

Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter of the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

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November/December, 2007

November Program Meeting: Birding by Ear with Julie Wraithmell

Birding by WHAT? That's right—just when you thought you had all those field marks down, a whole new challenge begins: birding by ear! The sounds that birds make are not just idle chatter, but important clues to their ID. Come learn how paying attention to the vocal stylings of the Florida forests can open up new dimensions in your birding experience... and make you the envy of all the birders on your block! Julie Wraithmell grew up birding in Central Florida, and worked for eight years for the state, creating the Great Florida Birding Trail. Currently, she works as the state wildlife policy coordinator for Audubon of Florida in Tallahassee.

**Informal social begins at 7PM, November 28, Wednesday, at the United Church
in Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Dr. Program follows from 7:30 – 9.**

Citizen Science in Action – the 2007 Christmas Bird Count

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is probably the oldest organized ornithological event in North America. There are approximately 2000 count circles spread over the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. Each circle encompasses 177 square miles and is divided into sections; each section is surveyed by one team. Teams include one or more experienced birders and most are open to a limited number of novices. CBC data extends back to Christmas Day 1900 and is readily available to researchers and the public over the Internet (<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>).

The four count circles in our area include Tallahassee, St. Marks, Apalachicola, and Port St. Joe. Others include Panama City and Cedar Key.

Dates and coordinators are:	St. Marks	December 15	Jim Cox (necox@embarq.com)
	Apalachicola	December 28	Alan Knothe (Alan.Knothe@dep.state.fl.us)
	Port St. Joe	December 29	Bob Henderson (bob@rkhenderson.com)
	Tallahassee	December 30	Marvin Collins (mcollins@nettally.com)
			Grayal Farr (grayal@nettally.com)

New participants should be aware that the count goes on rain or shine and should be prepared for possible adverse field conditions. Count coordinators and team leaders can provide more details. This is an excellent way for an inexperienced birder to get his or her feet wet (figuratively and literally).

Silent Auction on Sunday, December 9th

Apalachee Audubon will be having a Silent Auction at Word Traffic Book Store on 1227 E Lafayette St. from 1pm 5pm. We will have snacks and wonderful items to choose from such as original art work, books, gift certificates and much more. Please join us for this fun and exciting event to support your local Audubon chapter, and to visit with friends. If you would like to donate anything for the auction please contact Melissa at 850-510-4877 or birdingtreefrog@gmail.com.

November 10th, Saturday: Field Trip Bald Point at Alligator Point Birding with Melissa Forehand and Marvin Collins

Most of our wintering birds will be back and we may even get a few migrants such as Caspian Tern, Royal Tern, Yellow-Crowned Night Heron, Savannah Sparrow, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers and Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers.

Meet at: Wachovia Bank on S. Monroe St. at 8 AM

Expect to be done by: 1 PM

Level of difficulty: moderate

Be sure to bring: binoculars, sunscreen, insect repellent, water, snacks or light lunch

Cost: Free

Further information, contact:

Melissa Forehand, birdingtreefrog@gmail.com

December 1: Field Trip Bottoms Road, Mashes Sands, Lake Munson With Andy and Julie Wraithmell

Visit Wakulla County coastal marshes at Bottoms Road and Mashes Sands. Listen for Clapper Rails, scan for Bald Eagles and scope the river for wintering birds like Bufflehead and Common Loons. If time permits while returning to Tallahassee, we'll stop at Lake Munson to see what wintering songbirds we can find in the hammocks, and terns or gulls on the lake.

Meet at: 8AM at Wachovia Bank on S. Monroe for carpooling or at 8:30 AM at the end of Bottoms Road in Wakulla Co. (To reach Bottoms Rd., from the US 98/ CR 319 split in Medart, drive about 2.5 miles south towards Panacea on US 98. Just outside of Panacea, turn left on Bottoms Rd. Follow road to the parking lot/boat launch on the left.)

Expect to be done by: Noon

Cost: FREE

Level of difficulty: Walking on flat, mostly paved trails.

Be sure to bring: binoculars, water & sunscreen or insect repellent, if desired..

