



Crested Caracara

Spring
is in the
Air!

April/June 2013

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*



President's Message

Hendry-Glades Audubon, a 501c3 Florida non-profit organization established in 2006, represents over 105 individual and family members in Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee County.

Sincere appreciation goes to HGAS secretary, Kim Willis, who has produced and edited the quarterly "Crested Caracara" since September 2009. Please continue to submit photos and articles about birds, local history, poems, or antidotes to Kim at kim_willis@comcast.net

Volunteers are needed to help monitor bluebird nest boxes at the Mudge Ranch Bluebird Trail, Ortona Community Park and Fisheating Creek Trail once a month from February through June. The last of over 170 Bluebird nest boxes made from materials purchased through an Audubon grant was installed last week.

Plans are underway for a day trip to a well known birding hotspot in central Florida. Please submit your ideas for day trips. Four additional Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail sites have been added to Hendry County: Riverside Retreat, Devils Garden Bird Park, Spirit of the Wild, and Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Boardwalk. The Clewiston Museum offers Thursday and Friday Ecotours which feature area birding hotspots. For tour schedules contact Butch Wilson at clewistonmuseum@embarqmail.com or at 863- 983-2870.

This year HGAS volunteers lead over 25 trips to STA5, 4 guided walks at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Boardwalk, Big "O" Birding Festival trips, and presented programs for youth and community organizations. Volunteers manned booths at various events including Labelle's Fun Day/Earth and the American Indian Arts Festival.

Volunteers have started Breeding Bird Atlas II Surveys in our area. Most of the atlasing which will be done through 2016 is done during April, May and June. The Florida Ornithological Society is coming to help with this project May 29 through June 1st at a "Blockbusting" event which will be hosted at the Port LaBelle Inn. Please consider helping with this event. So far locating Scrub Jays in Hendry County has been the highlight of this year's atlasing for me.

Happy Birding!

Margaret

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

STA-5 2012 Schedule

May 11

June 15

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 or the Clewiston Museum 109 Central Avenue, Clewiston. (863) 983-2870.

May 13-David Simpson, Breeding Bird Atlas II Project – Dallas Townsend Bldg., LaBelle

No meeting for June

Birding in Hendry County

It has been an awesome breeding season so far in Hendry County. Recent breeding bird surveys netted confirmed breeding Purple Martin, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret, Red-Shouldered Hawk and Anhinga.

A recent trip to southern Hendry County confirmed Sandhill Crane, Bald Eagle, Crested Caracara, and Barred Owls.

Common Nighthawks Chimney Swifts and Swallow-tailed Kites are beginning to become common sightings and is confirmed summer breeding birds in Hendry County!

The "Old US 27" Eagle nest is active and productive this year. The nest was active last year and the eagles bred and it seemed they reproduced but the nest failed to produce fledges for the first time in five years. I am happy to report that this year there is one healthy fledgling that is actively flapping and perching on the edge of the nest. The fledging is challenging itself more each day and will soon be leaving the nest. If you visit the nest, please remember to maintain a distance of at least 660 feet in accordance to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines.

For information and maps from the First Breeding Bird Atlas surveys <http://legacy.myfwc.com/bba/default.asp> or the Breeding Bird Atlas II project 2011-2016 go to: http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm?fa=explore.ProjectHome&BBA_ID=FL2011

STA 5 Update

From January through April 128 species of birds were reported at STA5.

Some highlights included a Tropical Kingbird, Cassin's Kingbirds, Gray Kingbirds, and Cinnamon Teal. The trees at CR 835 and Deer Fence Road netted Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and a pair of Great Horned Owls with young.

In February 2013 Purple Swamphens became American Birding Association countable which attracted birders who wanted to add this species to their life lists. Listers also came to STA5 to add Fulvous Whistling Ducks along with the Kingbirds.

Birders and photographers gave Alan Murray, Jill Strickland, Kim Willis, and Dori Sosensky glowing reviews for leading the escorted groups and helping birders locate their "target" birds.

The Whooping Crane "Fireweed" (born June 2012), who was reported in the STA5-Clewiston Christmas Bird Count Circle, successfully made his first migration back to Wisconsin with 3 Sandhill Cranes.

65 and 85 species are being reported during scheduled visits.

