

# Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter of the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

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## February Program Meeting: Pesticide Use in Residential Settings and Silent Auction to Benefit AAS

Our featured speakers will be Dr. Richard Gragg, Associate Director/Associate Professor, The Environmental Institute, at Florida A&M University and Charlie L. Clark, Environmental Administrator for 21 years with the Florida Department of Agriculture, Division of Agricultural Environmental Services and Instructor for 3 years with Florida A&M, NASA grant. They will discuss common pesticides and toxic substances that homeowners purchase and use in their everyday lives. Mammalian toxicology and environmental ecology for some common pesticides will be explored.

Starting at 6:45, you may peruse Silent Auction items and begin bidding. Books, artwork, gift certificates, etc. will be auctioned. Come and have some fun by bidding OR **you can still contribute gift certificates or items such as art work or books related to birds, natural history, or the environment; new or lightly used items are OK!** To donate something, contact any Audubon board member or Melissa Forehand, (850) 510-4877, email [birdingtreefrog@gmail.com](mailto:birdingtreefrog@gmail.com).

**Silent Auction and informal social begins at 6:45 PM, February 27, Wednesday, at the United Church in Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Dr. Program follows from 7:30 – 9. The Silent Auction will conclude when the program ends.**

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## Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour, February 23, Saturday, 2008, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Interested in making your yard more attractive to birds and other wildlife? The Apalachee Audubon Society (AAS) invites you to take a self-guided tour of six local yards that are wildlife havens. Tickets are \$10 per person and will be available for purchase beginning February 1st at **Native Nurseries** and **Wild Birds Unlimited**. Ticket holders will receive addresses and maps to each location at the time of purchase.

Each yard has unique features to attract a variety of birds and other wildlife such as wintering hummingbirds, orioles, tanagers, finches, and pine siskins as well as our year-round residents. You will be inspired to maintain your own yard or green space for wildlife, whether it is one birdfeeder, one nest box, one wildflower bed, one garden path, or one natural area.

Make a difference for wildlife, one yard at a time! Join us in our first annual Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour and fundraiser to benefit Apalachee Audubon Society.

**VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL NEEDED to assist in the yards.** Contact Fran Rutkovsky to find out how you can contribute your time and still be able to go on the tour. Contact Fran via email [franrutkovsky@comcast.net](mailto:franrutkovsky@comcast.net) or at (850) 422-3636.

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### February 16, Saturday: Field Trip, Dixie Plantation Farm Wagon Tour of Property and Wildlife With Melissa Forehand Pre-Registration Required; Feb. 10 Deadline

Apalachee Audubon will join birders in Jefferson County for a farm wagon tour of the Dixie Plantation. Dixie is a large well-maintained plantation near Monticello used today mostly for horse trials and dog training. Our wagon will wind through beautiful forest, wetland, open habitats. We'll visit the large lake behind the "Big House." We expect to see a variety of birds and wildlife, including turkeys, ducks, wading birds, and early migrants. We may even see Sandhill Cranes, which have been observed on the plantation.

This year we are reserving 10 spaces for Jefferson County birders and 10 for Leon County birders.

**Meet at:** 8AM at Monticello Courthouse

**Expect to be done by:** noon

**Be sure to:** dress warmly and wear water-resistant shoes or boots. Bring binoculars, sunscreen, insect repellent, water.

**Feb. 10 deadline to pre-register. Contact:** Melissa Forehand via email at [birdingtreefrog@gmail.com](mailto:birdingtreefrog@gmail.com) or leave message at (850) 510-4877. After 10 spaces have been reserved, a waiting list will be created; people on the waiting list will be called if there is room after the Feb. 10 deadline.

### 11th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) February 15 – 18, Friday – Monday, 2008 Joint Project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology & National Audubon "Count for Fun, Count for the Future!"

You can participate in the GBBC by:

1. Counting birds for at least fifteen minutes during Feb. 15th – 18th, 2008. Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like – just keep a separate list of counts for each day and/or location.
2. Counting the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time and write it down. (You can get regional bird checklists from Audubon's "How To" site at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html>.)
3. Entering your results at the web page, [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/), where the counts nationwide will be reflected on a map of the USA.

