

Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter Of The Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

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February, 2002

President's Column

Banding Hummers in Winter

Each year over a half-million birds are banded by scientists in North America. Recently, Fred Bassett, from Montgomery, Alabama, banded two Black-chinned Hummingbirds in my yard and went on to band 12

Hummingbird feeder solution

1 Part sugar
4 Parts water
Boil 1-2 minutes
Cool
Refrigerate
unused solution

Never use honey or artificial sweetener!

Do not add red food coloring (it is not needed)

Rufous, 4 Black-chinned, 1 Allen's and 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in other Tallahassee yards. He also recaptured 3 Rufous he

banded here last year and one that was banded in April 2000 in Ingram Texas, about 75 miles northwest of San Antonio. It is the farthest west a hummer has ever been banded and then recaptured in the eastern United States. This is a significant event in the small world of hummer banders and adds a valuable piece of information about their migration patterns.

In addition to their migration patterns, banding provides ornithologists other valuable information, such as their condition, size, and weight that help determine what they need to survive. The data is used by conservationists, scientists and policy makers to develop conservation policy.

Many people in this area maintain hummingbird feeders all year long and are delighted to find hummingbirds visiting their feeders in the winter. One of the biggest misconceptions about hummingbirds is that if you don't take your feeder down the hummingbirds will not migrate. This is absolutely false! Fred assures me that there is nothing you can do to keep the hummingbirds here when it is time for them to leave.

So you can keep those feeders clean and full and enjoy wintering hummingbirds with a clear conscience. And please report your sightings to Larry Thompson at lthompson@audubon.org.

Good birding.

Larry

Program Highlight

Tuesday, February 26

Protecting Florida's Springs with Jim Stevenson

Jim is with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and will discuss the protection of Florida's springs. Wakulla Springs is too often clouded with sediment and is becoming choked with Hydrilla. As our urban area extends south, we are learning, often too late, how interconnected our ground and surface waters are as well as the contribution of the multiple point and non-point contaminant sources.

Programs begin with an informal social at 7:00 p.m., followed by the program at 7:30.

Naturalist Society Calendar of Events

The Naturalist Society of North Florida hosts lectures by researchers in the natural history of our area. All community members interested in the topics of research are invited to attend. The lectures are held the third Thursday of each month from September through May, except December. Each evening's program begins with a social mixer at 7:00 p.m. and is followed by the program from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

On February 21, Bill Palmer and Todd Engstrom will present their research on Bob White Quail, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and the Red Hills Ecosystem. The presentation will be held in the education barn at Tall Timbers Research Station, on Henry Beadel Drive, off Highway 12 across from the WCTV Station. Go north on either Thomasville or Meridian Road and turn on Hwy 12. Beadel Road is halfway between Meridian and Thomasville Road.

On March 21, Greg Hagan will present his research on Red-cockaded Woodpecker Reintroduction. The presentation will be held in the Cooperative Extension Service Auditorium, 615 Paul Russell Road, directly east of Capital Stadium.

On April 18, (Still being developed – announcement will come later)

On May 16, Jim Miller will present his research on the Apalachee People and their Environment. The presentation will be held in the Cooperative Extension Service Auditorium, 615 Paul Russell Road, directly east of Capital Stadium.

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Mission Statement

Protection of the environment through education, appreciation and conservation

Join National Audubon

Make a difference by joining the National Audubon Society and the Apalachee Chapter. Every new member strengthens the organization and helps make our voice heard on behalf of wildlife and the environment.

SPECIAL ONE-YEAR INTRODUCTORY RATE is \$20.00

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Members receive six bi-monthly issues of the award-winning Audubon magazine, eight issues per year of the Apalachee newsletter, free membership in the local Audubon Chapter, opportunities to visit most sanctuaries and nature centers, invitations to study with Audubon experts at ecology camps and workshops, and eligibility to participate in wide-ranging Audubon travel. Local Chapter: Apalachee Audubon, **E19 7XCH**

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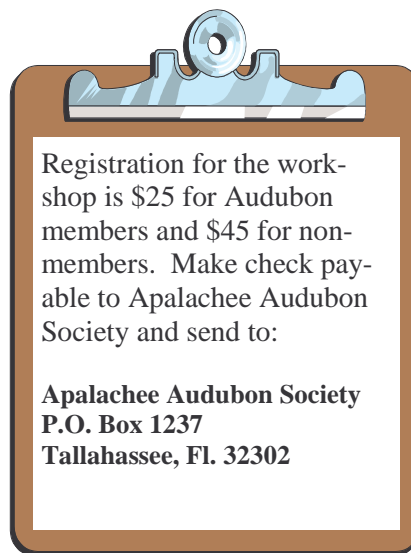
Introduction to Beginning Birdwatching

Apalachee Audubon is conducting its annual Beginning Birdwatching workshop on Saturday, March 2nd. We will explore and celebrate the fascinating birds in the Tallahassee area while gaining knowledge and skills to enjoy birding at home or in the field. The Apalachee Audubon Beginning Birdwatching Workshop will give you a great opportunity to learn from experienced birders who will share their years of experience and skills to make your birding more enjoyable. The seminars will address the bird species likely to be seen during the bird watching fieldtrip following the workshop and the special optional bird watching fieldtrip we will offer about two weeks after the workshop.

