

Apalachee Audubon

The Newsletter of the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

Vol. 107, No. 3

www.apalachee.org

November/December, 2008

**November Program Meeting: Thursday, November 20, Historic Amtrak Station, 918 Railroad Ave.
Speaker Raphael Abanja – *In Pursuit of Biodiversity Conservation: Protecting the Honey Bee*
7:00 PM Social, 7:30 – 9:00 Program**

Join us to learn about the current status of honey bees. Find out about efforts to protect the stability of honey bee populations and their importance in maintaining biodiversity and healthy ecosystem dynamics.

Raphael holds a Bsc. degree in Zoology and Chemistry from Moi University and Maseno University College, Kenya and a Master's Degree in Entomology from the University of Ghana. He is currently a PhD candidate in entomology at the University of Florida.

Apalachee Audubon Welcomes Scott Weidensaul To Tallahassee!

Mark your January, 2009 calendar for an exciting opportunity to hear Scott Weidensaul, author, naturalist, and field researcher. Scott's field research focuses on bird migration including birds of prey, hummingbirds and the movements of northern saw-whet owls. He lectures widely on conservation and nature. His writing has appeared in Smithsonian, the New York Times, Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife and Audubon. His most recent book, *Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding* (2007), traces 400 years of ornithological history.



Scott is a regular faculty member at Maine's Hog Island Audubon Camp. At Hog Island this summer is where our Apalachee Audubon board member Pam Flynn met Scott. Once Pam realized what a knowledgeable and entertaining speaker Scott is, she convinced him that he needed a Florida Getaway during January. We are delighted that

Scott accepted the invitation to visit us here in north Florida. To learn more about Scott's other interesting books and activities visit his web site at www.scottweidensaul.com/.

Enjoy two fund-raising events featuring Scott on Thursday, January 29 and Friday, January 30

All proceeds will go to Apalachee Audubon and to the
Operation Migration: Whooping Crane project at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.



On Thursday evening, January 29 join us for wine and hors d'oeuvres at a small gathering to welcome Scott to Tallahassee. Attendance will be limited to 30 people, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at a location to be determined. The cost will be \$50 per person which includes a ticket to his Friday night talk. To reserve a spot, contact Pam Flynn at (850) 383-1238 or pflynn57@gmail.com. This event will be announced to the general public on December 1, giving Audubon members the first opportunity to reserve a spot for the event. Your donation is tax deductible.

On Friday, January 30 Scott will be speaking on *A Brief History of American Birding*. His talk will be at 7:00 PM at Tallahassee Community College, Building 38 (Economics and Workforce Development at SW end of campus). Tickets for this event are \$10 each and may be purchased beginning December 1. Purchase tickets at Wild Birds Unlimited or Native Nurseries. To purchase a ticket by mail send a check to: Pam Flynn, 2801 Sterling Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with a check made payable to **Apalachee Audubon**. Indicate an address, phone number, or e-mail address where you wish to be contacted with further event details if necessary. As a bonus for early ticket buyers, purchase your ticket before January 1 and your name will be entered into a drawing for one of three prizes. Watch for additional event details at our web site: www.apalachee.org.

Don't miss out on these fascinating and educational opportunities!

President's Message
The Audubon Assembly – October 24-25, 2008

Conservation Chair Marvin Collins, VP Ed Gartner, and I shared a ride to Florida Audubon's annual meeting, and also a room in Crystal River's Plantation Hotel. Thursday afternoon the three of us took a pre-Assembly boat trip and saw beautiful Three Sisters Springs, a remnant of old Florida that has – so far – escaped the clutter of overdevelopment and armored shorelines. The upwelling of clean water kept the water near the Three Sisters clear enough for the manatees to navigate.

Friday started with a choice of field trips. I went with Thomas Dunkerton to the shore where he exhibited his digiscope – a digital camera married to a telescope. I was looking through the digiscope, and a melanistic gull flashed his under-wings. The “in your face,” vivid, red markings were startling. And this viewing was on a rainy, overcast day!

