

Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter of the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

Vol. 106, No. 7

www.apalachee.org

April, 2008

April Program Meeting: That place on 98 ... What do they do there anyway?

With Todd Engstrom, the Associate Director of the Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory (FSUCML)

Located on St. James Island in northwest Florida, the FSUCML offers unique opportunities for research, education, and outreach on the Gulf of Mexico in a biologically diverse, pristine environment. Habitats range from inshore oyster reefs to offshore patch reefs, from freshwater bogs to sea grass and salt marshes. The FSUCML is in close proximity to the St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge, the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Tate's Hell. Research is conducted by faculty in residence and from the departments of biological science, oceanography, geology, and anthropology.

Todd will be our expert interpreter explaining these diverse habitats & related research at FSUCML. Todd earned his PhD at FSU in 1986 and since 1990 has worked as an ecologist in the south Georgia/north Florida region, notably at Tall Timbers Research Station and for The Nature Conservancy, directing the Greenwood Project in the Red Hills region of Georgia. During 2007 he led a search for the Ivory-billed woodpecker on the Apalachicola River for the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. Join us for an in depth look at our local environment.

Informal social begins at 7:00 PM, Wednesday, April 23RD, at the United Church in Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Dr.
Program follows from 7:30 – 9.

On Saturday morning, May 3rd, we are invited to a field trip led by Todd at the FSUCML.
Located at 3618 Highway 98, St. Teresa, FL 32358.

Birdathon 2008 Is Coming Soon / April 12TH — April 29TH

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 right away at 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! Please pledge OR contribute right away!!

Saturday, April 12 Field Trip

St. George Island State Park

Rob Lengacher

Local teacher and birder, Rob Lengacher, will help nature lovers take advantage of spring migration at St. George Island State Park. If weather conditions cooperate we can expect a great variety of migrating songbirds.

Meet at: Wachovia Bank on S. Monroe St. and leave by 7:15 AM to carpool or meet at the island Youth Camp parking lot at 9 AM.

Expect to be done by: noon

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 and a wildlife spotting scope if you can!

Further information, contact: Rob Lengacher, PH: 850/878-1014 E-mail: rlengacher@fsu.edu

Thursday, May 15, AAS Annual Dinner, United Church in Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Dr.

Social begins at 6 PM, dinner served at 6:30

Presenter Bob Montanaro, Pelican Island Audubon Society, Vero Beach, FL

Osprey Diary: Wildlife & People of Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge (see <http://www.ospreywatch.org/> for Osprey info)

\$10 tickets available thru Wednesday, May 14 at Native Nurseries or Wild Birds Unlimited; Or purchase tickets at the door.

Our dinner features a homemade meal; an accurate head count of attendees for planning is important!

RSVP to Chef Tim Smith at 850/933-5979, especially if you plan on purchasing tickets at the door on May 15.

Bob Montanaro's presentation uses a combination of still and video photography to tell the story of the 2007 Osprey nesting season at Florida's **Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)**. He also introduces us to some of the staff and volunteers who work at the Refuge; they describe from first hand knowledge some of the challenges now facing Pelican Island NWR and America's refuge system as a whole.

Highlights of the program include dramatic still and video footage of the Osprey young learning to fly, a very inquisitive Great Horned Owl nestling, contentious Bald Eagle/Osprey encounters, heated Osprey sibling rivalry, and other wildlife found elsewhere in the Refuge.

Pelican Island NWR was America's *first* Wildlife Refuge, established in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt. Two Floridians approached President Roosevelt with the need for creating this Refuge. Their request followed a successful campaign two years earlier by the American Ornithologists' Union and the Florida Audubon Society to pass legislation in Florida calling for the protection of non-game birds.

This year for dinner we'll enjoy a delicious homemade Greek meal, courtesy of our very own local Audubon member Tim Smith, who serves as both our Banquet & Awards Chairperson. Tickets are \$10 per person available thru Wednesday, May 14 at Native Nurseries or Wild Birds Unlimited. After May 14, purchase tickets at the door on Thursday, May 15. Location is United Church in Tallahassee. RSVP to Tim at 850/933-5979, especially if you plan to purchase tickets at the door on Thursday, May 15.