Further information, contact: Julie Wraithmell, (850) 527-0279
jwraithmell@audubon.org

President's Letter

Dear Audubon members and friends,

Having returned from a recent vacation I share below what inspired me about one birding area in Scotland and another in Nebraska, hoping to be joined by others to incorporate in our North Florida birding areas some of what I learned.

The Scottish Seabird Centre (www.seabird.org) in North Berick east of Edinburgh, Scotland is associated with The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (www.rspb.org), and has several interactive and interpretive activities that strongly appeal to children and their families. Topics include seasonal migrations, pollution and litter, matching birds and habitats, and creating backyard birding and wildlife habitats. On offshore islands remote cameras enable viewers to both pan and zoom in on huge nesting colonies of gannets, puffins, gulls and seals. Currently, daily videos of the birth and raising of a colony of baby seals may be found at the website, as well as live webcams of nesting colonies of gulls and gannets on offshore islands.

The new Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center southwest of Lincoln, Nebraska (<http://www.springcreekprairie.org>) is a new birding facility on the tall grass prairie and woodlands. Of special interest is the education center, built with straw bales covered with stucco, utilizing solar energy and other low impact energy sources, and salvaging and reclaiming many other materials in the building. Tall grass prairie demonstration plots are meant to inspire local homeowners to convert their blue-grass acreages to prairie, a preferable alternative to mowing, watering, and fertilizing their energy-consuming lawns.

Although our area far surpasses both of these places in terms of the number and variety of species and microhabitats for birds and other wildlife, the potential for these magnificent areas to become centers of learning has not been fully realized. Local Audubon chapters and our fellow environmental groups need to work together to educate children and families about the interrelationships among wildlife, their habitats, energy generation and consumption, and sustainable development. I'll be telling you more as our AAS year unfolds.

Elizabeth Platt, AAS President

CAN YOU GIVE A FEW HOURS?

Apalachee Audubon Society is happy to accept volunteer hours on a one-time basis from willing folks. Without making a long term commitment, help out for only one event, e.g. provide refreshments for a meeting, sit at a display table, or assist with a backyard tour. If you are willing, call our president, Elizabeth Platt, 385-9043 or email her, ejplatt@embarqmail.com.

Buy a 2008 WBU Calendar Help AAS!

Beautiful color calendars with close-up bird photos are available for \$3.50 from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Proceeds from the sale of each of the calendars will be donated to Apalachee Audubon Society.

The calendars make lovely gifts.
Many thanks to Wild Birds Unlimited
for this generous support!

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Mission Statement

Protection of the environment through education, appreciation, and conservation.

Project FeederWatch by Fran Rutkovsky

The 21st season of Project FeederWatch begins November 10 and runs through April 4. FeederWatchers count the birds that come to their feeding stations on scheduled dates and report the results to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The reports help document unusual sightings, winter range movements, and the effects of development and climate change. This is the world's largest database of feeder-birds populations.

To learn more about Project FeederWatch, visit www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights. A photograph of Bluebirds by Apalachee Audubon member, Glenda Simmons, is in this season's PFW calendar. Even if you register after the Nov. 10 date, you can still participate in this winter's count.

I will begin my 9th PFW season in November. I've become more aware of which birds are "expected" here in winter and which ones are rare or occur just occasionally. Join in the fun and help contribute information to this important bird population database.

Creating Email List

We are in the process of creating a mailing list for the chapter. If you would like to be added and receive news about our meetings and field trips, please send your contact information to: pfly57@hotmail.com. Thank you.

Join AAS!

For \$20 a year you can be a member of both National Audubon & our local chapter. You can join by contacting National Audubon Society by mail or online. See links at our chapter web site at www.apalachee.org or by mail to: Member Data Center, POBox 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. Be sure to specify our chapter ID: E19.

Whopping Crane Info on the Web

Apalachee Audubon chapter member Fred Dietrich has been working with Operation Migration to graph crane flight patterns for the last few years. To see his graphs and other crane information go to:

<http://www.operationmigration.org/2007milecomparison.html>

Costa Rican Birding Trip

There are still openings for the birding trip to Costa Rica to take place April 12 – 26, 2008. The trip will be professionally led, making overnight stops at 9 locations, and possibly seeing a majority of the 869 avian species found in Costa Rica. The trip is during the height of the birding season. Accommodations are good and the price is reasonable. A down payment is due by January 1st. Contact Bob Henderson at 575-6610 or bob@rkhenderson.com for additional information.

