



Crested Caracara

January/March 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 2010 Schedule

Jan 8
Jan 15
Jan 22
Feb 5
Feb 19-21 Great Backyard Bird
Count
Mar 5
Mar 23-26 Big O Birding Festival

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 Hendry Labelle Recreation Department located at 310 West Cowboy Way, LaBelle or Clewiston Museum 109 Central Avenue, Clewiston. (863) 983-2870.

**Next Meeting: January 10, 2011,
at Hendry/ LaBelle Recreation
Dept..**



President's Message

Best wishes for the New Year! Looking forward to new trips and projects in 2011!

On January 15, 2011 Hendry-Glades Audubon Society celebrates its recognition as an official Audubon Chapter. Our membership is over 100 members and their families who live in Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee Counties plus winter visitors and friends. We completed the 4th Annual STA 5-Clewiston FLSO Christmas Bird Count in December with plans underway for the 5th Annual CBC to be held on Saturday, December 31st.

Planning has begun to add bird walks or trips to area birding hotspots. Please send me your suggestions for day or extended trips (sta5birding@embarqmail.com). Volunteers are needed to lead and help organize trips at their convenience. Weekday afternoons or Sunday afternoons would work well for me to lead day trips January-March in order to avoid conflicts with the STA5 Trips.

HGAS is waiting for results of a grant application to National Audubon for a Bluebird Trail in Pioneer plus bluebird nest boxes and activities for youth and adults. The public libraries, 4-H, Pioneer Homeowners Association and other organizations have agreed to participate in this year-long project. Please let me know if you would be willing to help construct, donate plywood or cut wood for the boxes.

The Big "O" (and Photography) Festival will be held in Clewiston March 23-26. This year's featured bird will be the Swallow-tailed Kite. Mark your calendars. Ken Myer, renowned Swallow-tailed Kite researcher, will be the keynote speaker. Some of Florida's best birding guides have been added to this year's Big "O" lineup of trips to birding hotspots in Hendry and Glades County including boat trips on Lake Okeechobee. The photo contest, photo tours and workshops have being expanded. The Big "O" website at www.bigobirdingfestival.com will be updated soon. To volunteer to help with registration or events contact Margaret England.

Margaret

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

Norm Dillman “The Owl Man”

It is with great sadness that we mourn the passing of our dear friend and long time Hendry-Glades Audubon board member and former vice-president, Norm Dillman.

Norm was active in various organizations in our community. He will be remembered by many as the “Owl Man” who presented Florida owl programs for children and adults throughout our community.

Norm lost his long struggle with cancer this past November. A gathering was held at his home in December to celebrate his life.

Norm Dillman will be missed.



STA 5 Highlights

Highlighting the November STA5 trip was the sighting of the White-faced Whistling-duck in the “four-corners” area of STA5. Suspected of being an “escaped” species it was exciting to see nonetheless.

The results are in for the 4th Annual STA5-Clewiston FLSO Christmas Bird count One of the highlights of the November STA 5 trips was twenty miles south of Clewiston in Hendry County. The rain didn't stop the thirty volunteers of all ages who counted 105 species with nearly 99,000 individual birds. New to this year's species observed during the Christmas Bird Count STA5-Clewiston FLSO were painted buntings, Burrowing owl and Dickcissel. Check out the CBC website at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. Next year's count will be Dec. 31st 2011. It isn't too early to register for next year. There are still openings for the January 15th trip to STA5. Trips are free, but reservations are required. Meet at the 7:00 a.m. at the Clewiston McDonalds to carpool to STA5 or meet at the STA5 gate at 8:30 a.m. Contact: Margaret England Sta5birding@embarqmail.com www.hendrygladesaudubon.org Bring your friends and family to visit “The Birding Oasis of South Florida” (*Birder's World* April 2009)



Photo by Bill Hatch

HELP WANTED: Reporting Banded Loggerhead Shrikes

The Eastern Loggerhead Shrike is considered critically endangered in Canada, and much effort is going towards its recovery. An extensive banding program and new geolocator study are underway in Ontario to help resolve migration routes and wintering grounds of this species.

We need your help! Please report any banded (including color-banded) loggerhead shrikes to Jessica Steiner at Wildlife Preservation Canada (Tel: 519-836-9314, Fax: 519-836-8840, jessica@wildlifepreservation.ca). We are especially interested in birds banded with red over silver on the left, as these birds are wearing geolocators and must be re-captured to download the data.

Congrats!

The Hendry-Glades Audubon Society celebrated its 5th year of leading bird guiding tours in STA – 5 this past November. Thanks to all volunteers of the past five years who have participated in making STA-5 one of the premier inland birding hotspots of our state.



Operation Migration has played a leading role in the reintroduction of endangered Whooping cranes into eastern North America since 2001. In the 1940s the species was reduced to just 15 birds.

We need your help! Operation Migration relies on grants and contributions from individuals and foundations to continue our work. You can help ensure the Whooping crane survives for future generations by calling 800-675-2618, or visiting [this link](#) to make a donation.

