

Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter Of The Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

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November, 2002

President's Column

Birding Economics

(The following is extracted from an article by Julie Brashears, Birding Trail Coordinator at the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.)

Your birder dollars are a vote for conservation. They lobby local communities to conserve their resources not only for the health of their environment, but for the health of their economy. Nationwide, birding is big business: 54 million Americans defined themselves as birdwatching enthusiasts in 1994. Florida is second in the nation (behind California) in the amount of retail sales generated by non-consumptive bird use, which supports more than 13,000 jobs. Birders devote much time, effort and money to their hobby and they contribute significantly to local economies by spending money on everything from gasoline to hotel rooms. A 1993-94 study found that birding in the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary area of southwest Florida had an economic impact of \$9.4 million on the local communities. It is estimated that non-consumptive bird use generates \$477 million in retail sales in Florida every year.

Ways YOU can use your economic

might to motivate conservation:

- (1) Always make sure you're recognizable as an ecotourist or birdwatcher. If you are not recognized as an ecotourist, you are assumed to be a traditional tourist, for whom communities will continue to pave and develop their wildlands. Reproduce the calling cards on our website and leave them every time you eat at a restaurant, buy gas, or stay in a hotel while on a birding trip. Talk to people at these establishments so that they recognize the growing proportion of their business which comes from birders. Compliment them on their healthy wildlands.
- (2) Visit responsible businesses and tell them why. Businesses that landscape with native plants, give back to local wildlands or restoration efforts, and provide educational opportunities for the local community should be rewarded with our economic support and praise.
- (3) Don't fall prey to false "eco-marketing." As the size of the ecotourism market is gaining attention, more businesses want to share in the wealth. Be an educated consumer. Tell tour operators that you pay to see the natural behavior of animals, not their panicked reactions to disturbance. Tell them you don't want a canned experience--captive wildlife or wildlife lured by food.

Lastly, visit businesses that not only show you wildlife, but teach you about that wildlife, too.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.floridabirdingtrail.com/economics.htm> . In addition, the ABA has some good info at www.americanbirding.org.

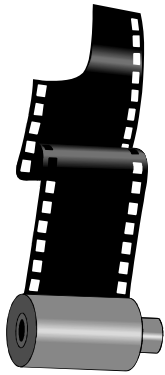
**Larry Thompson,
President**

Program Highlight **Tuesday, Nov. 19th**

(Note that the meeting is on the third Tuesday rather than the usual fourth.)

Steve Leitman will present "A Tale of Three Rivers: The Future of the ACF Basin". (Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint.) For the past 25 years, Steve has worked on the Apalachicola Bay and River system, beginning at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (then Regulation) and since then with a number of government and private organizations. Recently, Steve has been involved in the ongoing controversies regarding conflicting issues of water use for the three rivers. Steve will present the issues, status, and possible solutions to the tri-state impasse.

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



The Kestrel's Eye

The Tallahassee Film Society will present the 1999 Swedish documentary film "Kestrel's Eye" on Saturday, December 7th, at Tallahassee's Amtrak Station, 918 Railroad Avenue. There will be two showings: at 6 PM and 8:15 PM. St. Francis Wildlife Association is co-sponsoring the event and will bring Sierra, an American Kestrel. Tickets are \$6.25 for general public or \$4.25 for film society members. Call or email John Fraser at 850/386-4404 or at tallahasseefilmsociety@hotmail.com or visit their website at www.tallahasseefilms.com.

KESTREL'S EYE is a one-of-a-kind film and a lovely achievement. It won the 1998 Marseilles Festival of Documentary Film "Planète Câble Award" and the Main Prize at the 1999 Munich (Germany) Film Festival. The film has no dialogue or narration and takes place atop of a church overlooking a graveyard. A family of kestrels (small falcons) lives in a nook on the roof. Director Mikael Kristersson shoots with secret cameras and microphones mounted atop and inside the church. As a result, the entire point of view of the film is from above. The kestrels (and the camera) watch as human workers carefully tend the graveyard below; we see joggers, and people attending weddings and funerals. As they look down on workers trying to keep the gravesites tidy, the kestrels almost seem amused by man's daily struggle with the chaos of nature.

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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**

Send to: **National Audubon Society**

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(Make checks payable to National Audubon Society)

WEST NILE VIRUS UPDATE

The following is an excerpt from an article in the September 14th Washington Post. The entire article can be found on the web. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A15179-2002Sep13.html>) We recommend that you read the entire article if you have access to the web.

Hundreds of Birds Killed by West Nile **Midwest Hardest Hit as Virus Spreads**

By Kari Lydersen

CHICAGO -- Owls with glazed eyes, truckloads of dead crows, eagles struggling for their lives while being intravenously fed in bird sanctuaries. Those scenes are being repeated throughout the Midwest as the West Nile virus has struck with a vengeance, killing hundreds of birds. As the human toll -- now at 46 -- mounts, scientists are also concerned that dozens of bird species are facing long-term or even permanent effects from the virus.

"This is a bird disease, not a human disease," said John Bianchi of the National Audubon Society. At least 111 species have been identified as affected, and that number is expected to rise. A recent Audubon census in an area outside Chicago that was known to have a population of about 100 crows found only three. Bianchi noted that the recipe was there for a West Nile outbreak. This year featured a dry spring and early summer, an inhospitable climate for mosquitoes that meant their natural predators -- birds -- were also fewer. Then rains in late

summer led to a flourishing of mosquito populations, and the birds weren't there to eat them. Birds typically live only a few days after contracting West Nile. The virus causes encephalitis, meaning their brain becomes inflamed and they suffer heart lesions and enlargement of the other vital organs.

So far no species has been found to be immune to the virus, though some birds seem to suffer more acutely than others. Common crows and blue jays appear to be the first and most frequent victims, though bird experts note that this might only be because they are highly visible and numerous. Bird lovers are especially worried by the fact that raptors, including owls, eagles and hawks, are being devastated by the disease. Paul Tebbel, president of Raptor Recovery Nebraska, has been overwhelmed with sick hawks, owls and even two eagles in the past six weeks.

Meanwhile, concern about the disease's effect on people is contributing to even more bird deaths. Terror at the possibility of contracting West Nile has led people to dump pesticide in rivers, to demand mass chemical spraying and even to poison bird feeders, according to Bianchi. Rather than mass pesticide use, the Audubon Society is urging "integrated pest control," including the elimination of any standing water that can serve as a mosquito breeding ground, and the use of bacterial larvicides, which kill mosquitoes, midges and some other insects but leave most bugs unharmed.

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. Most 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, November 16 — Birdwalk - Meet at the First Union Bank across from fairgrounds at 8:00 a.m. Final objective to be determined.

Tuesday, November 19 — Membership Meeting. Steve Leitman will present “A Tale of Three Rivers: The Future of the ACF Basin”. Please see the front page for details.

Saturday, December 7 — The Tallahassee Film Society presents the 1999 Swedish documentary film “Kestrel’s Eye” at Tallahassee’s Amtrak Station, 918 Railroad Avenue. Two shows: 6 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Please see the review on page three.

Tuesday, January 28 – Joint Membership Meeting with the Sierra Club. Diane Roberts - The Future of Paradise: Development in the Florida Panhandle. Diane is on the English Faculty of the University of Alabama and is a contributor to the Tallahassee Democrat and NPR.

Tuesday, February 25 - Membership Meeting. Fred Bassett presents Winter Hummingbirds of North Florida. Fred works out of Montgomery, Alabama but spends much of his time in the Panhandle studying the several species of hummingbirds found here in the winter.