



Crested Caracara

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society

July/September 2014

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
Ann Starck
Mel Karau*

STA-5 2014 Schedule

August 9
September 13

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.

August – No meeting

September 8 -LABELLE
Chris Schmiege: Forest Recreation and Management on Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest.

October 13 -LABELLE
Dr. Reed Bowman: Scrub Jays



President's Message

Summer Greetings

Schedules for HGAS programs are being planned for 2014-2015. Please send your suggestions for programs and trips to Margaret England.

Over 7,500 people have attended HGAS lead tours to STA5 (Storm Water Treatment Area 5) since November 2005. There is public access area for walking, hiking or bicycling developed by SFWMD (South Florida Water Management District) Friday through Monday during daylight hours except for the 12 Sunday duck hunting days in the fall and spring.

HGAS participates in the Christmas Bird Count and Great Backyard Bird Count held annually on 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.

Breeding Bird Atlas II surveys are being conducted from 2011-2016. HGAS will host groups of birders and teams during the 2015 surveys May 1 through May 14, 2015 in order to document breeding birds in Hendry, Glades, and Okeechobee counties before 2016.

You are invited to participate in 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/>

A special thanks to the Clewiston News and staff for publishing HGAS's Inland Birding. For the past 3 years HGAS has submitted over 125 articles and photos of local birds to the Clewiston News which were also published in the weekly Glades Democrat and Okeechobee News This collection of articles and photos is being compiled for the papers for them to use when space is available in their publications as a public service.

Happy Birding!

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

Margaret

Summer Birding by Kim Willis

Our weather allows us the opportunity to get outdoors year round in South Florida, but how many of us brave the heat, mosquitos and afternoon thunderstorms to actually enjoy our mecca of wonders? Unless we are headed to the shore, many of us choose to stay within comfort of the ole A/C than to saunter out and engage Mother Nature head-on in the sweltering summer heat.

In June however, many of us were braving those South Florida perils, traipsing the county on this year's June Challenge; a friendly birding competition created to lure the reluctant birder out into the summer sizzle to see just how many birds one can observe within a given county in the month of June. Yes, I was up for the challenge!

It was pleasantly surprising to see that there are still birds to be seen in Florida in the summer. Our permanent resident birds add so much to the landscape and are often overlooked at the prospect of the next migrant sighting.

As I head out for an early morning excursion, the day brings the eerie calling of the Limpkin as it makes its way into the day in search of its morning meal. The marsh comes alive with the calling of the Red-winged Blackbirds and White-eyed Vireos as in the distance the cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk of the Pileated Woodpecker can be heard trailing in the wind. The Carolina Wren busies herself with the duties of the day as a host of Black-crowned Night Herons flutter from their Carolina Willow hideouts. Witchity-witchity-witchity of the Common Yellowthroat can be heard as the Common Gallinule picks at the vegetation for its morning delight. A Red-shouldered Hawk comes screeching past and perches itself in a tall cypress alerting all the others to my presence in their marshland world.

As for the contest, I have forgotten all about this as I stand awe of this wondrous place, taking it all in.

Looking for a little swamp adventure? Look no further than **Felda Swamp Buggy Tours**. Located at 13375 S SR 29, Felda, you can get a great look at old Florida backwoods on a modern 26 passenger swamp buggy on a 4,000-acre property that offers swamps and woods with wildlife. The property is part of the original Roberts family property that included Southwest Florida's legendary Red Cattle Company and is still family owned.

The site includes an air conditioned reception building to house ticket sales and displays. The walls display local South Florida game trophies. Even with the emphasis on the natural beauty of South Florida, they still have nice modern restroom facilities. Call for tickets or information, 863-843-2989 or visit online at Feldaswampbuggytours.com to schedule a tour. Open seven days a week from 8:30-5:00. Call about early morning or evening group tours. Scheduled tours run daily at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Children three and under ride for free.



STA 5 Update

STA5/6 had more successful Snail Kite nests than any other location in Florida. Researchers have documented over 44 nests during one survey this summer. The birds are banded in order to continue monitoring their movement.

Five years ago the young birds from STA5 were found north of Lake Okeechobee near Lakeport. During the August 9th trip a pair of Snail Kites was observed building a nest near the parking lot at the STA5 Public Access Area.

Other breeding species observed this summer during scheduled trips were Black-necked Stilt, Purple Swamphen, Purple Gallinule, and Common Gallinule. Fledgling Purple Martin, Turkey, and Red-shouldered Hawk were also observed.

During the summer months 60 plus species are observed, but there are fewer waterfowl and wading birds. Some migratory species are starting to move through the area including Swallow-tailed Kites. A Great Horned Owl was seen at the Deer Fence Road and 835 intersections on August 9.

Birders are reporting a large variety of species in the fields and power lines along Blumberg Road. We include these sightings in our STA5 checklists as well as birds seen along the L1 Dike Road and Manley Ditch Road.

Expect to see returning waterfowl and migrating birds during the September 13th trip to STA5. For information contact Margaret England at sta5birding@embarqmail.com or visit the HGAS website.

Welcome New Board Members



Welcome to our newest Hendry-Glades board members Mel Karau and Ann Starck. Ann will be taking on the task of membership.



Bulletin Board

Florida Panther Festival 2014

Saturday November 15, 2014

Collier Regional Park 10 am – 4 pm

Field Trips Sunday, November 16, 2014

www.floridapantherfestival.com or 727-599-7624 for information

Free, family fun event promoting protection, preservation and education of Florida's state animal.



