



Crested Caracara

July/September 2010 **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.

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President's Message

Summer Greetings

Schedules for STA5 trips and HGAS programs are being planned for 2010-2011. Nearly 4,000 people have attended HGAS lead tours to STA5 (Storm Water Treatment Area 5) since November 2005. A five page article about STA5 published in the April 2009 Birder's World has increased interest South Florida's Birding Oasis. Birders from North America and Europe attend the 25 annual HGAS lead tours. We look forward to the public access area for walking, hiking or bicycling that will be developed by SFWMD (South Florida Water Management District) within the next 2 years when construction of Compartment C is completed.

HGAS participates in the spring (May) and fall (September 18) North American Bird Counts, Christmas Bird Count (December 18) and Great Backyard Bird Counts (February 18-21 Presidents Day Weekend). The Christmas Bird Count is conducted in a 15 mile diameter circle, however data from the 4 day Great Backyard Bird Count can be submitted online for backyard counts or teams covering areas in North America including Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee Counties. You are invited to participate in our annual bird counts, lead or join a group for the STA5 tours, attend chapter programs and attend birding trips. Citizen Scientists of all ages may submit their bird list to Cornell's free website eBird <http://ebird.org/> Current total species for Glades County is 195, Hendry 235 and Okeechobee 219. Additional history is being requested for Northern cardinals, Red-winged blackbirds, Barn swallows, Purple martin and Tree swallows who migrate or live in the Gulf of Mexico region.

Please contact me if you have an idea for programs or trips. We are seeking speakers for the February, April and May meetings. Mark Renz will present the program at our annual covered dish and program in September. In October BJ Kattel will present an update on SFWMD recreational projects. November features Hendry County Extension Agent, Gene McAvoy; In December Bob Montanaro will present Critters, Cows and Cowboys. January's program will be presented by FDOF Forester, Mike Weston. In March author Charles Sobczak returns to present his latest book.

Happy Birding!

Margaret England

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

STA-5 2010 Schedule

Jul 17
Aug 21
Sep 18 (North American Migration
Count – Fall)
Oct 16
Nov 13
Nov 27
Dec 4
Dec 18 (Christmas Bird Count)

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 Dallas Townsend Agricultural Extension located at 1085 Pratt Blvd., LaBelle or Clewiston Museum 109 Central Avenue Clewiston, FL 33440-3701 (863) 983-2870.

**Next Meeting: September 13,
2010**

Upcoming Events

The 2010 Audubon Assembly will be held in St. Petersburg at the Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park, Oct. 22-23, 2010. More details will be forthcoming soon!

Save the date! The HGAS Fall North American Migratory Bird Count is scheduled for September 18, 2010. If you would like to volunteer to participate, please contact Margaret England at 863-674-0695.

September 13, Dallas Townsend Bldg. Dinner at 6 pm. and speaker at 7p.m. Bring a covered dish or dessert to share. Mark Renz: Florida Author, Photographer, Photo Journalist, Fossil Guide.

Will the Gulf Oil Spill Affect Birds That Nest in Our Backyards? NestWatch Needs Your Help

We've seen images of oiled pelicans, plovers, and other shorebirds and wading birds from areas affected by the recent spill. Species that nest on beaches and in coastal marshes, like plovers and terns, are being monitored by state wildlife officials. But many birds that nest in backyards all across North America, such as Red-winged Blackbirds and Tree Swallows, may winter in the coastal and marsh environments along the Gulf of Mexico where they could potentially be affected by the oil spill. We need your help to track nesting success of these birds in your own backyard and neighborhood.

Call for Data:

Birds passing through the Gulf region could carry contamination with them, creating an "oil shadow" of declines in bird reproduction hundreds of miles away from the coast. NestWatch accepts data for all North American birds. We are asking you to focus on these five backyard bird species; Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow and other migratory birds that may use the Gulf during some part of their annual cycle and could potentially be affected by the oil spill.

This year's nesting season is already in full swing; **it is critical to collect nesting data for these and other migratory species this year and in the years ahead.** Follow the NestWatch [Code of Conduct](#) and [Nest Monitoring Protocol](#) to help us track nesting success of backyard bird populations that may be affected by the Gulf oil spill. <http://www.nestwatch.org>

FWC Wildlife Hotline

Many of us frequent the outdoors on a regular basis. Sometimes during our time out we may encounter wildlife in distress, misplaced or violations being committed that need the attention of the Florida Wildlife Commission. Keeping the FWC Wildlife Hotline stored in your cell phone ensures that you will always have help available at your fingertips for just such occurrences. The number is 888-404-3922.