Schedule and complete lists may be viewed by visiting the

Hendry Glades Audubon website at: www.hendrygladesaudubon.org

"Fireweed" Makes a Local Visit



One of the five surviving Whooping Cranes that wintered on local Hendry County ranches was spotted recently back for a visit at the Devil's Garden Bird Park in South Hendry County in April. Fireweed as this bird has come to be known has often been seen in the DGBP pastures mingling with the Sandhill Cranes. If you are interested in scheduling a tour at the Devils Garden Bird Park to see this magnificent bird as well as a host of others, they can be contacted at 800-551-4375 <http://www.devilsgardenbirdpark.com/>

Reservations are required, so make your plans to visit today to see this spectacular bird and many other local favorites.

Editor's note: Before publication of this newsletter we were informed that "Fireweed" successfully made his first migration back to Wisconsin safely.



Bulletin Board

Breeding Bird Atlas II "BLOCK BUSTING WEEKEND" Mark your Calendars for May 29-June 2

Birding is great year round in south Florida. April and May is the "safe range" (resident not migratory birds) for reporting most of the South Florida Breeding Birds.

The Florida Ornithological Society Volunteers will be helping survey "Priority Blocks" in Hendry, Glades, Lee, and Charlotte County.

The host hotel will be the Port LaBelle Inn. Join a team or volunteer to survey a block during this fun event.

For information, contact Margaret England at 863-674-0695 - cell: 863-517-0202 sta5birding@embarqmail.com

Annual Elections Meeting and Covered Dish Dinner

The Hendry Glades Audubon Annual Elections will be held May 13th in LaBelle at the Dallas Townsend Building. Bring a covered dish and join us at 6 pm for a potluck dinner before the meeting.

Current officers have agreed to serve an additional term if elected.

Nominations from the floor will be accepted.

David Simpson will be our guest speaker for the evening beginning at 7:00 pm. His topic will be the Breeding Bird Atlas II surveys.

If you would like to accept an office or position on the board please e-mail Jeff Lazar at TerriLazar1@gmail.com

Things to do...

Florida Festivals in May

SunFest May 1-5 Flagler Drive Downtown West Palm Beach www.SunFest.com

El Galeon May 14-19 Part of Viva La Florida 500 tour, 170 foot replica of Spain's West Indies fleet Bahia Mar Marina, Ft Lauderdale www.sunny.org/events

Cayo Costa Heritage Day May 18 Tours, pioneer storytelling and more. Cayo Costa off the coast of Pine Island www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/events

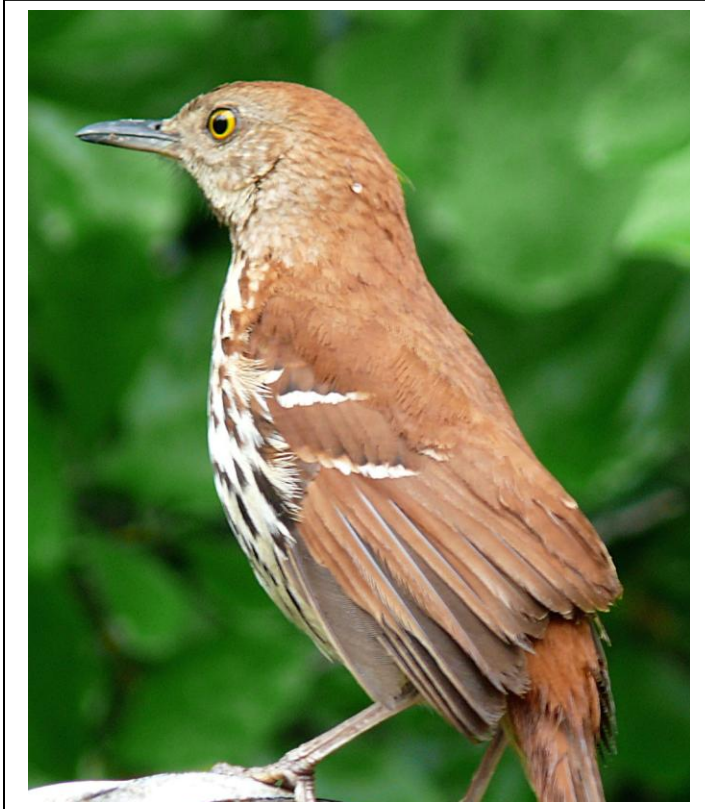
ArtNaples World Festival May 10-14 Celebrate the arts and culture of Latin America. Various locations in Naples. www.artsnaplesworldfestival.org

O.L. Raulerson Jr. Airboats, Swamp Buggies, Corn Hole Toss & BBQ Cook-off May 3-4 Bring your serious hunger for the big BBQ cook-off contest, Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center www.okeechobeechamber.org

Florida Folk Festival May 24-26 60 year Florida folk arts festival with folk artists, craftsmen and musicians gathered along the banks of the Suwannee River for this Florida tradition. Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park, White Springs www.floridastateparks.org/folkfest

Save the Dates for the 2014 **Big "O" Birding Festival March 9-13, 2014!** The "roost" hotel will again be the Port LaBelle Inn. Plans are already underway for the 13th annual event! Mark your calendars early to attend!

