

Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter Of The Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

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March, 2002

President's Column

Want information on bird conservation?

If you answer yes to the above headline, then the new *Audubon Bird Conservation Newsletter* is for you.

The *Audubon Bird Conservation Newsletter* is an electronic periodical that brings you up to date on the accomplishments and work of Audubon's Bird Conservation Program, the progress of the Important Bird Areas Initiative, and issues and events in bird conservation. We are reprinting several articles from the Bird Conservation Newsletter in this newsletter. To subscribe to Audubon's Bird Conservation newsletter send an e-mail to LISTSERV@LIST.AUDUBON.ORG with the following text in the body of your e-mail: SUBSCRIBE Bird-Conservation-News

Here are two articles from the *Audubon Bird Conservation Newsletter*.

SEARCH FOR THE IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER:

For 30 days starting in mid-January three teams, two people per team, will be searching the Pearl River

Wildlife Management Area, in Louisiana, in the hope of finding an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker, also known as the "Lord God bird", has not been seen in LA since 1943 and was last observed in Florida in 1950. Expected to be on the verge of extinction, hope came alive two years ago when a credible sighting of a pair of Ivory-bills was reported. In addition to the three teams of expert ornithologists and birders, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology will be setting out listening devices, throughout the Pearl River WMA that will record sounds continuously. The hope is if an Ivory-billed Woodpecker cannot be seen it may be heard. For more details on the search, as well as daily updates from the searchers, visit: <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/IBW.html>

Note: This search was completed with inconclusive results. The bird was not seen but possibly was heard drumming. Visit the site for the latest information.

STORKS DELIVERING THEIR OWN

Biologists have counted 1,000 wood stork nests in Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, near Naples, FL thanks to heavy rain last summer reports the *Naples News*, 2/2. Corkscrew is the largest nesting area in North America for the endangered storks, but has been unused for a

number of years because human expropriation of water from the Everglades ecosystem left it high and dry. A wildlife biologist said, "Last year was a disaster: We didn't produce one single stork." (Item courtesy of The Endangered Species Coalition, A daily news digest about endangered species, biodiversity related issues and the people working to stop extinction. For more, go to www.stopextinction.org)

Good birding.

Larry

Program Highlight

Tuesday, March 26

Birding Tallahassee – A new guide to the area's best birding sites

Apalachee Audubon, led by Larry Thompson, is publishing a book on the best birding sites in the Tallahassee area with maps and profiles of special attractions. Larry will give us a preview of the book and discuss many of these locations. Learn more about the many really great birding sites in our region.

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

Birdwalk – Apalachee Audubon’s Monthly Stroll Through Area “Hot Spots”

By Marvin Collins

Apalachee Audubon continues its monthly bird walks on the third Saturday of each month. We meet early and often decide our destination for that day depending on where the action is. If the destination is in town we are finished by noon. We are planning an all day trip through the area coastal "hot spots" (Bald Point through St. George Island, for example) in April or May. Watch this newsletter for details or call Marvin Collins at 850/224-9549.

Our outing on February 16 began at the Springhill Road Sewage Treatment Plant and finished at the pond behind Churches Fried Chicken on Lake Bradford Road. We saw 37 species that morning. The Tundra Swan was still on parade at the far pond at the Treatment Plant along with the usual ducks. We saw a pair of American Kestrel, one Spotted Sandpiper (shorebirds are pretty slim pickings at the moment) and an American Pipit or two. The Red-throated Loon was no longer at the Churches pond, but there were a number of Ring-Necked Ducks and more Common Snipe than I've ever seen in one place.