STA 5 Highlights

Two owl species were added to the ever growing HGAS STA5 Trip list during the May 8th North American Migration Count. An Eastern Screech Owl startled the STA5 team surveying the Northeast cell and burrowing owls were reported along the L1 Dike Road in the afternoon.

Summer is an ideal time for watching and photographing butterflies, dragonflies, wildflowers, reptiles and an occasional bobcat during the Monthly trips to STA5.

Thanks to Sally McPherson (SFWMD) and Kim Willis for leading the May 22 trip which included Brad Bergstrom's Valdosta State University students.

Orange Audubon Society's 2010 Kit & Sidney Chertok Nature Photography Contest Category: *Youth competition - Actions and Interactions*

Place: 1st Place: *Florida Scrub Jay*

Locale where photographed: Oscar Scherer State Park

Photographer: Megan Authement, Tampa
Member Orange Audubon Society



Congratulations Megan Authement, niece of HGAS member, Eric Myers. Great job!

Looking for ideas for chapter field trips

Is there someplace special that you visit that you would like to share with chapter members? Camping trips, birding trips, day trips or tours. We are looking for ideas or suggestions for HGAS chapter field trips. If there is someplace that you have visited or would like to visit please send an email to Margaret England at mleighthouse@embarqmail.com and make your suggestion.

Fisheating Creek Outpost



Join us for the Big Moon Paddle!
Sat., July 24th, 7:45 pm. Paddle downstream for stories and fireside snacks round the campfire. May include shuttle back depending on water level. Ancient beauty and incredible "night life". Cost is \$19.95 pp. Includes snacks and 1/2 canoe rental. Bring flashlight, beverage, and comfortable clothes and shoes. Group size limited, reserve your spot. Call 863-675-5999.

HGAS Newsletter on the Florida Audubon Blog at www.audubonoffloridanews.org/

Sign Up for Audubon email "**Action Alerts**"
<http://audubonaction.org/audubon/home.html>

HGAS Websites

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society Website:
<http://www.orgsites.com/fl/hgaudubon/>

Join the **Hendry-Glades Audubon Society** group on Facebook. Share your pictures and post discussions.

Ghost Orchid Blooming in July 2010

A rare ghost orchid has exploded with 14 buds this month, marking its second bloom this year and its fourth consecutive year on an ancient bald cypress tree at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples.

Extremely rare, the ghost orchid's delicate white flowers are beginning to blossom and should be in flower through July. Earlier in March, 2010, one blossom was discovered, mysteriously early in the season. Since 2007, the elusive flower has bloomed in June or July. Area biologists nicknamed this specimen the Super Ghost, since typically ghost orchids might have between one and three blossoms per year, if they bloom at all.

"This number of blooms is unprecedented, and promises to be the best ever blooming of the ghost orchid," said Ed Carlson, director of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

The ghost orchid (*Polkiahiza lindenii*) is an epiphytic orchid that grows without leaves on the trunks of trees in a small concentrated area of Southwest Florida. The plants are usually only visible to intrepid adventurers who must hike through hip deep water in the area's cypress, pop ash and pond apple sloughs to reach them. Preyed upon by poachers, the flower was the subject of bestselling author Susan Orlean's book *The Orchid Thief* and the subsequent movie adaptation. The ghost orchid is one of a number of extraordinary species of plant and wildlife that make Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary their home. The 13,000 acres also protect the largest stand of old growth bald cypress in North America. Because of its unique and rich biodiversity, Corkscrew was officially designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 2009, underscoring the need to protect this vital resource from a host of threats, including invasive species and development in sensitive watersheds for which Corkscrew serves as an essential link. Nearly 200 species of birds thrive in the sanctuary, renowned as home to America's largest nesting colonies of Wood Stork, a federally endangered species. The storks nest in majestic 600-year-old bald cypress, reaching heights of 40 meters.

Orchid lovers have a window to spot the ghost orchid blooming through July. Visitors to the sanctuary will find spotting scopes for easy close-up views set up along the sanctuary's boardwalk. Serious photographers should bring long lenses, as the plant is growing at a height of about 50 feet on the trunk of a bald cypress tree located 150 feet from the boardwalk.

Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, located at 375 Sanctuary Road West, in Naples, is open to visitors from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. every day between April 11 and September 30, 7 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. between October 1 and April 10. No admission within one hour of closing. For more information call (239) 348-9151.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



Fulvous Whistling-Ducks (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

The Fulvous whistling-duck is a large long legged, long necked duck with a dark brown back and rufous-brown crown and nape, with a white V shaped rump patch.