Species Spotlight



Did you know...

An aggressive defender of its nest, the Brown Thrasher is known to strike people and dogs hard enough to draw blood.

Brown Thrashers are accomplished songsters that may sing more than 3000 different song types and include imitations of other birds including Chuck-will's-widows, Wood Thrushes, and Northern Flickers.

Brown Thrashers are the largest common host of parasitic Brown-headed Cowbirds. Brown Thrashers do put up some resistance often rejecting cowbird eggs that are laid in their nests.

The oldest Brown Thrasher on record was at least 11 years, 11 months old. It was recaptured and then re-released at a Florida banding station.

The Brown Thrasher is the Georgia State Bird.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*)

Secretive and noisy in the underbrush, this member of the Mimidae family is so boldly patterned that one wonders how it can stay so well hidden in the tangled brush. Brown Thrashers are energetic singers, with one of the largest repertoires of any North American songbird. Their loud song is quite obvious as they sing from the top of a tree or from the cover of shrubs.

Brown thrashers are a slender bird foxy brown in color with long sturdy legs. They are heavily streaked on their chest and belly and have a long slightly de-curved bill and bright yellow eyes.

The Brown Thrasher breeds from southeastern Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and northern New England south to the Gulf coast and Florida, spending winters in southern part of their breeding range.

Preferring to forage on the ground, Brown Thrashers rarely venture far from thick tangled underbrush in which to take cover. Their habitat is that of scrubby fields, dense redeveloping woods, and forest edges. Their diet consists mostly of insects and other arthropods along with some fruits, seeds, and nuts; nosily scouring through leaf litter and debris running quickly on the ground to find their next meal.

The nesting process is a collaborative effort from the beginning. Both parents choose the nest site which is generally low in a tree or thorny bush or occasionally nesting on the ground. Both parents join in the nest building. If they start early in the breeding season, the pair will spend up to a week building a nest. If they start later in the season they may complete one in just a few days. The nest itself is a bulky cup made of twigs, dead leaves, thin bark, grass stems, and well-cleaned rootlets and lined with fine grasses. They breed in such dense vegetation that little is known of their courtship; the few observations that exist suggest that a courting pair presents each other with twigs or dead leaves, after which the male may briefly chase the female before mating. Both the male and the female feed the young.

The clutch size is normally two to six glossy pale blue, pale greenish blue or white eggs, with many red-brown speckles. Incubation is ten to fourteen days and the young fledge in nine to thirteen days of hatching. Brown Thrashers can have one or two broods per season. Grey Catbirds have been seen invading the Brown Thrasher nests and breaking their eggs. Other than the catbird, snakes, birds of prey, and cats are among the top predators of the thrasher.

Although widespread and still common, the Brown Thrasher has declined in numbers in some areas due to loss of suitable habitat.

Big O Birding Festival Photo Contest Winners



Big O
Photo
Contest
**Grand
Prize
Winner**
Daniela
Langley
"Fly
Away"



First Place - Daniela
Langley "Dinner at



Second Place - Ed
Butzin "Unhappy
Barred Owl"



Third Place - Joyce Hodgins "J-
7 Cattle and Photographers"