The Apalachee Audubon Beginning Birdwatching Workshop will be held at Mt. Vernon Square, 1114 Thomasville Rd., Suite E, Tallahassee, Florida 32303. The Workshop will be-

gin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. with a birding fieldtrip at a local park.

Join Larry Thompson, president of Apalachee Audubon Society, and Marvin Collins, Program and Fieldtrip Chair, for this day of learning and fun. Several local Apalachee Audubon Society birding experts will participate and can help the beginner get started. We'll enjoy a birding walk, so be sure to bring your binoculars and field guides! See YOU there!



Tallahassee Christmas Bird Count

By Larry Thompson

More than 40 hardy birdwatchers participated in this year's all-day Tallahassee Christmas Bird Count. The 15-mile count circle was divided into nine sections with a team assigned to each section. The census of early winter bird populations recorded 125 species on January 1st and another three species during the count week!

Thanks go to Rick West and Gail Menk for compiling the data and submitting the report, and thanks also to the team leaders:

Grayal Farr
Rick West
Todd Engstrom
Fran James
Ed Woodruff
Jim and Ellen Shelton
Jim Cox and Kate NeSmith
Dean and Sally Jue



Also, special thanks to all the great birders who spent the day in the field!

Join the 2002 Great Backyard Bird Count

Put your personal bird sightings on the map in the 5th Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) during February 15 -18. National Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Wild Birds Unlimited invite birders of all ages and skill levels to participate in this project that helps scientists map the distribution and abundance of wintering birds in North America.

Count the birds on any one or all of the count days. Each counting session should be a minimum of fifteen minutes but longer is better. Prepare a separate report for each day. Record the date, start time, count duration, weather, and type of habitat at each site. For each species of bird seen, record the highest number of each species seen at one time. For example, if at your backyard feeder you have four Cardinals at 10:00 AM and then six at 10:30, count that as six, not ten, so you don't count the same birds twice.

You can submit your results online and see the tally from the entire continent at the GBBC web site (www.birdsource.org/gbbc). Last year there were 53,343 checklists submitted with 442 species and over 4.5 million individuals counted. If you don't have access to the web, call Hans Van Tol in the evening at 850/656-4039. For more details visit the GBBC site

or our chapter's site (www.apalachee.org). For more info go to our Website, or for those without internet connection call Hans van Tol at 850 656 4039 (evening).

“Songs for the Earth” Concert



Singer songwriter Jim Scott will be in town on Friday February 15, 2002 for a solo concert of “Songs for the Earth” from 8:00-9:30 PM at the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Tallahassee 2810 N. Meridian Road. General admission for the concert is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children and students with ID. Advance tickets will be available at the Church office during business hours (385-5115). Tickets will also be on sale at the door the night of the performance, so arrive early for the best seats.

Jim is an exciting acoustic guitarist, singer, and composer of powerful music that furthers the ideals of ecology, justice, and peace. He makes an impact on hearts and minds as his concerts celebrate the common humanity of all cultures - our connections with each other and with the earth. His music has taken him around the world as he makes his case for harmony with well-

crafted, intelligent and humorous songs, poetry and stories. His guitar fluency comes from both a classical and jazz background, and he uses it well with classical and steel string acoustics.

In his years as guitarist for the Paul Winter Consort, Jim's clear voice led thousands in the song "Common Ground" and his own eco-anthem, "A Song For The Earth." He was co-composer of the Consort's monumental choral work, "Missa Gaia/Earth Mass," and recorded “A Concert for the Earth” in the Great Hall of the United Nations. While a member of the Winter Consort, Jim also wrote several PBS soundtracks and composed and arranged an entire concert for the group with the Indianapolis Symphony.

New Members Elected To Audubon of Florida Board of Directors

On the Sunday immediately following the Assembly, the Audubon of Florida Board of Directors approved the following four new members for seats on the Board.

Jill Mellen, Ph.D. - Research Biologist, Disney's Animal Kingdom
Roger Van Ghent - St. John's County Audubon, Chapter elected Board Member
Julie Byrne - Sarasota Audubon, Chapter Elected Board Member
Larry Thompson - Apalachee Audubon, Chapter Elected Board Member

Congrats to Larry and the other new members.

