

APALACHEE AUDUBON

The Newsletter Of The Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

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Birdcall hotline 513-1771

March 2000

Governor and Cabinet proclaim March 2000 "Audubon Month"

Floridians are proud of their environmental wealth. From the country's first National Wildlife Refuge at Pelican Island in the Indian River Lagoon, to Everglades protection, to the recent "Forever Florida" constitutional amendment, Audubon has set precedents for the rest of the nation.

Working together with its nationwide counterpart, National Audubon Society, FAS has been involved in nearly every significant conservation victory in Florida since the Society's founding on March 2, 1900.

To recognize Audubon's 100 years of leadership in protecting and conserving natural resources in Florida, the Govern-

nor and Cabinet proclaimed the month of March 2000 "Audubon Month" in a celebration at the Capitol on March 2.

Governor Bush recognized the organization. "Audubon of Florida is to be commended for their commitment to preserving and protecting our precious natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations," says Governor Bush.

Audubon of Florida President, Dr. Stuart Strahl, who was in Tallahassee to accept the proclamation on behalf of the organization said, "Audubon begins its second century in Florida with the mission of creating a 'culture of conservation' throughout the state. To ensure that our natural wonders are preserved for future generations to enjoy, we must emphasize the inherent value of Florida's ecological heritage as a fundamental component of public consciousness."

As part of our March celebrations, Audubon of Florida will hold its first-

ever statewide Birdathon 2000 on Friday, March 24. That day, Audubon staff, board members, chapters and friends will spend a day counting as many bird species as possible to raise the funds necessary to do our important work.

For additional information on how to join in on Audubon's statewide birdathon, contact Larry Thompson at (850) 222-2473 or e-mail lthompson@audubon.org.



**Don't Forget
March 28
Monthly
Program with
Don Morrow**

Don will explain the role of the Trust for Public Lands and how they were able to obtain the new Bald Point State Park Property.

President's Column

Register Now for Wakulla River Cruise

Jim Shelton

Each morning I awake to the lovely territorial songs of the chickadees and cardinals. Outside, blooming redbuds and yellow jessamine surround me. Spring is on the way! Springtime in north Florida is glorious and I can hardly wait. I know that the neotropical migrants are fattening up for their long journey north and birders everywhere are thumbing through their field guides in anticipation of the migrants return.

Apalachee Audubon and our co-sponsors will again celebrate this spring migration at the "Welcome Back Songbirds and Spring Wildflowers Festival" at Wakulla Springs State Park. This year The Native Plant Society will join the Festival. Both groups will be leading field trips and presenting seminars and workshops for attendees.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a brochure describing the festival in detail and a registration card for your use. Please take the time to review this information.

As a special treat for birders we will have the unique opportunity to take a special sunrise cruise on the Wakulla River. This is a chance to see the River as few have. Register early for this event, as capacity is limited. I hope you all will join us and Welcome Back the Songbirds.

Cranes and Grandkids Greet Goldmans

By Judy and Harvey Goldman



This February we traveled to Southeast New Mexico to greet the arrival of a new grandson, Riley, who weighed in at 9.5 lbs. One morning

we took the 6 year-old Drew and 3 year-old Abby to Three Rivers State Park, NM where we saw Canyon Towhees and Dark Eyed Juncos. Four days later we spent the morning at Bosque del Apache NWR, which is near Socorro, NM. We arrived in time to see the huge flocks of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese. The official count on the refuge for that week was: 12,650 Sandhill Cranes, 2 Whooping Cranes, 16,400 Snow Geese, 260 Canada Geese (year round residents), 22,850 ducks, and 62 Bald Eagles.

At the Refuge Visitor's Center we were advised of the latest sighting location of the two remaining Whooping Cranes on the refuge. Looking through my (tool time) 12 power binocs, we spotted two white dots miles off (in a posted area) among the Sandhill Cranes, but not well enough to add them to our list.

The Whooping Cranes were introduced to the area as an experiment. Since the cranes need to be taught the migration route, young Whooping Cranes were introduced into Sandhill Cranes' nests. The experiment "worked" in that the Sandhill Cranes

did raise the Whooping Crane young and did teach them the migration route. Unfortunately, the Whooping cranes then proceeded to mate with the far more numerous Sandhills. The resulting offspring were viable but sterile. The two remaining Whooping Cranes at Bosque are both female.

We enjoyed seeing a Bewick Wren, a Green-tailed Towhee, and a Verdin. The Gambles Quail (a favorite of ours) arrived at the viewing window at noon, waiting for the warmer part of the day. We also saw: Says and Black Phoebes, Coopers and Red-tailed Hawks, a tree full of Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Kestrel, Northern Flickers, Olivaceous Cormorants, a Ring-necked Pheasant, many varieties of ducks including many Cinnamon Teal, a Curve-billed Thrasher, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a Pyrrhuloxia. There were many meadowlarks, both Eastern and Western, and mobs of White-crowned Sparrows.

Bosque del Apache is named for the Apaches who formerly camped in the forested areas bordering the Rio Grande river which runs through the Refuge. The Refuge is located on the northern edge of the Chihuahuan desert. Local farmers grow crops on the refuge for wintering waterfowl and cranes. The farmers harvest alfalfa and leave the corn for the wildlife.