You can watch the maps change and grow over the count period. Nationally participants submitted 81,003 species checklists in 2007. Tallahassee earned #1 standing in Florida last year for the number of species counted (148)! Join the fun in 2008 & help Tallahassee keep this winning status!

## President's Letter

Dear AAS Friends,

While Melissa and I were wrapping Christmas presents at Border's last month, we engaged our 'customers' in conversations about birds. Almost all of them perked up at the mention of feeding birds in their back yards, which often led to a listing of species they had seen. When told about our Wildlife-Friendly Backyard Tour coming up on Saturday, February 23rd, they all seemed interested indeed. Several of our members, led by Fran Rutkovsky, have been planning this tour ever since last summer! And it promises to be a very exciting and educational event. Our chapter has been recognized by others in Florida as unique in promoting backyard birding in this way.

Another forthcoming event is the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), happening between February 15 – 18. The GBBC, led by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, provides an opportunity for people of all ages and birding skill levels to enjoy learning about their backyard birds while collecting important data for conservation. If you can spend only 15 minutes at home observing during the four days, you can participate in this nationwide effort! To find out how, visit <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html>. Last year the Tallahassee area was at or near the very top of the national listing of sightings for the GBBC!

One very easy task for each of us is to encourage our neighbors and friends who feed birds to tell us what they see, to offer pointers about feeders and birdhouses, and to invite them out to a field trip or Apalachee Audubon program meeting. Let's all make February a month to learn more about the treasures in our own backyards!

Elizabeth Platt, AAS President

## Music For An ANCIENT FOREST

*A benefit concert supporting ecological studies on the Wade Tract, the only virgin stand of longleaf pine managed carefully for decades, protected with a permanent conservation easement, and dedicated to long-term research.*

**Sunday, March 2nd**

**2:00 – 5:30 PM**

**On the lawn at Tall Timbers Research Station**

**Save \$5.00 by ordering before day of the show! Tickets are \$10 per person, \$35 per carload, and \$45 per van load. For more details or to order on-line visit [www.ttrs.org](http://www.ttrs.org), call (850) 893-4153 x224 or email [lisa@ttrs.org](mailto:lisa@ttrs.org).**

**Featuring the music of Velma Frye and four outstanding local bands!**

Proceeds from the concert will go to the Wade Tract Research Endowment at Tall Timbers Research Station. The endowment supports work on gopher tortoises, red-cockaded woodpeckers, Bachman's sparrows, American chaff seed, and the thousands of other plants and animals supported by this rare old-growth forest.

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## Mission Statement

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

## **'Green' Learning Opportunities During FEBRUARY and MARCH**

Weds, Feb 13 through March 5, 5:30 PM for dinner, talks following at 6:15 PM, at First Presbyterian Church. You can attend just the talks. **Series on Becoming Carbon Neutral.** For reservations call 222-4504.

Wed, Feb 20, 3:30 PM at City Hall. **City Commission Target Issues Meeting, Report from City Energy Services Staff on the City's Demand-Side Management (DSM) / Efficiency Plan**, including smart meter plan implementation and solar.

Wed, Feb 20, 7:00 PM at Mary Brogan Science Museum. **5th Annual Engineers Week Town Hall Meeting, "Florida's Energy Challenges: How Do We Measure Up?"**

Sat, Mar 22, 9 AM – 4PM. Free. Riversprings Middle School, Crawfordville, **Green Living & Energy Expo.** For further info call: (850) 926-3931. Web site: [www.sustainablebigbend.org](http://www.sustainablebigbend.org)

Anyone attending these events is encouraged to prepare a brief summary report for our newsletter. These reports will be coordinated by Marvin Collins, our Conservation Committee Chairperson. Please contact Marvin at (850)224-9540 or via email at [mcollins@nettally.com](mailto:mcollins@nettally.com). More detailed reports may be linked to our web page.