Please visit us [In The Field](#) to get the latest information on this ongoing Whooping crane reintroduction project.

Operation Migration is a founding partner of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), the coalition of non-profit organizations and government agencies behind the project to safeguard the endangered Whooping crane from extinction.

Field Trips

Saturday January 29, 2011- DuPuis Management Area Red-cockaded Woodpecker Trip

One of the best places to see the Red-cockaded Woodpecker in inland Florida is the DuPuis Management Area at dawn. Join Kim Willis and Margaret England for a free birding trip to the DuPuis Management Area in western Martin County.

The South Florida Water Management District, DuPuis Management Area is located east of Lake Okeechobee in Palm Beach/Martin County. You may carpool from the LaBelle McDonald's at 5:00 a.m. to the Clewiston McDonald's where we will meet and leave at 5:45 am...We will meet at gate 5 at the Dupuis Visitor's at 6:45 a.m. to caravan or to share rides from Gate 5 to the Red-cockaded Woodpecker cluster in order to limit the traffic on the road to the nest site. There will be opportunities to bird watch on the DuPuis Cypress Boardwalk, fishing pond, group campsite oak hammocks and visitor center habitat trail and butterfly garden after visiting the RCW nest site. Bring water, lunch, comfortable walking shoes and binoculars. A water cooler and refrigeration is available at the DuPuis Visitor Center. Directions:

http://myfwc.com/recreation/WMASites_Dupuis_index.htm

Hendry-Glades Audubon/SFWMD Bird Tours Flying High After 5 Years

West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and its partners at the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society recently celebrated five years of bird-watching tours in a wetland that cleans water flowing to the Everglades. The popular trips featuring recreation on public land at Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) 5 will continue in 2011.

Audubon volunteers, with support from the District, have led 108 individual tours with more than 4,250 birders and photographers from across the world at the site in Hendry County. Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, and many have become renowned havens for wildlife.

More than 187 species of birds – from endangered Everglades snail kites to great egrets – and tens of thousands of individual birds have been documented at STA-5 alone. To enhance the experience at the wetland, the District constructed a multipurpose bird watching platform that is fully accessible to disabled residents and visitors.

“STA-5, ‘the Birding Oasis of South Florida,’ is increasing in popularity with birders and photographers of all ages. Reservations for tours are made by vacationing bird watchers months in advance,” said Margaret England, President of the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society. “On December 4, an American pipit was added to our ever increasing species list of migratory and resident birds observed at the wetland.”

England and a team of volunteers lead the tours two Saturdays a month, with special events in between. They recently hosted Danish birders, and the tours earned a feature in the April 2009 edition of *Birder's World Magazine*.

The birding experience is not only limited to guided tours. Many Audubon volunteers and tour goers also participate in the Spring and Fall North American Migration Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count, the Big “O” Birding Festival and the Christmas Bird Count.

The latest season of tours has already begun, and trips are scheduled well into 2011.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



Did you know.....

The quintessential early bird, the American Robin is considered harbingers of spring.

The oldest recorded American Robin was 13 years and 11 months old.

A group of robins is collectively known as a “worm” of robins.

The American Robin is the state bird of Connecticut, Michigan and Wisconsin.

When eating Honeysuckle berries exclusively, the American Robin sometimes becomes intoxicated.

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

A migratory song bird from the thrush family, it is the largest of the North American thrushes. The American Robin is widely distributed throughout North America. Wintering south of Canada from Florida to central Mexico and along the Pacific Coast, the American Robin can be found in gardens, parks, yards, fields, pine forests, woodlands and shrub lands.

The American Robin lays three to seven pale blue eggs in a well-made nest cup made from mud, reinforced with twigs and grass, lined with softer grass, built in a tree or on a ledge. Incubation is from 12 to 14 days and is carried out by the female. Two broods per season are typical.

The American Robin feeds on wild and cultivated fruits and berries, insects and earthworms. They appear to cock their heads and “listen” to the ground when searching for earthworms but it hunts visually, not by sound. It is frequently seen running across lawns picking up earthworms. It’s running and stopping behavior is a distinguishing characteristic of the robin.

American Robins are most active during the day. They are social birds, especially during winter when they gather in large numbers on their wintering grounds. They assemble in large flocks at night and congregate in a secluded swamp or area of dense vegetation and in trees. They break up into smaller groups during the day to forage.

American Robins are successful birds, having adapted to human alteration of the landscape. At one time they were killed for their meat in southern states, and the meat was considered a delicacy. They are now protected throughout their range under the U.S. Migratory Bird Protection Act.

Photos



Barred Owl – DuPuis Management Area, Martin County November 2010 Photo by Kim Willis

Be as a bird
perched on a frail
branch that she
feels bending
beneath her, still
she sings away all
the same, knowing
she has wings.
Victor Hugo



© 2010 Don Hamilton Jr.