As a final note: Mother and son are both doing well.

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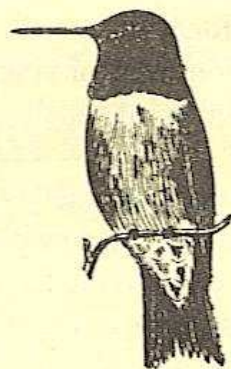
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Mission Statement

Protection of the environment through education, appreciation, and conservation



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The Apalachee Audubon Chapter wants to recognize and thank Buckeye Florida for its generous contribution in support of publishing this newsletter.

The Population and Habitat Program of the National Audubon Society

By Harvey Goldman

(source: <http://www.earthnet.net/~popnet/popcover.html>
23-Feb-2000)

Ninety-six hours from now, a million new members will be born into the human family. This year alone, global population will increase by nearly one hundred million people. According to current projections, the world's total population will more than double, and may triple in a single generation. With today's human population of nearly six billion, local to international attention to bringing population growth and consumption into balance with the natural world is essential.

Declining wildlife populations foreshadow the natural system's inability to sustain human life. Like a canary in a coal mine, recent decreases in migratory birds foretell greater loss of irreplaceable biodiversity. There is still an urgent need for education and activism supporting international population and family planning. These programs have been repeatedly gutted by the current Congress and population advocates must fight for funding year after fiscal year.

Taking Action: a Letter to your Congressional Members

Now's the time to let you members (representative and senators) know how you feel about international family planning and its positive effects on the environment for us all, animals, plants and humans alike!

Feel free to copy the letter below as is, or to edit it as you see fit.

Christmas Bird Count Results are in for Apalachicola Area

Submitted by Val Weeks

According to Thom Lewis, Wildlife Biologist with the St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge, the sixth annual Christmas Bird Count in the Apalachicola area was a great success.

Thom reports that 133 species were sited this year. While fewer rare birds were seen, a short-eared owl was observed along a sand spit in the Apalachicola Bay.

Thom invites interested parties to join him and a host of volunteers for the seventh annual count on December 29, 2000. See you there!

The Honorable _____
United States Senate / House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20510 / 20515

Dear Senator / Representative:

As an informed constituent, I am aware that our rapidly growing population poses a far-reaching and urgent environmental threat – imperiling birds, other wildlife and their habitats. To help prevent further deforestation, food and water shortages, global warming, wildlife extinction and other detrimental environmental effects, efforts must be made to slow population growth. One of the most cost-effective and democratic ways to address expanding numbers globally is by providing access to voluntary family planning services. I am writing to urge you to support higher levels of unrestricted funding for international family planning and population assistance for 2001.

By providing unrestricted monies for voluntary international family planning and population assistance, we support programs that slow world population growth. These programs improve maternal and infant health and lower the incidences of unintended pregnancies. The benefits of low-cost voluntary assistance programs directly improve the quality of human life and promote a healthier global environment.

Last year, Congress voted to restore a U. S. contribution to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - the right decision for families and for the environment. I hope that you will support continued UNFPA funding for 2001.

Finally, the President has stated that he will request a higher funding level for international family planning and population assistance programs for 2001. I urge you to support the highest possible funding level for these programs.

Clearly your support for international family planning initiatives is a direct message to your constituents that you support global environmental protection. Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
(Your name)

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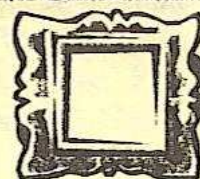
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Audubon Calendar

Monthly meetings, field trips, conservation activities and bird walks.

Monthly Meetings

Meetings are free and open to the public.

They will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Tallahassee, 2810 North Meridian Rd. Unless otherwise stated, field trips will leave from the First Union Bank, 3400 So. Monroe St., opposite the fairgrounds. Note time of departure.

For more info, or to leave a message, call our activities hot line 850-513-1771 or visit our web page <http://www.audubon.org/chapter/fl/apalachee>

March 25 (Saturday) Birding Field Trip: Ellen and Jim Shelton will lead a birding trip to San Luis Park one of Tallahassee's best birding spots. Meet in the parking lot at 8 a.m. Bring binoculars and field guides.

March 28 (Tuesday) Program: Trust For Public Lands, Don Morrow.
Don will explain the role of the Trust and how they were able to obtain the new Bald Point State Park Property.

April 1 (Saturday) Field Trip: Bald Point State Park, Don Morrow. Don will lead us on a field trip to the newly acquired Bald Point Property. This is a good time to see early spring migrants, We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the bank on South Monroe across from the Fairgrounds will return around noon.

April 25 (Tuesday) Program: Songbird Identification Video. Come join us for a look at this new one-hour video it is a fantastic learning tool for identifying those wonderful migrating spring warblers that we hope to see on our fieldtrip.

April 29 (Saturday) Field Trip: St. George Island Jim and Ellen Shelton will lead a trip to St George island to observe neotropical migrants as they stop over on the Island. Meet at the 1st Union Bank across from the fairgrounds at 8 a.m., bring lunch, binoculars, field guides, water and bug spray. We will return 3 p.m.

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