

# APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Apalachee Audubon Society Mission Statement:

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



NEWSLETTER OF THE APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

SUMMER 2014

*Editor's Note – from Suzanna MacIntosh*

*We hope you'll enjoy our summer newsletter. We decided to do something a little different during our 'summer break'. In this issue we will share some of our favorite books and favorite places in Florida and nearby Georgia. The books and places included are only a beginning; we will feature more in coming newsletters. If you have a special place you would like to see featured, please let us know at [aasnewsletter2011-audubon@yahoo.com](mailto:aasnewsletter2011-audubon@yahoo.com).*

## Inside This Issue



Officers & Directors	2
Water & Land Legacy	1
In the Yard	3
Great Crested Flycatcher	4
Summertime Adventures	5
Southern Gardens	6
<i>Bringing Nature Home</i>	6
Wakulla Springs	7
Wakulla Boat Tours	8
Least Bittern	8
<i>Wakulla: Art and Marble</i>	9
Marine Lab at Panacea	10
Birdsong Nature Center	11
Viera Wetlands	12
<i>The Swamp - Grunwald</i>	13
<i>Illumination - Hutto</i>	13
<i>Memoir – Jim Stevenson</i>	14
2 Florida Mystery Writers	14
2 Apps For You	15
Activities	16



FLORIDA'S  
Water & Land Legacy

## Florida Water and Land Legacy: What's next?

By Jacqui Sulek

*Audubon Florida Chapter Conservation Manager*

For over a year, all across Florida Audubon volunteers worked tirelessly to gather petitions to get the Florida Water and Land Legacy amendment on the ballot in November 2014. With the initial frenzy over many people are asking, "What's next?"

Polls indicate that a majority of Florida voters respond most positively to protecting their water and leaving a Legacy for future generations while sparing the public new taxes. The campaign strategy will include paid advertising in critical voting areas and volunteer efforts to educate the broader voting public.

What can you do?

- Familiarize yourself with the campaign website <http://www.voteyeson1fl.org/>.
- Sign up to be a sponsor and a volunteer. You will receive regular updates and action items from campaign headquarters.

- Become a monthly donor - \$5, \$10 or more each month will help guarantee funds needed for advertising. This is easily done online.
- Wear your VOTE YES ON 1 button whenever and wherever you can and use social media to share the message.
- Make a commitment to take action when the campaign heats up toward the end of the summer.
- Attend the Audubon Assembly Oct. 17-18 on Hutchinson Island. The theme for the 2014 Audubon Assembly will be **Make it a Big Year for Land, Water and Wildlife**. Workshops will give you the opportunity to share your ideas about allocating funds, land acquisition and management needs, how to get people out to vote and much more.

Recent changes in Florida's state government have made it increasingly difficult to protect what most Floridians value: water, land and wildlife. When Amendment 1 passes they will once again have the opportunity to do so, creating a legacy for generations to come. Your efforts will help make that happen!

## Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

2014 – 2015

### Officers & Directors

All telephone numbers are in the 850 area code, unless otherwise noted.

**President:** Adrienne Ruhl 813 293-1081  
**Vice-President:** Budd Titlow 320-6480  
**Secretary:** Helen King 765-2488  
**Treasurer:** Harvey Goldman 385-5222  
**Past-President:** Seán McGlynn 570-1476

### Directors:

Nick Baldwin 877-0249  
Kathleen Carr 322-7910  
Jim Cox 942-2489  
Carol Franchi 459-2066  
Ben Fusaro 297-2052  
Pat Press 539-5765

**AAS Logo Design:** Charlotte Forehand

**Newsletter Editor:** Suzanna MacIntosh  
[Aasnewsletter2011-audubon@yahoo.com](mailto:Aasnewsletter2011-audubon@yahoo.com)

**Web Administrator:** Kathleen Carr 322-7910

**Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.**  
P. O. Box 1237  
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc. (AAS) is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. All memberships and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

This newsletter is published by the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.  
©2014 Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

## Join National Audubon Society

for only \$20 a year

and enjoy free membership in Apalachee Audubon!

Membership includes *Audubon*, National Audubon's bimonthly flagship publication. Each issue of this award-winning publication features beautiful photography and engaging journalism. Our Apalachee Audubon Chapter newsletter will keep you informed of local and statewide Audubon and other nature-related events and will share birding and conservation information and news.

*You can pay for membership using a credit card by calling Audubon's toll free membership number, 1-800-274-4201. (Please mention our chapter ID, E19, so that Apalachee Audubon will get full credit for a new membership).* If you prefer to pay by check for an annual membership, send your \$20 check made payable to National Audubon Society (*please add Apalachee Audubon's chapter ID, E19*) and mail to:

**National Audubon Society**  
P. O. Box 422246  
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2246

Allow 4-6 weeks for the arrival of your first issue of *Audubon*. The cost of membership is tax deductible except for \$7.50 which is allocated to *Audubon* magazine.

