

# Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter of the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

Vol. 106, No. 6

www.apalachee.org

March, 2008

## March Program Meeting: Optics for the Tropics (OT): Connecting Birds, Habitats, and People

**Optics for the Tropics** President/Founder Joni Ellis will share what inspired her to create this non-profit education and research organization. OT provides quality optical equipment to ornithologists and educators in the Caribbean and Latin America, supporting their work with migrant bird populations. OT facilitates international partnerships between the Caribbean, Latin America and North America. Partners develop and monitor research and conservation strategies targeting wintering and breeding grounds of migrant bird populations. Joni will update us on results from the last five years. More info at [www.opticsforthetropics.org/](http://www.opticsforthetropics.org/) or [Joni@opticsforthetropics.org](mailto:Joni@opticsforthetropics.org)

**Informal social begins at 7:00 PM, March 26, 2008, Wednesday, at the United Church in Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Dr. Program follows from 7:30 – 9.**

## Birdathon 2008 Is Coming Soon / April 12<sup>TH</sup> — April 29<sup>TH</sup>

Please help make this year's Birdathon our best yet! We need team leaders, team members, and pledges. If you would like to join one of our Birdathon teams, contact Harvey Goldman at [Goldman@hep.fsu.edu](mailto:Goldman@hep.fsu.edu) or 850/385-5222. There is always room for more teams and more team members.

You may pledge to one of our teams or to the chapter as a whole. Your pledge can be a fixed dollar amount, or based on the number of species recorded by your team, or to the chapters species total. Teams will have a 24 hour period in which to record avian species (no one has yet birded the entire 24 hours!). Some teams have recorded close to 150 species; the chapter lists and totals for the years 1998 though 2006 can be viewed at <http://apalachee.org/birds.shtml>

Please help us with this activity – our major chapter fund-raiser! This money is used for environmental education, to pay for our newsletter, and to bring in out-of-town speakers for special programs. We place 65 to 80 Audubon adventure kits in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classrooms of local counties, at no cost to the public schools, and each kit costs the chapter \$45. Very little of the annual dues paid to the National Audubon Society returns to local chapters, so your support of this fund-raiser is critical to our continued success.

**Look inside to find a BIRDATHON pledge card!**

## Saturday, March 1<sup>ST</sup>, Field Trip St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Shore-Birding with Kristen Penney Sommers

Help us welcome a new, expert birder to our area. For the past 5 years during summer months, Kristen Sommers has been monitoring nesting shorebirds at Shell Key Preserve, an island and preserve just north of Ft. DeSoto Park. During winter months, she led St. Petersburg Audubon volunteers doing bimonthly bird counts at the preserve in order to document the habits of overwintering and migrating shorebirds. Now we have the opportunity to join Kristen as she applies her observation skills to the shorebirds and wading birds at one of our birding gems here in north Florida, the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

**Meet at:** Wachovia Bank on S. Monroe St. at 7:30 AM to carpool. Or meet at 8 AM at St. Marks Visitor's Center.

**Expect to be done by:** 10:30 AM

**Cost:** \$5 per vehicle. No extra cost for passengers.

**Level of difficulty:** Easy

**Be sure to bring:** Binoculars, field guide, insect repellent, water, comfortable walking shoes. If you have a wildlife spotting scope, bring it!

**Further information, contact:** Kristen Penney Sommers [kmp12374@yahoo.com](mailto:kmp12374@yahoo.com) or 813-748-7862.

## Saturday, March 15<sup>TH</sup>, Field Trip Torreya State Park – the "Mountains" of Florida Marvin Collins, Gil Nelson, & Bay County Audubon

Apalachee Audubon and Bay County Audubon chapters will join on Saturday March 15 for a field trip to Torreya State Park. Marvin Collins and Gil Nelson will lead the trip. Gil is author of Atlantic Coastal Plain Wildflowers and several other excellent books on the botany of Florida and the Southeastern US. The park encompasses over 13,000 acres bordering the east bank of the Apalachicola River north of Bristol. This area is considered by many to be the southernmost extremity of the Appalachian Mountains. The Apalachicola River has its origins in Appalachia and the terrain and biota are often more typical of the mountains than North Florida.

We will be walking the main (old) trail which is about 7.5 miles long and, by Florida standards, strenuous with a steep and often tricky terrain. Among the Appalachian species likely to be encountered is the Southern Copperhead, so we'll have to pay attention to where we are walking. Expect to spend the day.