New Audubon Resolutions Reflect Increasing Threats

By Hans van Tol

Each year Audubon of Florida adopts conservation resolutions to set priorities for the state and chapter organizations' conservation efforts. Conservation committees in the chapters initiate most of the resolutions and members of the Audubon of Florida staff propose others. Then they are reviewed and approved at the annual Audubon Assembly by Audubon members from the 43 Florida chapters.

In November the following 26 resolutions were approved:

- Apalachicola River
- Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- Climate Change
- Conservation Education
- Econolokhatchee River
- Everglades Ecosystem
- Fire Management
- Florida Panther Protection & Recovery
- Florida Scrub Jay Recovery
- Florida Water Resources
- Growth Management
- Indian River Lagoon Water Quality
- Lake Okeechobee
- Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem
- Northwest Florida Water Management
- Ocklawaha River Restoration
- Oil and Gas Drilling
- Phosphate Mining Environmental Impacts
- Pinhook Swamp-Osceola – Greater Okefenokee Ecosystem
- Protected Species
- Roadless Area Conservation Rule
- Rural Land Protection
- Southwest Florida Land Use
- Transportation Policy
- Whooping Crane Recovery
- Yellow River Dam

As you can see the list includes national and state concerns. And in Florida, with its rapidly growing population, issues with water resources and water quality, urban sprawl and preservation of habitat for plants and animals are prominent.

Audubon chapters in our region propose two of the new resolutions: Apalachicola River and Yellow River Dam. The Yellow River is threatened by a recent proposal to build a dam to create a drinking water reservoir on lands that were bought by the Water Management District for the protection and conservation lands along this river. But there are other drinking water sources that have much less environmental impact and are less expensive. Audubon strongly opposes this project as it would submerge valuable wildlife habitat and would be detrimental to threatened species of fish such as the Gulf Sturgeon. The dam could also damage the remaining sea grass beds in Pensacola Bay.

Another local treasure is the Apalachicola River as evidenced by the large expenditures for land acquisition in the river flood plain to protect its water quality. It has a great diversity of freshwater fish and is vital for the ecology of the Apalachicola Bay and its renowned oysters. In spite of that, dredging operations detrimental to the fish populations and the riverbank's habitat continue. Dredg-

ing is necessary for commercial barge traffic but the volume is so low that the cost to taxpayers is \$30,000 for each barge-tow. Audubon is urging the U.S. Congress to stop funding these dredging operations.

To learn more about the conservation resolutions, check the Audubon of Florida website (www.audubonofflorida.org) or contact Bill Lowrie at the Tallahassee Audubon of Florida office at 222-2473. These are challenging issues and require all of us to work together if we are going to change public policy. We encourage you to get involved. Please contact us to learn how you can help.

Birdwalk - A Monthly Stroll Around Tallahassee "Hot Spots"

By Marvin Collins

We are planning monthly "bird walks" on the 3rd Saturday of each month. We will try to meet early to catch the most avian action and try to preserve some flexibility as to location depending on where the action is. We should be through before noon but sometime in April or May we will take an all day trip through the area coastal "hot spots" (Bald Point through St. George Island, for example).

For more information, call Marvin Collins at 850/224-9549.

Monthly Meetings, field trips, conservation activities and bird walks

Audubon Calendar

Monthly meetings are free and open to the public. They are held at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Tallahassee, 2810 North Meridian Road. The evenings begin with an informal social at 7:00 p.m., followed by the program at 7:30. Unless otherwise stated, field trips will depart from the First Union Bank at 3400 S. Monroe Street (opposite the Fairgrounds). Note the time of departure for each trip. For more info check out our web site at <http://www.apalachee.org/calendar.html>.

Saturday, Feb. 2 – Field Trip: Jim Cox will lead a "working" field trip at the Tall Timbers Research Station to discover evidence of nest cavity excavation by Brown-headed Nuthatches. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Tall Timbers on State Hwy 12 west of US 319.

Saturday, Feb. 16 – Bird Walk. Meet at 1st Union Bank across from fairgrounds on South Monroe at 7:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 26 – Membership Meeting. Jim Stevenson - Protection of Florida's Springs.

Saturday, March 16 - Bird Walk. Location and Time TBA.

Tuesday, March 26 - Membership Meeting. Larry Thompson, et al. - Birding Tallahassee. Larry will introduce a brochure in development that will describe the best areas for birding in and around Tallahassee.

Tuesday, April 23 - Membership Meeting TBA.

Friday – Sunday, April 26 - 28 - Welcome Back Songbirds and the Wakulla Wildlife Festival. Wakulla Springs State Park.

Tuesday, May 21 - Membership Meeting. Gil Nelson - Natural Gardens of the Big Bend: An Introduction to the Plant Communities of the Florida Panhandle. Note change from 4th to 3rd Tuesday due to Memorial Day holiday.

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