Fulvous whistling-ducks can be found breeding in southern California, southwestern Arizona, central and eastern Texas, the Gulf Coast of Louisiana to central Mexico and locally in Florida. The nest is usually located a few inches above the water and is often built in a rice field. It may also be built at the edge of a pond or swamp, in a clump of bulrushes, or in a clump of cattails or other vegetation. Sometimes more than one duck will use the same nest. The ducklings hatch in 24 to 26 days and both parents will care for the young. The ducklings fledge in about 60 days.

The fulvous whistling-duck lives in marshlands, wet meadows, rice fields, flooded agricultural areas and lagoons. The fulvous whistling-duck usually eats at night. It gleans seeds from grasses and weeds and forages for waste grain in cornfields and rice fields. It will sometimes scoop up plant materials in shallow water.

This species is perhaps the least studied of common North American waterfowl. To date, studies have been conducted primarily in agricultural regions of North and South America at the fringes of the species' breeding distribution and have focused mostly on the duck's importance as an agricultural pest.

Did you know.....

The Fulvous whistling-duck's common name comes from the hoarse whistling sound it makes and from its coloring. Fulvous means tawny.

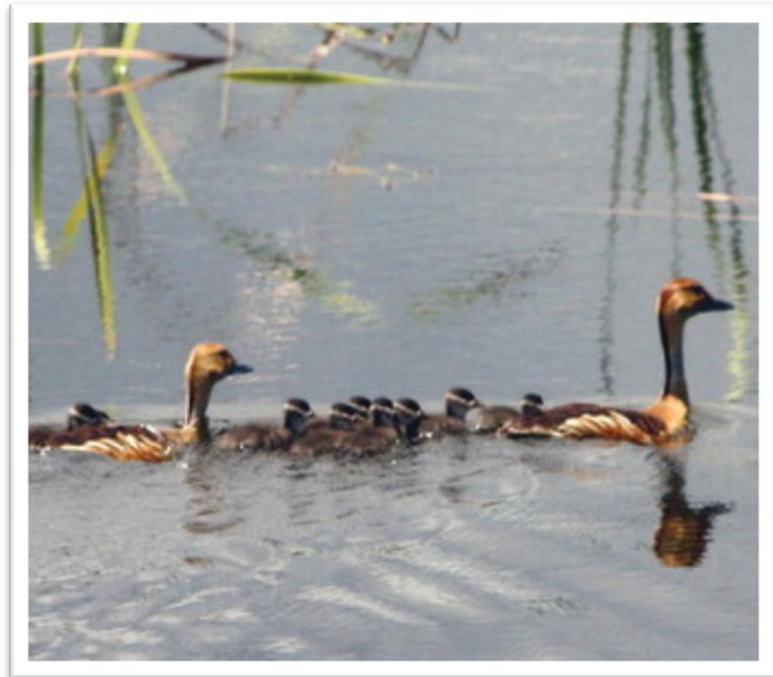
The Fulvous whistling-duck is a frequent nest parasite, laying eggs in other Fulvous whistling-duck nests, as well as the nests of other duck species. These other duck species often lay their eggs in Fulvous whistling-duck nests as well.

The Fulvous whistling-duck was once called the Fulvous tree duck.

In some ways, whistling-ducks act more like swans than ducks. The male helps to take care of the offspring and a mated pair stays bonded for many years.

Unlike many other ducks which have elaborate courtship displays, whistling-ducks appear to have none.

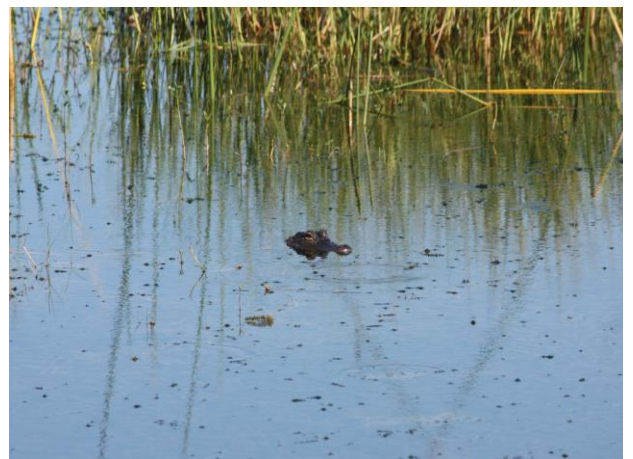
Photos



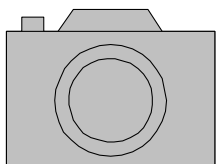
Photos by Kim Willis –STA 5

Glimpses from STA 5

Photos by Kim Willis



If you have photos that you would like to share, please submit them for our newsletter. We would love to share your photos with everyone.



