



# Crested Caracara

## Hendry-Glades Audubon Society

October/December 2009

*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**

*Norm Dillman  
Julie Jeffers  
Martha Valiant  
Ellen Minichiello-Boles  
Rhonda Roff  
Sonny Mowbray  
Terri Lazar  
Add Austin*



## ***President's Message***

Birding is great year round in Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee Counties. The summer birds, including the Swallow-tailed Kites, Common Nighthawks and Chimney Swifts, have returned to their home grounds. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were seen during the NAMC in September. Wintering raptors, swallows, sparrows, ducks and the feisty Belted Kingfisher have returned. Start watching feeders for retuning buntings and songbirds. Please share stories and photos of birds you observe in our area and other birding adventures.

At the October Board meeting, the board voted to offer two options to membership in Hendry-Glades Audubon. The first membership option is to join National Audubon. With this option you receive the Audubon Magazine, HGAS digital or print newsletters, field trips and membership in your local chapter. HGAS receives \$20 for new "Chapter Generated" memberships and less than \$2 for renewal's from National Audubon. The second option is the "Chapter Only Membership" which includes membership in Hendry-Glades Audubon, digital or print newsletters and field trips. All funds will be used for chapter events, programs, materials and supplies. The Chapter Only Membership and donations to Hendry-Glades Audubon (501c3) are tax deductible. The Chapter Only membership is a good option for member of other chapters who want to be affiliated with HGAS and for members who don't want to receive Audubon Magazine.

Special thanks go to the "Crested Caracara" editor, Kim Willis for the HGAS newsletter. Two options for receiving the newsletter will be offered for the next quarterly "Crested Caracara". Please let me know if you prefer digital or print newsletters.

Happy Birding,  
Margaret England, HGAS President '09-'10

### **Meetings**

*Second Monday of each month  
at 7:00 PM, September thru  
May – Please check for updates  
and meeting locations.*

*Meetings locations will alternate  
between the Dallas Townsend  
Building in LaBelle and the  
Clewiston Museum in Clewiston.*

### **Next meeting:**

**November 9 in Labelle**  
**Dr. John Ogdan: Challenges and  
Opportunities in Florida Bird  
Conservation: Red Knots,  
Redstarts, and Red-headed  
Woodpeckers".**

**December 14 in Clewiston**  
**Dr. John D. Canter: A Whooping  
Crane's Story**

# News You Can Use.....

## Upcoming Events

### **Christmas Bird Count – Saturday, January 2, 2010**

Post count gathering will be hosted by Hendry County Commissioner Karson Turner at Quality Electric in Clewiston.

Contact **Margaret England** for more information 863-677-0965

### **Nature Lecture Series - DuPuis Management Area**

Saturday, November 28, 2009 10:00 a.m. – Geocache Blast

Saturday, December 28, 2009 10:00 a.m. – Archeology Speaker

For information contact **Kim Kanter** at 561-924-5310 x 3339

### **American Indian Arts Festival – Big Cypress Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum**

Friday – Sunday, November 6, 7 & 8, 2009 10 am – 5 pm

Contact **Margaret England** for more information 863-677-0965



## Save the date

**John D. Canter:** The Whooping Crane's Story: Endless Vigil to Recover and Sustain a Fragile and Imperiled Species, December 14 - Clewiston Museum (HGAS December meeting)

Big O Birding Festival, March 26-28, 2010 [www.bigobirdingfestival.com](http://www.bigobirdingfestival.com)

2010 Audubon Academy, March 26-28, 2010 at [www.ParamountPlaza.com](http://www.ParamountPlaza.com) Gainesville, FL

## STA 5 Highlights

The Cassin's Kingbird has returned to Sta-5 & environs for at least the third year in a row. It was seen and photographed by many October 17th STA-5 tour in its "usual" locale i.e. on the power lines and across the canal on the far western boundary of Cell 1-A. The bird was confirmed by Bruce Anderson from photos submitted by Margaret England. The tour was a good one with only 11 participants and the weather wasn't scorching hot for a change! 70 or so species were seen at STA-5 including Blumberg Rd. Highlights include 75 Roseate Spoonbills including one banded, 9 Snail Kites, 50 Wood Storks, 6 Peregrine Falcons, 20 Purple Gallinules (mostly juveniles), 150 Northern Rough-winged Swallows and 200 Least Sandpipers.