**Meet at:** Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Bldg. ("the Coppertop") at 7:30 AM or at the Park at 9 AM EST at the Gregory House. The Douglas Bldg. is the main FL DEP bldg. at 3900 Commonwealth Blvd. If you take the I10 exit south at Capitol Circle NW, Commonwealth Blvd. is the first rd. to the left past the Harley motorcycle dealership.

**Expect to be done by:** Late afternoon

**Cost:** \$2 park fee per car

**Level of difficulty:** Strenuous (by Florida standards).

**Be sure to bring:** Binoculars, field guide, insect repellent, water, sturdy & comfortable walking/climbing shoes/boots, lunch, snacks.

**Further information, contact:** Marvin Collins at 224-9549 or by e-mail at [mcollins@nettally.com](mailto:mcollins@nettally.com).

## Saturday, March 29<sup>TH</sup>, Field Trip St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (SMNWR) Birding with Jim & Ellen Shelton

Local favorite birding guides Jim & Ellen Shelton will help us spot a variety of birds at the SMNWR at the peak of the migration season.

**Meet at:** Wachovia Bank on S. Monroe St. at 7:30 AM to carpool. Or meet about 8 AM at St. Marks NWR Visitor's Center.

**Expect to be done by:** 10:30 AM

**Cost:** \$5 per vehicle. No extra cost for passengers.

**Level of difficulty:** Easy

**Be sure to bring:** Binoculars, field guide, insect repellent, water, comfortable shoes. If you have one, a wildlife spotting scope!

**Further information, contact:** Jim or Ellen Shelton at 850/942-5194 or e-mail to [birdjim@comcast.net](mailto:birdjim@comcast.net)

**From Our President**

**Focus the Nation:**

On February 1 Florida A & M University hosted an excellent event entitled Focus the Nation (www.focusthenation.org) to make young people aware of, and engage in discussions about, global warming, clean technology, and pollution. Sponsors of the nationwide organization include businesses, environmental groups and churches, and its events reached literally thousands of colleges, universities, and K-12 school systems nationwide. FAMU went "all out," involving whole classes of curious and engaged students in 25 seminars and other events such as those I attended. The first was a presentation about the Knight Foundation's Greenovation Projects: the pilot Star Tran park & ride, public schools recycling, Urban Design Studio, and Sustainable Tallahassee. Generating a great deal of interest was a session on ecocitizenship: to develop stewardship in the face of Global Warming effects on population growth, food, water, pests, and weeds. Another session focused on human rights and environmental ethics, while another of great interest was on green cleaning, with specific recipes provided in a very useful handout. AAS member Steven Urse was on a panel of local environmental experts and also attended a panel featuring local political leaders. FAMU's Environmental Sciences Student Organization encouraged participation in environmentally friendly competition among student groups in 'Green Games'. Lots of helpful and provocative information and the enthusiasm of the students made my day at FAMU especially memorable.

**Elizabeth Platt, AAS President**

**Officers**

President: Elizabeth Platt 850-385-9043  
ejplatt@embarqmail.com  
Vice-President: Melissa Forehand 850-510-4877  
birdingtrefrog@gmail.com  
Treasurer: Harvey Goldman 850-385-5222  
goldman@hep.fsu.edu  
Secretary: Dawn Saucier 850-656-4045  
dsaucier@flabar.org

AAS newsletter is published 8 times yearly (Sept.-May, except December) by the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc., P.O. Box 1237, Tallahassee, FL32303-1237.

**Printed on partially recycled paper.**

**Mission Statement**

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

**Music for An Ancient Forest:  
Wade Tract Benefit Concert**

Join us at this benefit concert for the Wade Tract Research Endowment at Tall Timbers; the endowment supports the study of red-cockaded woodpeckers, Bachman's sparrows & many other animals & plants in this rich longleaf ecosystem. Bring your blanket, lawn chair, cooler, sun screen, and hat and enjoy hours of fine music.

**Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, from 2:00-5:30 PM**

**Tall Timbers Lawn in front of Beadel House**

(on Thomasville Rd., 17 miles N. beyond I10, left on County Rd.12)

Featuring ...

**Velma Frye** (one beautiful voice)  
**Depot Creek** (Classic Cajun)  
**Eclectic Acoustic** (Songs from Everywhere)  
**Tanager** (Irish Traditional)  
**Frank Lindamood** (early American Folk)  
**Aaron O'Rourke & the SAIL High School**  
**Bluegrass Band**

Save \$5.00 by ordering in advance! Tickets are \$10 per person, \$35 per carload, & \$45 per van load when ordered online at [www.ttrs.org](http://www.ttrs.org) or by phone (call Lisa Baggett at (850) 893-4153x241). Tickets on day of the show are \$10 per person, \$40 for carload, and \$50 for vans.