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Mission Statement

Protection of the environment through education, appreciation and conservation

A message from Gail Menk

Some Bird Songs, Leon County

"HE WHO HAS HEARD THE BIRDS
THEIR MORNING CAROLS
SING" (Wordsworth) may connect
with the following:

For me, no avian songster rivals the House Wren for sheer uplifting ebullience. In Leon County I have been fortunate to hear this melody as early as 13 September 1999 at Black Swamp Nature Preserve (BSNP) and can cite two other such September songs on later dates. I can also gladly attest that said wren does not hesitate to sing locally throughout fall and well into winter. Indeed, I have heard said singing on almost any date in October, lesser so, though intermittently so throughout November, on six occasions in December and this time round as late as 17 January. I have yet to hear the song in February but am currently listening with anticipation.

OTHER FALL/WINTER SONGS:
I would advance that singing of the House Wren is dominant among other fall/winter avian visitants. Interestingly, on 7 NOV I was intrigued to observe a Song Sparrow on my right sing immediately after a House Wren had sung close-by on my left, and would question if such antiphony was mere coincidence. A White-throated

Sparrow had chimed in not long before.

Quite unexpected but most welcomed were my first hearings in Florida of answering etherealizations of two Hermit Thrushes in the north-east part of the county on 6 December, and on 31 January that unmistakable though diminutive ditty of a Winter Wren at BSNP. The latter, as has been the case in summer in the state of Washington, suggests to me a recorded House Wren on a 33 1/3 disk revved to 78 RPMs. More northward county-wise, Fran Rutkovsky of now renown Rutkovsky's Ravine relates that she has earlier heard said song and has also induced said singer (s?) to vocalize via response to a tape recording. Ah, technology! Ah, Rutkovsky's Ravine!

On 12 December another unexpected singing was that of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet on Bragg Drive near the bike trail (a good birding spot), and I look forward to more consistent singing of that species as it departs northward in April. During late December and well into January I have of necessity contented myself with songs of Cardinals and Robins (BSNP always good for mostly the latter), although on 11 February I heard for the first time this winter the song of the Blue-headed Vireo.

But as spring has reluctantly approached in February, I am hearing our resident singers overlapping songs of the winter birds. "Dust-off-that-Easter-bonnet-and-quick" saith

the White-eyed Vireo just about at every birding site and dig! that Blue-bird of late sing to his mate at Faulk Drive landing. "Surely, surely, surely - Life is dear...Even here -Blue above - You to love - Purely, purely, purely" (H. van Dyke)

And at the end of March there will occur once more the seasonal recapitulation of the singing House Wren. I have heard its song locally as early as 2, 6, and 15 March although my average early date is app. the 15th. My latest April dates average 15 April, but I've heard the song as late as the 21st.

It is with stressful envy that as of April/May I have not as yet experienced vocally or locally such songs as that of the Swainson's Thrush as did David Harder at San Luis Mission Park on 29 April 2000, nor that of the Orange-crowned Warbler as heard by Jim Cavanagh in early May 1977 at Myers Park. (Both of these species were eventually seen by those two birders.) Neither (Darn!) did I hear the rare-in-spring Ovenbird sing at the residence of Duncan Evered and Lyla Messick (St. Augustine Road) on 3 & 4 April 1997. But I suppose I can make up for that regretful omission by having heard that species sing unseasonably at Ron Christen's pad on Rathbone Road, Wakulla County, on a since lost autumnal date of some years ago. I could go on and on but durst not.

Good birding and Spring Tidings,
fellow nimrods, and remember to
hearken ever and anon.
G. Menk

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, March 16 - Bird Walk. St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This trip will be aimed at beginning birders but all are welcome. For car-pooling, meet at 7:30 at the 1st Union Bank on North Monroe across from the fairgrounds. Alternatively, meet at 8:00 at the St. Marks Visitors Center. Refuge entrance fee is \$4.00 per car.

Tuesday, March 26 - Membership Meeting. Larry Thompson, et al. - Birding Tallahassee. Larry will introduce the new guide to local birding sites soon to be published by Apalachee Audubon.

Tuesday, April 23 - Membership Meeting. The Apalachicola Bay Riverkeeper will discuss the importance of the Apalachicola River and the struggle to restore it to its natural state.

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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