Lord of the Marsh Peregrine Falcon – Photo by Don Hamilton



© 2010 Vincent P. Lucas

American Pipit – STA5/Blumberg Road, December 4, 2010 Photo by Vincent Lucas

AUDUBON OF FLORIDA NEWS

Audubon's Dr. Paul Gray Reports from Lake Okeechobee

On November 30, I ventured on Lake Okeechobee from Okee-Tantie, to inspect some of the in-lake management projects that have been done, and are being planned. Along on the trip was Don Fox, of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), also this year's winner of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies "Fisheries Biologist of the Year" award, Dr. Bruce Sharfstein, of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and Kevin Powers, SFWMD Governing Board member from Indiantown.

Lake Okeechobee's water level was at 13 feet and conditions were just *beautiful*. The marshes and submerged plant communities have (finally) recovered from the high water events of 2004 and 2005, and not only are the plant communities vibrant, but the birds using the marsh were abundant and varied. We tallied 47 species in a three hour trip, including Snail Kites, many Limpkins, Roseate Spoonbills, 9 other species of herons and egrets, and 10 species of shorebirds, gulls, and terns, with many in large flocks.

Past "marsh-scraping" projects that cleared organics from the marshes have re-grown with desired spike rush and bladderwort communities, as opposed to adjacent un-scraped areas still dominated by brush, and holding few birds. Don showed us old aerial photos and maps depicting a slough from Tin House Cove up to the Buckhead Ridge Marshes that has filled with dead plant material. FWC plans to reopen the slough if the lake gets low enough this year. FWC also is developing burning prescriptions for the marsh to take advantage of low water conditions. Burns help remove organics and stimulate germination and growth of many marsh plant species. SFWMD, and other agencies contribute financing and expertise for these efforts as well.

In spite of great conditions now, the lake is lower than desired for this early in the dry season, and if weather predictions are accurate, the lake could drop as low as *10 feet by June*. Wading bird nesting might not be possible this spring. Similarly, this could kill off the recent apple snail recovery which in turn, could make the lake unfit for Snail Kite nesting for several more years. Such low levels also would create water supply rationing for farmers and the cut off fresh water flows that maintain proper Caloosahatchee Estuary salinities, killing their tape grass beds and associated spawns of fish, crabs, shrimp, and other estuary inhabitants.

The Audubon team continues to work in Okeechobee's watershed to gain more water storage capacity that will help prevent these low water events (and high water too), as well as projects to clean up Okeechobee's water. This week we submitted extensive comments on how to improve the Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan (LOPP) 3-year update, including a written letter to Carol Wehle, the Executive Director of the SFWMD. The LOPP specifies projects to improve water quality and level managements, as well as in-lake management activities.

When I thanked Governing Board member Kevin Powers for coming, he emphasized that he has to vote on many issues affecting the Lake and St. Lucie Estuary, and he is a person who wants to see and know, first hand, what he is voting on. We appreciate his care and extra efforts.

In the Beginning: A Brief History of the National Audubon Society

By Kim Willis

Formed in 1886, the Audubon Society was first founded by George Bird Grinnell, editor of the *Forest and Stream* hunting and fishing journal. Even being an avid hunter, Grinnell was appalled at the reckless slaughter of thousands of plume birds for the adornment of hats for ladies fashion. Grinnell began a campaign of published pieces against plume hunting in his magazine. From this, came a pamphlet entitled “*Audubon Magazine*” in honor of illustrator John James Audubon. Although he did not know Mr. Audubon, he did attend the artists’ widow day school and wandered among his artifacts.

In the beginning the “society” existed only in the pages of the magazine. No members, no meetings, just folks united against the reckless slaughter of birds by the plume hunters. Interlaced with stories of feathered pets, ornithological biographies and bird histories, the publication soon became too tasking and it ended in 1888.

Some eight years later, Boston socialite Harriet Hemenway took her own stand against the still uncontrolled plume hunting practices and scoured the Boston Blue Book, an index of the city’s elite, marking noted women of the day who adorned the fashionable plumes and invited them to join a society for the protection of birds. Ms. Hemenway united these ladies and others interested in the cause and in ornithology in general, and created the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

By the turn of the century, the Audubon Society had spread across the country and unified under a national committee. The society encouraged federal and state legislation against the plume hunting practices and helped create the first Federal Bird reservation which ultimately led to the formation of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Over the decades, the Audubon Society has expanded its mission of protecting birds from plume hunters to use their influence for federal policies on air, water and endangered species protection. Today, the Audubon Society funds conservation programs for birds and encourages initiatives in the protection of birds and other wildlife while also encouraging initiatives to control invasive species, ecosystem restoration, protecting the Endangered Species Act and maintaining the restrictions for the Clean Air and Water Act.



Plumes of Blood

Plume hunters took their work seriously and often violently resisted the Audubon Society's efforts to protect wild birds. In 1905, Guy Bradley, an Audubon warden near Flamingo, Fla., was shot and killed by a plume hunter while defending illegally killed nesting birds. Another warden, Columbus G. MacLeod, died in the line of duty only three years later in 1908. Later that year, yet another would lose his life when Pressly Reeves, of the South Carolina Audubon Society, was shot and killed in an ambush by unknown assailants. These murders heightened the Society's condemnation of plumes for fashion.

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