Calling all Shutterbugs!

Parrot Flower
(*Impatiens psittacina*)

The plant was identified at the Royal Botanical Garden Kew in 1901 and was discovered in 1899 in the Shaw States of Burma. It is only found in portions of Burma and northern Thailand and as such is quite rare. According to the grower it is very difficult to cultivate and requires a local natural pollinator to produce seeds. It also requires very specific soil pH in order to prosper and produce the "blue" coloration.

Thai authorities have strict rules prohibiting the harvest and sale of the plant, and smuggling one out of Thailand might land you in a Thai prison for a lengthy stay. You can read much more and see the original botanical text at www.ExoticRainforest.com.



Photo by Larry Frogge



Dear Audubon Chapter Leaders,

The oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico has inspired an outpouring of citizens nationwide who want to help. There are volunteer opportunities in the Gulf, but not nearly enough for all individuals who have so generously expressed an interest in helping. While we recognize that assisting with the Gulf oil spill response is the first priority for these individuals, we are eager to provide them with meaningful direction for what they can do to make a difference - at their home, in their community, and with their local Audubon Chapter or center.

Audubon has been engaged in the spill response since day one getting volunteers out on the ground in a number of different roles including working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to assist them in their bird rescue and recovery efforts, helping Tri-State Bird Rescue with a variety of tasks including transporting injured birds, and a number of other associated volunteer roles. We also recently launched the Audubon Coastal Bird Survey program, a citizen science program similar to some of the bird counting activities that many of you have participated in over the years, although the goal of this project is to collect bird data and document impacts from the spill on birds and habitat. We have had volunteers in our Volunteer Response Center in Mississippi for several weeks making calls to volunteers in the five coastal states - some of you may have gotten a call if you registered as a volunteer. They have now called through most of the list of about 15,000 volunteers from coastal states and now are starting to contact others outside the Gulf region, who should hear from the Volunteer Response Center within the next three weeks.

Your Chapter may be receiving emails or calls from volunteers soon. We recognize that the summer is not usually a busy time for most Chapters, but we are hoping that if you have a project underway or planned for the near future, this can be great opportunity to bring into the Chapter new people who are motivated by a strong desire to help but have no outlet. Most volunteers who signed up through Audubon are not bird experts and the majority are not Audubon members, but they want to help ease the suffering (both avian and human) that they see most nights on the news. They will ask you what they can do with YOUR Chapter to help.

We are eager make the connections between everyone's desire to help the birds along the coast and the need to protect and improve habitat along migration corridors that may connect your backyard with the Gulf, or with other sensitive areas along all flyways. Protecting or enhancing habitat used by breeding or migratory species can help birds everywhere be successful in migration.

We will be offering some specific suggestions shortly about habitat improvement, education and advocacy projects that you may be interested in implementing through the Chapter. But for the time being, if you have any bird walks, restoration projects, bird monitoring activities, Audubon at Home-related activities or anything else that can use more volunteers, this could be an opportunity to get assistance. And, if you have great ideas for projects that need help now, please let us know and we would be happy to direct volunteers in your area to get in touch with you.

Finally, the Audubon Oil Spill Response Team would also appreciate hearing your ideas for putting these good-hearted people to work with your Chapter. Please email your suggestions and your contact info back to Rebecca Richter rrichter@audubon.org.

Join Hendry-Glades Audubon Society, Inc.

There are now two ways to join HGAS:

Chapter-only membership (\$20) and membership through the National Audubon Society (\$20).

Chapter-Only Membership: 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. Chapter-Only members receive the quarterly **Crested Caracara** newsletter either electronically or in print. Make check payable to Hendry-Glades Audubon Society, Inc. (HGAS)

YES! I want to become a member of HGAS.

☐ Chapter-Only Membership \$20 Annually.

Enclosed is my check payable to 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 (C9ZE51OZ) 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**, 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 C9ZE51OZ is on the form. Less than \$2 per membership is returned to HGAS for renewing memberships. Mail the completed form and check payable to: Membership Chair, Hendry-Glades Audubon Society, 380 Riverview Dr., LaBelle, FL 33935