**Apalachee Audubon Society Birdathon Pledge Card**

I am happy to pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_  
per species in support of Birdathon. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
My tax-deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
is enclosed payable to Apalachee Audubon Society. City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Pledged in support of \_\_\_\_\_  
Birdathoner: \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail your pledge OR your contribution to:*

**Apalachee Audubon Society**  
**Post Office Box 1237**  
**Tallahassee, FL 32302-1237**

\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING BIRDATHON!**

Every dollar you give will go toward AAS programs to protect birds, other wildlife and habitat here in North Florida.

## Hedgerow Design and Management for Songbirds

By David Copps, Landscape Designer

When I moved into my home a few years ago, there was nothing but patchy lawn between my house and the one next door. I stopped mowing to let the seeds and roots of native vegetation sprout and grow. Natural regeneration was supplemented with the planting of trees and shrubs purchased from a local nursery. My goal was to create a hedgerow that would attract more songbirds to my yard.

Recently, while looking out the window at this strip of vegetation on a chilly February day, I saw a mockingbird jealously guarding the last of the red berries on a yaupon holly, ruby-crowned kinglets and yellow-rumped warblers stripping the hard, waxy fruits from wax myrtles, and brown thrashers and white-throated sparrows tossing and scratching the leaves on the ground below in search of a meal. My hedgerow is finally paying off in wildlife viewing dividends.

When designed and managed properly, hedgerows provide valuable habitat for urban wildlife, especially songbirds. Provided below are some tips and techniques that can be used to increase the number and variety of songbirds in yards and neighborhoods everywhere.

Provide a variety of small trees, shrubs, and vines throughout the hedgerow. Groupings of both deciduous and evergreen plants that flower at different times of the year provide an abundance of food in the way of fruits and seeds throughout the year. Two of my favorites are yaupon holly and wax myrtle as mentioned above. Other good ones are American beautyberry, Walter's viburnum, Chicasaw plum, cherry laurel, red cedar, winged sumac and blueberry.

Just as important as the composition of the hedge is its structure. To provide the necessary dense cover for nesting, resting, and escape from predators it is important to create multiple layers. Ideally a three-layered pattern, one that resembles the structure of a natural forest edge, should be the aim. To produce this effect, a row of small trees is planted first. In front of these go the large shrubs which are followed with a bank of low shrubs. One of my favorite models for this effect is the roadside vegetation along Lighthouse Road in St. Marks Wildlife Refuge where tight groupings of red cedar, cabbage palm, dahoon holly and saw palmetto are laced together with wild grape and pepper vine.

Leave some dead wood standing within the hedge for perching sites. During the breeding season many male birds seem particularly attracted to isolated dead branches for singing, especially when there is dense escape cover nearby. Dead wood also harbors a wide variety of insects which attracts bark-gleaning birds such as woodpeckers and nuthatches.

Finally, tell your neighbors about habitat landscaping and ask them to join in. Songbird populations greatly benefit when individual hedgerows link together to form a larger neighborhood network.

### 11<sup>TH</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

#### Statistics from USA 2008

Total Checklists Submitted: 62,640  
Total Species Observed: 611  
Total Individual Birds Counted: 6,961,299

#### Statistics from Florida 2008

Total Checklists Submitted: 2,589  
Total Species Observed: 254  
Total Individual Birds Counted: 369,200

#### Tallahassee Update

As of Tuesday, Feb. 19, Tallahassee was the **only** city in North America that makes the national Top Ten in all of the following categories: Most Checklists (#2); Most Species (#4); and Most Birds (#5). **Let's give ourselves some credit for that!**

For more updates, additional statistics, photos, blogs, distribution map, & more, visit [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/). The GBBC project is cosponsored by the Cornell Ornithology Lab and the National Audubon Society.

#### **BIRDSONG'S OLD TIMEY PLANT SALE** Saturday, March 22, 9 AM – 2 PM

Birdsong is located mid-way on Meridian Road, 4-miles north of the Florida-Georgia border. For details visit [www.birdsongnaturecenter.org/](http://www.birdsongnaturecenter.org/)




## WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Everything for the birds and the serious birder!

**OPTICS ~ SEED ~ FEEDERS ~ BIRDBATHS ~ FIELD GUIDES  
NESTING BOXES ~ NATURE GIFTS**

**WE NOW CARRY SWAROVSKI OPTICS!**

**1505-2 Governor's Square Blvd Tallahassee, FL 32301**  
**(850) 576-0002**      [www.wbu.com/tallahassee](http://www.wbu.com/tallahassee)



## David Copps LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

*~ bringing nature home ~  
with earth-friendly habitat gardens*

876 Madeira Circle  
Tallahassee FL 32312

**850/385-6548**  
[meadowman3@yahoo.com](mailto:meadowman3@yahoo.com)



## SUSTAINABLE BIG BEND

### Green Living and Energy Expo

*Riversprings Middle School, 800 Spring Creek Hwy  
Crawfordville, FL 32327, Wakulla County*

**March 22nd, 2008**  
9AM – 4PM. Free.

For further info call: (850) 926-3931.