The FWC needs your help documenting where gopher tortoises live - Download the **Florida Gopher Tortoise Smartphone app**. The free app is available for both Android and iOS smartphones. With your help, FWC will be able to better document where gopher tortoises are living within our Florida communities, and how we can work together to protect them.

<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/gopher-tortoise/app/>



Congratulations to our June Challenge contestants for Hendry and Glades Counties – Way to Go!

Kim Willis – Hendry County 77 Species

Margaret England – Hendry County 65 Species

Ann Stark – Glades County 74 Species

SWFL CISMA

Python eggs are hatching in SWFL ... Adult females that have been sitting on their eggs for the past two months will leave the clutch a few days before they hatch... They can travel a good distance searching for food and water and can cross roadways...

We have heard many reports lately of adult snakes sighted on the roads in southern Collier... Hatchlings will show up on the roads very soon, moving at night or they can often be seen dead on the roads from vehicle mortality early in the morning...

Please keep a lookout for pythons on the roadways for the next few weeks... Take photos and a GPS location and report to the hotline... This information helps them document their expansion into new areas...

If you know of anyone who is interested in assisting SWFL CISMA with night time road-cruising surveys for pythons over the next few weeks please contact Ian Bartoszek at:
ianb@conservancy.org

Species Spotlight



Photo by Kim Willis

Did you know...

The Anhinga is native to many countries around the world, including Belize, Brazil, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, the United States and Venezuela. The Anhinga has also been found in a variety of other countries, such as the Cayman Islands, Canada, Haiti and Martinique.

The Anhinga is often seen soaring like a raptor. They use thermals and can be seen soaring several thousand feet.

The nickname “water turkey” comes from the Anhinga’s long tail.

The nickname “snake bird” comes from the manner in which they swim with their bodies below water with their head and neck above. Observers see this as resembling a snake.

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)

Snakebird, Water Turkey, or simply Anhinga; whatever your name choice for this strange looking bird, there is no doubt it will get your attention when you see it with its long snake-like neck and slender body. It is seen gliding effortlessly through the water in search of its next meal. Other times perched with its wings outstretched in the warmth of the sun as if it is reaching for that last ray. The Anhinga is large bird with a long thin neck and a long thin pointed spear-like bill. They have a long tail and silver patches on their wings. The male bird is all black while the female and juvenile birds have a brown to buff colored neck.

The Anhinga breeding region includes the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from North Carolina to Texas, Florida, and the Mississippi Valley north to southern Missouri, Illinois, and Kentucky. The Anhinga winters along the Gulf Coast north to South Carolina. Anhinga can also be found in Central and South America. The Anhinga habitats include freshwater swamps, coastal bays, lakes and marshes with thick vegetation and large trees that are used for roosting and nesting.

Nest construction is started by the male before he has picked a mate. The male collects the nesting material leaving the female to finish the construction of the bulky platform of large sticks and grasses and leaves and usually placed in the forks of trees near water or overhanging it. Two to five pale blue eggs are laid; incubation takes place for approximately 25-29 days by both parents. Anhingas nest in large colonies of Anhingas and other water birds.

The Anhinga diet consists of primarily fish of course and small invertebrates. Prey is stalked underwater, speared with their long pointed bill and eaten alive above water by being tossed up off of their bill and eaten head first.

The Anhinga is a Species of Least Concern as a result of its vast range.

Photos



A pair of Anhinga babies acting like typical squabbling siblings. (Photo by Larry Frogge)



One of the many species of shorebirds that breeds in the local STA's, this baby Least Tern was recently photographed at STA1 East. This little guy still has the down feathers present on top of its head. (Photo by SFWMD)



This Great Blue Heron seems to have lost something. Maybe he misplaced his dinner. (Photo by Larry Frogge)



It isn't difficult to guess which species this little one is with those long legs and that pointed bill! This fuzzy baby Black-necked Stilt is just one of the successful breeding populations from STA 5 this summer. (Photo SFWMD)

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

You may choose between two types of membership:
"HGAS Chapter Only Voluntary Member" or both National Audubon and HGAS

1. "Voluntary" memberships receive the quarterly Crested Caracara newsletter by e-mail. Voluntary membership funds and donations support local educational and program opportunities.

YES! I want to become a "Voluntary" member of HGAS.

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

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

Please send my Crested Caracara via e-mail.

Additional Tax Deductible Donation to HGAS (501c3) is enclosed.

Enclosed is my check payable to HGAS (Hendry-Glades Audubon Society)

2. You may join or renew your HGAS membership through the National Audubon Society using a print form or online at:

<http://support.audubon.org/> Select Chapter Code: E51 Hendry-Glades AS

With this type of membership, you receive the quarterly Crested Caracara (via e-mail), 6 issues of Audubon Magazine, the Florida Naturalist magazine and membership in the National Audubon Society and Hendry-Glades Audubon Society.

All dues for new memberships through the National Audubon Society and a portion of renewal dues are returned to HGAS if the Chapter Code C3ZE510Z is on the membership form or the Chapter E51 Hendry-Glades AS is selected from online menu.

National Audubon Society Membership \$20 Annually C3ZE510Z

Enclosed is my check payable to the National Audubon Society.

Mail to:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society Chapter Code C3ZE510Z

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