Apalachee Audubon Yard Tour Fundraiser by Fran Rutkovsky

Mark the date on your calendar for our first Apalachee Audubon Yard Tour/Fundraiser on February 23, 2008. I'm organizing a tour of yards that are wildlife-friendly, especially to birds. As of now 5 yards are lined up for the tour, with each offering a different habitat and specialty. A fee will be charged for the self-guided tour, with the proceeds going to AAS. More details will be in the January newsletter and on our web site.

I do need volunteers! Please contact me: 422-3636 or franrutkovsky@comcast.net if you are willing to help out. People are needed to greet visitors, prepare snacks, and design, print, and distribute flyers and maps. Let's work together to make this a successful fundraiser for our chapter. And let's also hope the hummingbirds, orioles, tanagers and other winter birds will also cooperate!

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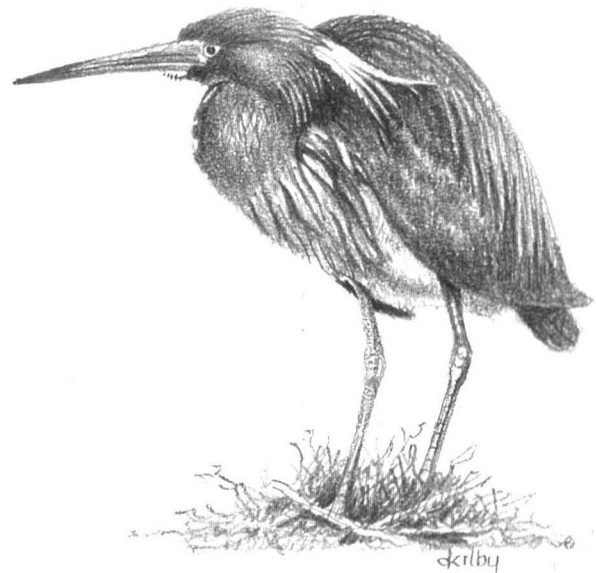


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Your membership expiration date is shown at the top right above your name. For problems with mailings from the national office or to change your address, call the National Audubon Society Office at 1-800-274-4201.

AUDUBON CALENDAR

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

Monthly programs are free and open to the public. They are held on fourth Wednesday of each month from September through May (except Dec.), at United Church of Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Dr., unless otherwise noted. Most evenings begin with an informal social at 7:00, followed by the program at 7:30. For more info, check out our website at www.apalachee.org.

NOVEMBER

- 10:** Field trip – Bald Point with Melissa Forehand and Marvin Collins
- 11:** Related field trip (repeats 11/18, 25 & 12/2, 9) - The Concerned Citizens of Wakulla County (CCOW) will sponsor trips with Chuck Hess and Joel Castro to the Apalachicola National Forest to watch banding of adult Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Reservations are limited to 6 per trip. To reserve your spot and obtain more information contact lynn_artz@hotmail.com or call 926-8756. See www.cowakulla.org to learn more about CCOW.
- 17:** Related field trip – St. Marks NWR sponsors fall bird and wildlife tours with volunteer Don Morrow
- 17:** Related – St. Marks NWR Photo Club (repeats 12/15, 1/19)
- 28:** Monthly Program – Birding by Ear with Julie Wraithmell

DECEMBER

- 1:** Field trip - Bottoms Road with Julie and Andy Wraithmell
- 9:** Audubon Silent Auction at World Traffic Book Store from 1-5 PM
- 15:** CBC St. Marks – Contact Jim Cox (necox@embarq.com) to join the count.
- 28:** CBC Apalachicola – Contact Alan Knothe (Alan.Knothe@dep.state.fl.us) to join the count.
- 29:** CBC Port St. Joe – Contact Bob Henderson (bob@rkhenderson.com) to join the count.
- 30:** CBC Tallahassee – Contact Marvin Collins (mcollins@nettally.com) / Grayal Farr (grayal@nettally.com) to join the count.