fledglings, may eat over 400 pounds of fish during a single breeding season.

The average lifespan of the wood stork in the wild is 15 – 18 years.

Collectively, a group of wood storks are called a “clatter of storks”, a “filth of storks”, and a “swoop of storks” just to name a few.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria Americana*)

The wood stork is a large wading bird about 50 inches tall with a wingspan of 60 to 65 inches. Wood storks are mostly white with black flight and tail feathers and a dark grey featherless head that resembles that of an ibis. The bill is thick, long and curves downward. Juvenile wood storks have yellow bills and brown on the head and down the neck. The sexes are similar.

Wood storks breed mostly in Florida and Georgia, rarely in South Carolina to Texas. Breeding habitat is mostly in cypress swamps and mangroves. Wood storks are colony nesters; the nest is made of twigs, vines and moss and is in the top of a tall tree. Two to five white eggs are incubated for 27 to 32 days and are carried out by both parents. In South Florida, wood storks lay eggs as early as October and fledge in February or March. However, in north and central Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, storks lay eggs from March to late May, with fledging occurring in July and August.

Wood storks feed on small fish, tadpoles, frogs and crayfish. They hunt by wading in isolated pools with their bill open just under the waters surface and quickly snapping it shut when it encounters prey in as little as 25 milliseconds—an incredibly quick reaction time matched by few other vertebrates.

Photos



Another exciting addition to STA-5! This beautiful male Cinnamon Teal was gracious enough to remain for several visits during the January/February trips. Photo courtesy of Bernie Master.



There were certainly no shortages of Soras during the winter STA-5 trips. They were sighted and heard calling for nearly every trip. This little guy was spotted by guest, Joanne Burge. Photo courtesy of Buddy Burge.



Handsome guy! Photo courtesy of Larry Frogge. Beautiful shot of a breeding male Osceola Turkey.



Bulletin Board

Big O Birding Festival March 27-31 2012 Another wonderful success!

Over 200 birders and photographers participated in the largest bird-themed event in South Central Florida, located on the Southwest shores of Lake Okeechobee, the state's largest freshwater lake. Wide vistas of blue skies, oak-canopied rivers, quaint small antique towns and farming communities offer visitors a taste of inland Florida. Some of the state's rarest plants and animals are found here including the Florida Scrub Jay and Florida panther.

This year's 4-day event, March 27-31st 2012 had a new registration "roost" at the *Port LaBelle Inn*. From there, participants explored Hendry and Glades counties which are home to more than 400 species of birds, including Wood Storks, Everglade Snail Kites, Limpkins, Swallow-tailed Kites, and Painted Buntings, who reside from October through April. While the all-inclusive pass excluded accommodations, it afforded festival attendees four full days of programs and exclusive tours led by prestigious experts, birding activities, scheduled meals, and transportation to and from the guided tour sites including Lake Okeechobee. Plans are already underway for the 12th Annual Big "O" Birding Festival.

Clewiston Museum offers Eco Tours

The Clewiston Museum is offering year-round Friday Eco tours to STA 5 and the Herbert Hoover dike in Clewiston. Ride a small bus with your guide, and enjoy the abundant birdlife of Hendry County and historical interpretation of Lake Okeechobee.

Advanced reservations are required. For details and availability, contact the Clewiston Museum at clewistonmuseum@embargmail.com or 863-983- 2870. www.clewistonmuseum.org

STATEWIDE BLUEBIRD BLITZ

The Spring Bluebird Blitz will help us determine where Eastern bluebirds are breeding and nesting in Florida. The goal is to establish the location of Eastern bluebirds throughout the state. It is a concentrated effort by as many volunteers as possible going out all over the state of Florida trying to locate as many Eastern bluebirds as they can find.

Participation is simple

- Go outside on Friday April 13 and/or Saturday April 14, 2012, and look for bluebirds
- Record as much as you are able about the bluebirds you see, location, behavior, sex, age, etc. We also want to know where you looked and did not find any bluebirds.
- Download, complete, and submit the Blitz Report form that is on the Florida Bluebird Society web site, floridabluebirdsociety.com.