### **UPDATE: Wakulla Springs Basin Working Group**

The Wakulla Springs Basin Working Group met on January 18, 2008 at the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Building in Tallahassee. The working group is comprised of springs "stakeholders" whose purpose is "to understand the hydrology of the Wakulla Springs system, identify threats to the water flowing to the spring and develop solutions to overcome the threats". Discussion included the continued expansion of the known cave system connecting with and contributing to the springs, extension of the existing springs protection zone to incorporate these areas, identification and potential public acquisition of key properties affecting these areas, and technical and political aspects of upgrading waste treatment facilities within the springs watershed. Marvin Collins and Melissa Forehand represented the AAS Conservation Committee. The committee expects to participate in future actions to encourage appropriate local regulation and property acquisition.

### **Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park 10th Annual General Membership Meeting & Social**

On Feb 11th The Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park will hold its 10th Annual General Membership Meeting and Social. Prospective members can learn about the organization and ways to get involved. Wakulla Lodge's Chef Chris Hazelton will treat the membership with his culinary specialties. Friends' President Della Parker-Hanson and Park Manager Sandy Cook will present their respective annual reports; various committees will present reports. New board members will be voted on & introduced to the group. Activities begin at 12:30 and conclude at 3:00 with free boat rides (or a Fireside Chat).

For more information about the annual meeting or the Friends' group, contact the Membership Coordinator at [moreinfoxy@wakullasprings.org](mailto:moreinfoxy@wakullasprings.org) or call (850) 224-5950 or visit the web at <http://www.wakullasprings.org/>.



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### **CAN YOU GIVE SOME HOURS IN 2008?**

We need several volunteers to staff an AAS display and hand out brochures at forthcoming events:

- Sat., April 5 - Wakulla Wildlife Festival at St. Marks
- Sat., April 12 - Pinewoods Bird Festival at Pebble Hill Plantation,

If you are willing to help at a display for an hour or more, please call our president, Elizabeth Platt, at 385-9043 or email her at [ejplatt@embarqmail.com](mailto:ejplatt@embarqmail.com).

## **NATIVE NURSERIES**

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## AUDUBON CALENDAR February/March 2008

### Monthly meetings, field trips, related events, and conservation activities

Monthly programs are free and open to the public. They are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month from September through May, at the United Church of Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Dr., unless otherwise noted. Monthly programs usually begin with an informal social at 7:00, followed by the program at 7:30. For our February monthly program only, come early at 6:45 to see what's being auctioned & make a bid. For more Audubon information, local & national, check out our website at [www.apalachee.org](http://www.apalachee.org).

### FEBRUARY

- 9:** Related field trip – St. Marks NWR sponsors final winter bird and wildlife tours with birder/biologist Don Morrow. At 9AM and 1 PM. Reservations required. Call 925-6121 for details.
- 10:** Conservation activity – Friends of Wakulla Springs annual mtg. Further info, [moreinfoxy@wakullasprings.com](mailto:moreinfoxy@wakullasprings.com), or call (850) 224-5950 or visit web at <http://www.wakullasprings.org/>.
- 16:** Field trip – Dixie Plantation tour, Monticello, Jefferson County with Melissa Forehand. Limited to 10 participants. Contact Melissa by 2/10 for reservations at [birdingtreefrog@gmail.com](mailto:birdingtreefrog@gmail.com) or 850-510-4877.
- 15-18:** 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology & National Audubon.
- 23:** Fundraising/Yard tours event – Wildlife-friendly backyard tours of 6 special Tallahassee yards. Tickets available at Native Nurseries and Wild Birds Unlimited.
- 27:** Monthly Program with Silent Auction (come early at 6:45 to see what's being auctioned & make a bid) – Pesticide Use in Residential Settings by Richard Gragg & Charlie Clark and Silent Auction.

### MARCH

- 1:** Field trip – (TBA). Check our website later for details [www.apalachee.org](http://www.apalachee.org).
- 15:** Field trip – Torreya State Park with Marvin Collins, Gil Nelson, & Bay County Audubon.
- 22:** Related event – Green Living & Energy Expo, 9AM – 4PM. Free. Riversprings Middle School, Crawfordville. For further info call: (850) 926-3931. Web site: [www.sustainablebigbend.org](http://www.sustainablebigbend.org).
- 26:** Monthly Program – Optics for the Tropics with Joni Ellison.
- 29:** Field trip – (TBA) with Jim & Ellen Shelton.