Bob Montanaro's presentation is a perfect opportunity to learn more about how we can continue the rich Florida tradition of protecting our birds. Please join us for this special occasion and bring a friend or family member with you!

Audubon Advocate: Shocking News - House May Cut Funds for Everglades and Florida Forever - Act Now

Advocacy Campaign from Audubon of Florida

Write your elected officials; tell them that it is **unacceptable** to zero out **Florida Forever & Everglades Restoration!**

The Conservation Network of Audubon of Florida functions as a clearinghouse for the very latest information on Florida conservation issues, providing you with the means to easily and effectively communicate with your elected officials. It's the easiest way to leverage your effectiveness on state and regional environmental issues!

Look up your elected officials by zip code at the Audubon Action web site!!

Sign up for free e-newsletters and fact sheets.

<http://audubonaction.org/florida/home.html>

From Our President

Dear Fellow Apalachee Audubon Friends,

Yesterday I was asked by an environmentalist from Monroe County to write a letter on behalf of the preservation of a native ecosystem in the state parks of the Keys. It seems a local group has convinced their Legislator to submit a bill (HB 1215) that would preserve a stand of non-native Australian pines for their 'aesthetic appeal'. Despite the fact that a monoculture is created when such species takes over an area, driving out birds, other wildlife, and native plants, the group remains adamant in support of those trees. In fact, one member was heard to say, "When the birds pay taxes like the rest of us, then maybe I'll listen," and some additional sentiments not fit to print here.

I am reminded of similar stories told by birding friends in Bay County Audubon who are trying to get a city ordinance in Panama City to keep dogs off the beach to protect nesting plovers, or by others in St. Petersburg Audubon to keep destructive partying intruders away from certain offshore islands, which are havens for nesting birds. Or, when faced with restricted access to certain delicate areas in the Apalachicola National Forest, some motorcycling Floridians protest vociferously, and not always politely, that they should be allowed to go anywhere they like.

But then something like our recent Backyard Wildlife Tour of six yards takes place and draws a crowd of one hundred people to look at birdhouses, bird feeders, and bird-attracting trees and bushes. And these visitors, only a few of whom were Apalachee Audubon members, were moved and inspired as they walked around the yards, talking to their hosts about ways to encourage more birds into their own yards. So, there are friends of birds and wildlife out there! And we need to continue to promote backyard birding as a means to further our goals of habitat preservation and conservation. Fran Rutkovsky's team (see her article for the names) who hosted this outstanding event have earned our praise and appreciation, as have our friends at Wild Birds Unlimited and Native Nurseries who sold tickets. Next year, anyone?

Elizabeth Platt, AAS President

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www.apalachee.org

Printed on partially recycled paper.

[Mission Statement](#)

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

SAVE THE DATE!!!

2008 Central South Native Plant Conference
October 17-18

Birmingham Botanical Gardens www.bbgardens.org

Premier wildflower conference of the Southeast, fostering awareness, appreciation & increased usage of plants native to the Southeast. Visit web site for details or contact Anna Sizemore, Special Events Coordinator at 205/414-3965 or asizemore@bbgardens.org.

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:

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

_____ 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.

Tallahassee Democrat Blog Covers Audubon Yard Tours!

Check out <http://tinyurl.com/2l9nug> to find Bruce Ritchie's blog. Bruce is an environmental issues reporter for the Tallahassee Democrat. He visited each yard & wrote a story called **Spring arrived during yards tour**. He shares comments on each yard & posts a good picture of Fred Dietrich's yard. His blog is filled with stories, information, & links relating to Florida & local environmental issues. His blog also lets you leave a comment of your own on this story or any of the others he's posted.

Thank You, Bruce, for participating in this project & sharing your experience with a larger audience!!

First Annual Wildlife-Friendly Backyard Tour

From Fran Rutkovsky, Committee Chair

Apalachee Audubon's first annual "Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour" fund raiser on February 23, 2008, was a big success. We sold 100 tickets, and it sometimes felt as if half of those people were in our yards all at one time. We also took in over \$100 in donations. Most people left with smiles on their faces and a question, "When's the next one?"