Discover hundreds of the best products and services  
that promote sustainability.  
Find ways to create a simple, healthy life.

Visit <http://www.greenlivingenergyexpo.com/> or  
[www.sustainablebigbend.org](http://www.sustainablebigbend.org)  
for more information!

# NATIVE NURSERIES

**The Store for Nature Lovers  
For Over 28 Years**

**Native Plants - Wildlife Gardening  
Bird Shop - Herbs - Organic Gardening Supplies**



850-386-8882  
1661 Centerville Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
[www.nativenurseries.com](http://www.nativenurseries.com)

Apalachee Audubon  
P.O. Box 1237  
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1237

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Permit No. 30

March 1<sup>ST</sup> Audubon Bird Walk at St. Marks NWR!  
March 2<sup>ND</sup> Music for an Ancient Forest: Benefit at Tall Timbers!

Your membership expiration date is shown at top right above your name. For problems with membership, call the National Audubon Society Office at 1-800-274-4201. For problems with mailings, contact Pam Flynn at [pflynn@us.ibm.com](mailto:pflynn@us.ibm.com)

**AUDUBON CALENDAR March/April, May Preview, 2008**  
**Monthly meetings, field trips, fund-raising events, and related events**

Monthly programs are free and open to the public. For more Audubon information, local & national, check out our web site at [www.apalachee.org](http://www.apalachee.org).

**MARCH**

- 1: Field trip — St. Marks NWR birding with Kristen Penney Sommers. More info e-mail [kmp12374@yahoo.com](mailto:kmp12374@yahoo.com) or PH 813/748-7862.
- 2: Related event — Music for an Ancient Forest: benefit concert supporting the Wade Tract. On the lawn at Tall Timbers Research Station. Tickets online at [www.ttrs.org](http://www.ttrs.org) or e-mail Lisa at [lisa@ttrs.org](mailto:lisa@ttrs.org) or PH 850/893-4153 x224
- 15: Field trip — Torreya State Park with Marvin Collins, Gil Nelson, & Bay County Audubon. All day hiking; 7:30 AM until late afternoon. Somewhat strenuous. Further info, contact Marvin Collins, [mcollins@nettally.com](mailto:mcollins@nettally.com) or 850/224-9549.
- 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. More info [Joni@opticsforhetropics.org](mailto:Joni@opticsforhetropics.org) [www.opticsforhetropics.org/](http://www.opticsforhetropics.org/)
- 27: Related event: 3rd Herbert L. Stoddard Natural History Seminar, Tall Timbers Research Station – E.V. Komarek Science Education Center. For details contact Jim Cox, Vertebrate Ecologist, TTRS, [jim@ttrs.org](mailto:jim@ttrs.org).
- 29: Field trip — St. Marks NWR birding with Jim & Ellen Shelton, 850/942-5194 OR e-mail to [birdjim@comcast.net](mailto:birdjim@comcast.net)

**APRIL**

- 12: Fund raising event — Annual BIRDATHON begins; ends on 29<sup>th</sup>. Try something new — be a team member!
- 12: Field trip — St. George Island State Park with Rob Lengacher. Birding for migrating songbirds. Further information contact Rob at [rlengacher@fsu.edu](mailto:rlengacher@fsu.edu) or 850/878-1014.
- 11-13: Related event — Pinewoods Bird Festival at Pebble Hill Plantation, Friday – Sunday. For Schedule of Events visit online at <http://pinewoodsbirdfestival.com/>. To pre-register for field trips, call soon & speak to Lisa, 850/893-4153x241.
- 26: Monthly Program — FSU Coastal and Marine Laboratory (FSUCML) and coastal habitats with R. Todd Engstrom, [engstrom@bio.fsu.edu](mailto:engstrom@bio.fsu.edu). Follow up field trip with Todd to the FSUCML, Saturday, May 3rd.

**MAY PREVIEW**

- 14: **ANNUAL BANQUET** — Speaker Bob Montanaro, Osprey research, & Membership Program. Tickets \$10/person available ahead of time or at the door. Location is TBA. For more info contact Tim at 850/933-5979.