The euphoria was tempered a few minutes later, on the drive back to the hotel. We noticed a dark object ahead, in the next lane – was it road-kill? One of my tasks as a Master of Wildlife Conservation was to record dead wildlife and, when feasible, to pull the corpse off the road. As we pulled to a stop, we were dumbfounded to realize it was a cormorant, sitting on the road!

I got out of the pickup and looked over the bird but could see no injuries. Walking slowly behind and gingerly picked her up -- very aware of a potentially slashing beak – I carried her to the edge of an adjacent marsh and gently launched her into the air. She arose to about ten feet and then descended in to the rushes. We drove away with our thoughts.

The three of us attended all the “learning” sessions (Coastal and upland habitats, etc.). We went to the Friday banquet and had dinner with Gov. Crist (along with 197 other participants!) He was recognized for his continuing pro-environment positions with a *Champion of the Everglades* award. Our final activity on Saturday was to vote on a very large number of resolutions that will determine Audubon's regional and state conservation priorities. Eric Draper was kept busy chairing that meeting. We saw Jim Cox, a presenter in a learning session, and AAS members Brian Chumley and Julie Wraithmell, who serve in the Audubon state office and helped run the Assembly.

For more information, please contact me.

Ben Fusaro
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fusaro@math.fsu.edu

Lord God Bird: The Enduring Quest
For the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker
All Saints Cinema, Historic Amtrak Station
Friday and Saturday, November 21ST – 22ND

The Tallahassee Film Society (TFS) and the Apalachee Audubon Society are sponsoring the showing of *Lord God Bird: The Enduring Quest for the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker*. The film will be shown at the All Saints Cinema at the Historic Amtrak Station, Railroad Square. Showings are at 6 PM and 8 PM on Friday, November 21ST and at 5 PM and 7 PM on Saturday, the 22ND. Tickets are \$7 general admission, \$5 TFS members & students with ID. The discovery of the supposedly extinct bird in the swamps of Arkansas was first announced to the public during the spring of 2005. This 90-minute documentary reveals the natural history of the species, describes developments since 2005, and tells a story of faith, doubt, despair, and hope regarding our relationship with nature. For further information visit the TFS home page at: www.tallahasseefilms.com or call 386-4404. Mark your calendars now for the showing of this excellent film!



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Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc. (AAS)

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Newsletter Editor Ann Bruce 766-3061
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Visit our web site at www.apalachee.org for e-mail addresses, list of committee chairs, and online copy of newsletters.

Mission Statement

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

Citizen Science in Action – the 2008 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 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 at:

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>

Four count circles in our area include Tallahassee, St. Marks, Apalachicola, and Port St. Joe. Others include Panama City and Cedar Key and Jackson County. Not all coordinators will have space for a new birder to participate, but some locations can accommodate someone new. Be sure and contact the coordinator well ahead of time if you are interested.

Dates and coordinators are:

St. Marks	December 20	Jim Cox 942-2489
<i>(Restricted participation at St. Marks; access is limited to a single vehicle in some areas.)</i>		
Port St. Joe	December 27	Bob Henderson 576-6610
Apalachicola	December 28	Alan Knothe 653-8063
Tallahassee	January 3	Marvin Collins 224-9549
		Grayal Farr 385-5732
Jackson County	January 4	Andy Bankert (321) 258-2353

The count goes on rain or shine. Be prepared for adverse field conditions if you are going. Count coordinators and team leaders can provide more details. This is an excellent way for an inexperienced birder to get feet wet (figuratively and literally)!



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Calling All Volunteers

Apalachee Audubon needs you. We could use more folks to help with activities, projects, etc. If you can spare some hours, please call Ben Fusaro or any AAS officers, or visit our web site and review volunteer opportunities.