Photos



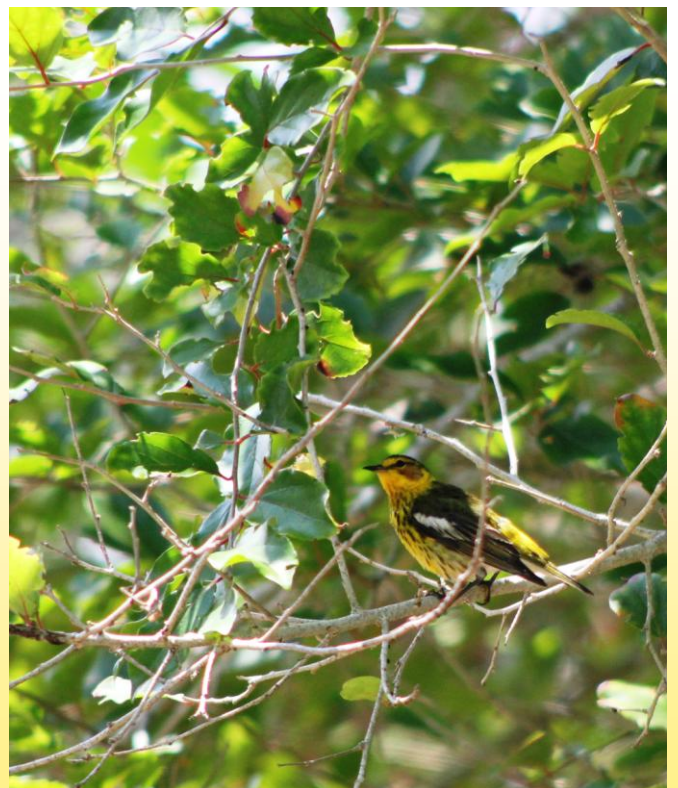
Add Austin's backyard visitors - Painted Buntings - photo by Add Austin



Pretty in Pink – Roseate Spoonbill Photo by Larry Frogge



Male Black-throated Blue Warbler Photo by Kim Willis



Male Cape May Warbler Photo by Kim Willis

HAPPY EARTH DAY

Earth Day is April 22. Each year on this day environmentalist around the world celebrate this annual event in honor of our great planet to demonstrate support of environmental protection and awareness. It was first celebrated in 1970 and brought 20 million Americans together for a peaceful demonstration in favor of environmental reform. Today Earth Day is celebrated in more than 190 countries worldwide and is coordinated by the Earth Day Network.

Speak Out Against Wasteful Fishing Gear

Thanks to concerned citizens from around the United States, more than 320,000 public comments supporting greater protections for severely depleted western Atlantic blue fin tuna have been submitted in the past three years. These comments have pushed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) to begin developing a new rule that could protect blue fin and other depleted marine life from wasteful surface long line fishing gear.

Surface long lines stretch on average for 30 miles—a length equal to 528 football fields—and dangle hundreds of baited hooks. Blue fin, blue marlin, sea turtles, sharks, and more than 80 other species get caught and killed on this gear. These harmful interactions are of particular concern in the Gulf of Mexico, the only known spawning ground for western Atlantic blue fin tuna. There are other ways to catch yellow fin tuna and swordfish, without killing hundreds of tons of other ocean wildlife.

Now, NOAA Fisheries has the opportunity to prohibit this harmful fishing practice in the Gulf and strictly limit unwanted blue fin mortality in the Atlantic surface long line fishery. These measures can also encourage the transition to other highly selective fishing methods; help stop the waste of blue fin and other severely depleted ocean wildlife, and benefit those fishermen who fish responsibly. In addition, restoration funds from the Gulf oil spill can provide fishermen with the resources needed to transition to smaller, more efficient vessels, and less wasteful fishing practices.

NOAA Fisheries will release the proposed blue fin rule for public comment during the summer. This comment period is the best opportunity for the public to provide input on the rule. Visit www.PewEnvironment.org/GulfTuna or contact cjaggard@pewtrusts.org to learn how you can submit a comment.



Become a Jay Watch volunteer. Find training near you!

Now enrolling volunteers for 2013 Jay Watch training sessions!

Some of you are already Jay Watch volunteers. Others learned about Jay Watch at the Audubon Academy. But if you are not familiar with Audubon Jay Watch program join one of the 2013 Jay Watch volunteer training events this May and early June. This exciting citizen science program is for a short duration but provides critical data. Your participation plays a critical role in the protection of this charismatic species!

Saturday, June 1 — Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Martin County

Wednesday, June 5 - Lake Wales National Wildlife Refuge -Flamingo Villas tract, Highlands County

For information contact: Jacqui Sulek
jsulek@audubon.org

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

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 Household 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 Tax Deductable Donation to HGAS Enclosed

National Audubon Society Membership \$20 Annually Enclosed is my check made payable to National Audubon Society or online select chapter code **E51**.

<https://ssl.palmcoastd.com/pcd/app/index.cfm?iXz=C3607BFDBDC71347DF4DC9FDE3E204C6>

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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 C2ZE51OZ is on the form and portion of renewal fees.

Mail the completed form and check to:

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society Chapter Code C2ZE51OZ

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