My thanks to all who purchased tickets and visited our outstanding wildlife-friendly yards and to our hosts and other volunteers. We all contributed to a great success!

Host: Eleanor Dietrich

Volunteers: Dean & Sally Jue, Grayal Farr, Mike Miller

Host: Fred Dietrich

Volunteers: Glenda Simmons, Elizabeth Platt

Hosts: Jody Elliott, Claudia Mason

Volunteer: Tracee Strohmman

Host: Pam Flynn

Volunteers: Ann Bruce, Tracee Strohmman

Host: Harry Hooper

Volunteers: Linda Most, Karen Wensing

Hosts: Fran & Paul Rutkovsky

Volunteers: Ed Woodruff, Michael Evans

Yard tour committee:

Fran Rutkovsky, chair; Fred Dietrich, Pam Flynn, Tracee Strohmman

Yard tour ticket sales:

Native Nurseries and Wild Birds Unlimited

Thanks to **Elizabeth Platt** for the idea of the tour and to **Donna Legare** for giving tips about organizing it.

P.S. from Fran: A visitor to my yard & deck on the Feb. 23 tour left a baseball-style cap. If you lost one, call & describe it: 850/422-3636.



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See Page 2

APALACHEE AUDUBON CALENDAR April/May 2008, Vol. 106, No. 7

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

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. Most evenings begin with an informal social at 7:00, followed by the program at 7:30. For more info, check out our web site at www.apalachee.org.

APRIL

- 12:** **Fund raising event** – Annual **BIRDATHON** begins; ends on 29th. Try something new – be a team member! Contact Harvey Goldman at goldman@hep.fsu.edu or 850/385-5222 for details. Use form inside to mail in a contribution or a pledge
- 12:** **Field trip** – St. George Island State Park with Rob Lengacher. Birding for migrating songbirds. Further information contact Rob at rlengacher@fsu.edu or 850/878-1014.
- 11-13:** **Related event** – Pinewoods Bird Festival at Pebble Hill Plantation, Wade Tract Preserve, Tall Timbers, 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.
- 18:** **Related event** – 4th Herbert Stoddard Natural History Seminar, Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS), Komarek Science Education Center. For details contact Jim Cox, Vertebrate Ecologist, TTRS, jim@ttrs.org
- 19:** **Related event** – Green Cleaning Class, 11AM-12:30PM, Green Living Center Coffee Room Event. Why use harmful, toxic chemicals when natural cleaners do the job? Located next to the blue painted Decent Pizza store front, 1020 N. Monroe St., across from Cafe Cabernet, near 4th Ave. More information tallahasseeeglc@glc.com
- 26:** **Monthly Program** – That place on 98 ... What do they do there anyway? With Todd Engstrom, Associate Director, Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory (FSUCML), engstrom@bio.fsu.edu. Follow up field trip with Todd to the FSUCML, Saturday, May 3rd.

MAY

- 3:** **Field trip** – FSU Coastal and Marine Laboratory (FSUCML) and coastal habitats with R. Todd Engstrom
- 9-11:** **Weekend field trip** – Bird watching trip to Kennesaw Mountain, GA with Bob Henderson. Bob says this weekend will be very good for migration sightings! More details TBA soon; check our web site OR email: bob@rkhenderson.com or PH: 850/575-6610.
- 14:** **Apalachee Audubon Banquet** – Osprey Diary: Wildlife & People of Pelican Island NWR with Bob Montanaro, Pelican Island Audubon Society. Tickets \$10 per person, available ahead of time or at door. Location is United Church of Tallahassee. Enjoy **delicious** homemade Greek dinner, courtesy of our very own local Audubon member, Tim Smith, who serves Apalachee as both our Awards & Banquet Chairperson. Contact Tim at 850/933-5979 to purchase tickets or to volunteer with set up or clean up.
- 17:** **Field trip** – A delightful spring butterfly walk with our local experts Sally & Dean Jue. Check our web site soon for details TBA.