War in the Glades

The Fisheating Creek Florida Trails Sub-Chapter is meeting at the Glades Historical Society Westergaard House on Tuesday April 10th, at 7:00 p.m. Their guest speaker is Clewiston Museum Director, Butch Wilson. His presentation will be on the Second and Third Seminole Wars that took place in Glades and Hendry Counties. Refreshments will be served after the presentation, so come join us for an educational and entertaining evening. Public is welcome. For information contact: Betty Loomis 863-946-3560 or Margaret England 863-674-0695 Directions: From US27 turn at the Glades County Courthouse and go three blocks and turn left and go several blocks to brown wooden house with white trim 270 L Ave, Moore Haven, Fl.

Osprey Watch

The Center for Conservation Biology has launched Osprey-Watch, a project created to engage a global community to collect data on breeding osprey. The mission of Osprey-Watch is to bring citizen scientists together in order to collect information on a large enough spatial scale to be useful in addressing three of the most pressing issues facing aquatic ecosystems including global climate change, depletion of fish stocks, and environmental contaminants.

Osprey-Watch is a user-friendly, internet platform that allows observers across the globe to map their nests, log observations, upload photos, and interact within an observer forum. Information entered into the platform will be immediately accessible to users and will be summarized following the breeding season. To join a growing community of global citizens, please visit <http://www.osprey-watch.org> and become an Osprey-Watcher.



Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
MyFWC.com

Released: April 4, 2012

New speed zone on Hendry highway will help protect Florida panther

A new speed zone in Hendry County will make crossing the road safer for panthers and other wildlife. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) worked with the Hendry County Board of County Commissioners and partners such as Defenders of Wildlife to create the new zones on Keri Road, also known as CR 832.

Keri Road is a rural road that passes through the Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest. Since 1996, the FWC has documented nine panthers that were killed by vehicle collisions along this road. Florida's panther population today is an estimated 100 to 160 adults.

The new speed zone, which will reduce the nighttime speed limit from 55 mph to 45 mph, will go into effect this week. The zone would extend approximately 5.25 miles from the east-west boundary of Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest, from Wild Cow Grade to Railroad Grade.

"Vehicle collisions are one of the leading causes of death for Florida panthers," said Darrell Land, FWC panther team leader. "Speed zones such as this can make a real difference in the conservation of this endangered species. Reducing your speed reduces your stopping distance. If an animal is on the road, potential collisions can be avoided."

Vehicle collisions are the greatest source of human-caused mortality to this federally endangered species. Already, in 2012, there have been three documented deaths of panthers hit by vehicles. Among the 24 documented panther deaths in 2011, nine, or more than a third, were due to collisions with vehicles.

"Traveling at 45 mph instead of 55 mph adds about one minute to the five-mile drive," said Land. "We're just asking for a minute of someone's time for the Florida panther."

Motorists should be aware that violators may receive fines exceeding \$200 for their first offense of exceeding the slow speed zone, and any violation of more than 29 mph over the posted limit may result in a mandatory court appearance.

The FWC encourages people to report sightings of an injured or dead panther by calling the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922) or #FWC or *FWC on a cell phone. Another option is texting Tip@MyFWC.com (standard usage fees may apply).

For more information on Florida panthers and how you can help, visit www.floridapanther.net.org and click on "[Safe Roads for People and Panthers](#)" under the "Further Reading" section.



Highlights of the Big O Birding Festival 2012



Participants enjoyed searching for native apple snail eggs at the Spirit of the Wild WMA.



The search was on for American Crocodile eggs at the Gatorama Croctail party. Fifty-one eggs were recovered by festival goers and volunteers.



Guests enjoyed a leisurely and informative kayak trip in the river oxbows of the Caloosahatchee River.



Wonderful views at the ever popular J Seven Ranches trip.



Birders were delighted with a variety of flora & fauna at the Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest trip.



Keynote speaker Jason Lauritsen, Assistant director at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and Wood Stork researcher speaking about the Wood stork.

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