During the October 30 Everglades Coalition visit to STA5 numerous shore birds were present including black-necked stilts.

The STA5 tallies are recorded on Cornell's free eBird website at [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).

## Birding Programs for Schools

These items are still needed for local schools.

Can you recycle any birding supplies to the cause? You can help me by bringing any of the following to upcoming meetings:

- Binoculars you do not use anymore that a child might use for practice.
- Outdated Calendars that have Photos of FL Birds
- Audio CD's of birdsong
- Used or new Field Guide

Thanks,

**Ellen Minichiello-Boles**  
Teacher/Naturalist

## **Florida Master Naturalist – Hendry County**

The 40 hour Freshwater Wetlands Module will be offered at Dallas Townsend Hendry County Extension Office in January 2010, Monday, Thursday & Saturday from 4 pm to 8 pm with field trips on Saturdays. Enrollment is limited to 20 people. For more information contact **Gene McAvoy**, County Extension Director Regional Vegetable Agent IV UF/IFAS Hendry County Extension, PO Box 68 Labelle, FL 33935 - 863-674-4092, Office 863-673-5939 [www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/](http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/)



### **STA-5 2009 Schedule**

November 14  
November 28  
December 12  
December 26

HGAS Newsletter on the Florida Audubon Blog at [www.audubonoffloridanews.org/](http://www.audubonoffloridanews.org/)

### **Help us save trees!**

This will be the last issue of the Crested Caracara to be sent by regular mail. Beginning with the January/March 2010 edition we are asking that all future mailings be sent electronically. You will need to “opt-in” to receive a hard copy sent to you by regular mail.

To receive your copy by email, please send your email address to:  
[sta5birding@embarqmail.com](mailto:sta5birding@embarqmail.com)

To receive a copy by mail, send your name and address to: HGAS Newsletter, 380 Riverview Dr., LaBelle, FL 33935

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

### **Stay Connected**

**Audubon of Florida:** <http://www.audubonofflorida.org>

### **HGAS Websites**

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



Wings Over Florida is a FREE award program open to resident and non-resident Florida birdwatchers. Its purpose is to encourage YOU to identify as many native birds as you can within Florida.

As your skills improve and your bird list grows, you can apply for increasing levels of achievement. Full color certificates are awarded at five levels starting at a life list of 50 Florida species (Beginner) and ending at 350 species (Elite Florida Birder). Once you have reached the first level of achievement, simply fill out a Wings Over Florida checklist and application sheet and send it the Commission for review.

Whether you are an experienced birder or just starting out, you can apply for a Wings Over Florida birding certificate. This program is open to residents and non-residents who bird in Florida.

### **Questions?**

Wings Over Florida Program  
P.O. Box 6181  
Tallahassee, FL 32314-6181  
Telephone: 850-488-9453  
Fax: 850-488-3940  
[WOF@MyFWC.com](mailto:WOF@MyFWC.com)

<http://www.myfwc.com/gfbc/WOF/index.htm>

## **SPECIES SPOTLIGHT**



Photo credit: [Larry Frogge](#)

### **Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*)**

A bird of open country, the Crested Caracara resides in the southwestern United States and Florida, Central and South America where it is often seen in the company of vultures feeding on carrion. The Crested Caracara, a member of the falcon group, is a large, long-legged bird with bare red skin on the face and a black cap and short crest at the back of the head.

The Crested Caracara is the most terrestrial bird in the falcon group; spending a great deal of time on the ground. They usually feed on carrion but they will take advantage of any food opportunity by eating small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, turtles, fish, crab, eggs, insects, worms, and nestling birds. Caracaras hunt live food on the ground or take food from other birds.

The nest of the caracara is very deep and stout in construction. Consisting of many layers, a new layer is added each year. In some cases the nest will be reused year after year. The female will lay two or three eggs and the male helps to warm and incubate them during the 28 days it takes them to hatch. The adults eat mainly carrion however they kill and bring fresh meat to their young, who remain in the nest for about three months before learning to fly.