AAS at St. Marks NWR Monarch Festival We Love All of Our Volunteers

With the help of 6 of our volunteers, on Saturday, October 25, Apalachee Audubon participated in the 20th Annual Monarch Butterfly Festival at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Our Audubon display highlights some of our chapter activities in the areas of conservation, education and appreciation of natural areas. Many visitors stopped by to check out Apalachee Audubon and several folks inquired about new memberships. Our children's table, with its bird puzzles, mazes and coloring activities were especially popular. Our presence at the festival wouldn't have been possible without the time and talent of our volunteers: Jan Bordelon, Meredith Finley, Harry Hooper, Elizabeth Platt, Jean Quincy and Lynn Reynolds.

Birdathon Revisited

We extend a tardy thank-you to volunteer Eric Shaw. In April, Eric was a great help to the Gnit-Picking Gnatcatchers team when, within 24 hours, they identified 142 bird species – the most among our teams for this major fundraiser. We apologize for omitting Eric's name from the list of our Birdathon volunteers.

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Nov. Program Meeting, Thurs. Nov. 20
*In Pursuit of Biodiversity Conservation:
Protecting the Honey Bee* with Raphael Abanja
Movie Screening: *Lord God Bird* at All Saints Cinema
Fri. & Sat. Nov. 21 & 22
January Scott Weidensaul Events
Thurs. Jan. 29, Welcome Party, 6:30 – 8:30 PM, \$50 tickets
Fri. Jan. 30, *Brief History of American Birding* Lecture
7:00 PM at TCC, Bldg. 38, SW Campus, \$10 tickets

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.

APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY (AAS) CALENDAR November/December 2008, Vol. 107, No. 3

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, our monthly program is being held on the third Thursday of November. It is free and open to the public at the historic Amtrak Station, 918 Railroad Ave. Social at 7:00 PM, program at 7:30. See details at www.apalachee.org.

NOVEMBER

- 20: Monthly Program** – *In Pursuit of Biodiversity Conservation: Protecting the Honey Bee* with Raphael Abanja. Details above.
- 21-22: Movie Screening** – *Lord God Bird: The Enduring Quest for the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker*, All Saints Cinema at the historic Amtrak Station. Showing on Friday the 21ST, 6 & 8 PM; on Saturday the 22ND, 5 & 7 PM. See page 2 for more details. **We still need volunteers to help staff the Audubon information table in the theatre lobby.** If you would be willing to take a shift on either day, please contact Pam Flynn, 382-1238 or pflynn57@gmail.com.

DECEMBER

???? **Whooping Crane Fly-over Celebration Day** – **Whenever the whoopers arrive, watch the inaugural class of ultralight-led whoopers fly over the town of St. Marks as they head to the Wildlife Refuge. Watch our web site for details.**

Christmas Bird Count 2008 – St. Marks (20TH), Port St. Joe (27TH), Apalachicola (28TH), Tallahassee (January 3), and Jackson County (January 4). See inside on page 3 for further details about *Citizen Science in Action*.

JANUARY 2009

- 24: Field Trip** – Birding trip to Wakulla Springs State Park with local resident and experienced birder George Apthorp. Will include visiting a restricted area of the park known as the Sanctuary. Plan on a 3-hour walk.
- 29: Welcome Party** – For Scott Weidensaul, nationally well-known author, naturalist & speaker. Enjoy wine, hor d'oeuvres, & good company. Attendance is limited to 30 people. Cost is \$50 per person (& includes ticket to his lecture the following evening). See page 1 for details. Also visit www.scottweidensaul.com/ or www.apalachee.org.
- 30: Author Lecture** – *A Brief History of American Birding* with Scott Weidensaul. Cost is \$10 per person, 7 PM, Tallahassee Community College, Building 38. Tickets available beginning December 1ST (page 1 details). Buying ticket prior to December 30 includes entry to a raffle for one of 3 gifts. Visit www.scottweidensaul.com/ or www.apalachee.org for more details.