At one time, caracaras were common in the prairies of central Florida, but their numbers declined as favored habitat was forever changed by housing developments, citrus groves and improved pastures. Today, both the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service list the caracara as Threatened. Most abundant in a six-county area north and west of Lake Okeechobee (DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Highlands, Okeechobee and Osceola counties), their stronghold is privately held ranch land. Biologists are working with landowners to better understand the needs of caracaras and the many other wild animals dependent on these central Florida prairies.

### **Did you know.....**

The Caracara has been known by many scientific names: *Polyborus plancus*, *Ployborus plancus audubonii*, *Caracara plancus*, *Caracara cheriway* & *Caracara cheriway audubonii*.

The Crested Caracara is sometimes referred to as the "Mexican Eagle" and is the Mexico's National bird.

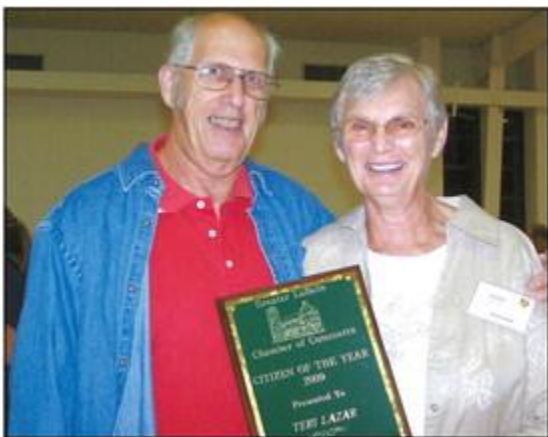
There are eleven different species of caracara.

"Caracara" is Spanish for "carrion eater".

[caracara.fieldguideflorida.com](http://caracara.fieldguideflorida.com) is a website dedicated to the conservation of the Florida Caracara.

# Congratulations!

Congratulations to HGAS President, **Margaret England**, HGAS Vice-President **Butch Wilson** & Clewiston County Commissioner **Karson Turner** for doing such a fine job representing our communities in the recent segment of WGPU TV program Connect! Visit [www.wgcu.org](http://www.wgcu.org) to view this wonderful segment.



## LaBelle Chamber of Commerce honors Citizen of the Year Teri Lazar

**Teri Lazar** was the choice as the LaBelle Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year for 2009. One of the hardest workers in LaBelle, Teri is pictured with her proud husband, Jeff.

Congratulations Teri! We are very proud of

## Thank you!

Big thanks goes to the 29 volunteers who participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual North American Migration Count for Hendry/Glades Counties and to the Clewiston Inn for providing the Sugar and Spice room for the post count gathering. Additions to this year's count area were Dinner Island Wildlife Area and a count by boat on Lake Okeechobee.

103 individual species were reported with 23,675 total birds being tallied.

This year's highlights included returning duck species: Fulvous whistling-duck, Black-bellied whistling-duck, Blue-winged Teal and Ring-necked duck. Some of the raptors reported were Short-tailed Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon. Belted Kingfisher had returned as well as tree and barn swallows. Warblers included Yellow, Yellow-throated, Pine and Black-and-white reported in Glades county.

Mark your calendars for next year's North American Migration Counts to be **May 8, 2010, and September 18, 2010.**

The Bald Eagles have returned to the nest on old 27 for the third year in a row. If you are in the vicinity of SR 835 & old 27, you can find the nest approximately 2/10ths of a mile on the south side of the road.

The two years previous have produced a total of three successful fledges. Here's to another successful year!

## ***Member's Photos:***



*Photos by Larry Frogge – Glades County*

### **Larry's "Good Morning" emails**

If you are not receiving Larry Frogge's daily "Good Morning" emails you are truly missing out on some absolutely amazing bird photos. To be included on Larry's emailing list, send an email to Margaret England at: [sta5birding@embarqmail.com](mailto:sta5birding@embarqmail.com).

## **Speakers and Presentations**



Join HGAS, December 14, 2009, 7:00 pm at the Clewiston Museum for an informative presentation of **The Whooping Crane's Story: Endless Vigil to Recover and Sustain a Fragile and Imperiled Species** with **Dr. John D. Canter**.

Dr. Canter is a graduate of the University of Pittsburg with dual B.A. and B.S. degrees and University of Pittsburg Mini Medical School.

Dr. Canter is a consultant with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, United States Department of Defense, Carnegie Mellon University, International Executive Education and Global Fortune 100 Companies, US, Europe, Far East.

He is the author six published novels and presents Whooping Crane and Chocolate Science seminars.

Dr. Canter is a member of the International Crane Foundation and the Whooping Crane Conservation Association.

Join Hendry  
Glades  
Audubon  
Society for an  
evening with  
**Dr. John C.  
Ogden,**  
Monday  
November 9,  
2009 – 7:00  
pm at the  
Dallas  
Townsend  
Building in  
Labelle, Fl.

This  
informative free  
presentation is  
open to the  
public.



### Challenges and Opportunities in Florida Bird Conservation: Red Knots, Redstarts, and Red-headed Woodpeckers”.

**John C. Ogden** currently (2009) is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon of Florida. Previously, he was a research scientist at Everglades National Park for 16 years, Director of the Ornithological Research Unit and co-Director of the California condor recovery program during his 14 years with the National Audubon Society’s Research Department, and served 10 years as Chief Scientist for the South Florida Water Management District on the Everglades restoration program. John is a native Tennessean, who came to Florida to do graduate study at Florida State University. His introduction to the birds of Florida included field surveys of birds in all counties of the State.

John was the first President of the Colonial Water bird Society, and was a member of the recovery teams for the American Crocodile, Wood Stork and California condor. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists’ Union, and received the Charles M. Brookfield award from Tropical Audubon in 2004 for his work in the conservation of our natural resources in Florida. His professional experiences and knowledge have primarily been in Everglades’s wetland ecology and restoration, the biology and conservation of raptors and colonial water birds, and the status and population trends of the birds of Florida. John co-edited the 1994 book, "Everglades: The ecosystem and its restoration". In addition to his extensive field and conservation work in Florida, John has participated in surveys and studies in Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Zimbabwe and South Africa. At present John is continuing to work on Everglades’s restoration issues, and is developing new conservation programs for the birds in Florida (i.e., "common birds in decline" and neo-tropical birds "stop-over" habitats).



January 11, 2010  
Don't miss Dr.  
Jackson at the  
January 11, 2010  
HGAS meeting in  
LaBelle at the  
Dallas Townsend  
Building, 1085  
Pratt Blvd.,  
LaBelle, Fl 33935

This informative  
free presentation  
is open to the  
public.

**Dr. Jerome A. Jackson** is Professor of Marine and Ecological Sciences and former Whitaker Eminent Scholar in Science at Florida Gulf Coast University. Jerry's current research focuses on the ecosystems of southwest Florida and the history of ornithology. He is author/editor of 24 books and more than 300 articles in the professional and popular literature. Among his recent books "In Search of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker" was published by Smithsonian Books in 2004 and appeared in a second edition in May 2006. "George Miksch Sutton: Artist, Scientist, Teacher" was published by University of Oklahoma Press in 2007.

Jerry has taught biodiversity concepts at the third and fifth grade levels and at 11 universities on Sumatra and Java in Indonesia. His research and teaching have also taken him to Cuba to study Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, to the Peruvian Amazon to teach Tropical Ecology to middle school classes, and to the Canadian Arctic to teach Arctic Ecology to high school students. He co-hosted a weekly nature-oriented feature called "Southern Outdoors" on CBS-Television in Mississippi for 13 years, contributed to Public Television's Scientific American Frontiers series and Canadian Broadcasting's "Prairie Scapegoats," and has hosted a daily public radio feature in southwest Florida called "With the Wild Things" for the past 10 years.

Jerry has served on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and South Florida Ecosystems Endangered Species Recovery Teams and on the national Invasive Species Advisory Committee. He has been honored by being named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Ornithologists' Union, and the Explorer's Club. He and his wife Bette, also an ornithologist and Associate Professor at Florida Gulf Coast University, live in Naples, Florida, with their sons Brent and Matthew.



## 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