*Audubon Memberships - Give the gift of the outdoors! Members can call National Audubon at [800-274-4201](tel:800-274-4201) to check the status of their subscriptions or request changes to their subscriptions.*

*You can sign up to receive the Apalachee Audubon newsletter and announcements of coming field trips and other events by joining our Google Groups email notification list at: [groups.google.com/group/apalachee-audubon](https://groups.google.com/group/apalachee-audubon). More information is available at [www.apalachee.org](http://www.apalachee.org).*

*We hope you'll join us on Facebook*  *and on Twitter* 

*Special thanks to our friends at Wild Birds Unlimited and at Native Nurseries for their help and support throughout the year!*

## Wild Birds Unlimited



Everything for the birds  
and the serious birder!

NATURE GIFTS  
OPTICS ~ FIELD GUIDES ~ FEEDERS  
BIRDBATHS ~ SEED ~ NEST BOXES

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



Since 1980

# Native Nurseries

- Wild Bird Shop
- Wildlife Gardening
- Landscape Design

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



***Favorite Places*** - Our homes are among our favorite places and our yards can be a haven for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Here are some tips for enjoying your own yard. Summer is also a great time to start planning for the fall planting season - an ideal time to add native plants and trees to your landscape.



Bluebirds enjoying a birdbath

Photo by Glenda Simmons

new ones moving down from the north. Their banding projects have shown that it's not even the same hummers in the yard on a daily basis! You should also keep an eye out for any "western" hummingbird that may turn up.

Glenda Simmons says she currently has eight active birdbaths in her yard. She also advises, "A very inexpensive water feature one could add is a wrought iron sprinkler, called 'Pound of Rain'. It can be purchased at Walmart for around 5 bucks. You attach your garden hose to it and put it under a shrub or some other area that has small trees and shrubs, and within five minutes of that being turned on, I guarantee you will have birds bathing!"

I hear Mississippi Kites over my neighborhood frequently in July-August. Get to know their 2-syllable call, and you may hear them soaring above you. You can hear it here: [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/mississippi\\_kite/sounds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/mississippi_kite/sounds).

In my records I've noted summer breeders as well as migrants showing up in July-August, such as: Summer Tanager; Acadian Flycatcher; Hooded Warbler; Louisiana Waterthrush; Red-eyed, White-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos; Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Cerulean Warbler, and other warblers. Most of these birds don't go to feeders but will appreciate the birdbaths. I also use spray misters, especially when it's hot and dry. The birds also will appreciate the caterpillars and insects that are around.

Last summer we really enjoyed watching the Zebra Heliconian butterflies that laid eggs all over the passionvine planted in our yard. Soon black-and-white caterpillars were crawling on the leaves, and strange looking chrysalises appeared hanging from the vines, the pokeweed, the stair rail, etc. The Gulf Fritillary butterfly also uses the passion-vine as a host plant. You can plant this in a big pot with a trellis, but if you have a place to let it run wild, you may see even more butterflies. Learn about the Zebra Heliconian, our state butterfly at: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/florida/zebra.html>.



White-eyed Vireo

Photo by Glenda Simmons

Before you know it, migrating birds will be coming through on their fall journey southward, and our winter residents will replace some of the summer breeders.

## In The Yard

By Fran Rutkovsky







Great Crested Flycatcher Nesting Cycle

Collage and Photos by Glenda Simmons

## Great Crested Flycatcher Nest Monitoring

By Glenda Simmons

Monitoring, multiple species, of active nests, in my yard, and other locations, that I report to Cornell's Project NestWatch, [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org), takes most of my spare time. One, special, successful, nest attempt, for me, this season, was monitoring a pair of Great Crested Flycatchers, in my yard. While it's common to hear these amazing birds, as we venture outside, in the summer, seeing them on a daily basis, as they raise their, one, brood of the season, before departing back to South America, is quite a treat. I've been fortunate to host these birds for several years, but was amazed, when I explored the data map on Cornell's Nestwatch site, to find out how few of these nest sites were reported. For comparison, there are, currently over 2,000 Eastern Bluebird nest sites, being reported to NestWatch, and only EIGHT Great Crested Flycatchers! It made me feel that my efforts to report this data to Cornell, really makes a difference, and the satisfaction that I helped the birds have a safe start in life, by offering an, appropriately sized, box, on a (tall!) free standing pole, with a stove pipe predator guard.



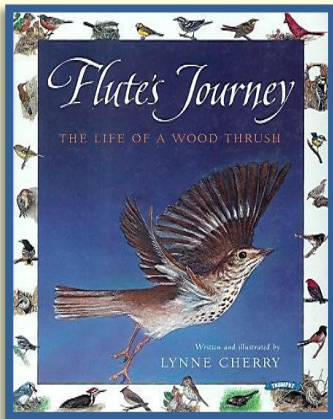


## Summertime Adventures for Young Wildlife Lovers, On and Off the Page

By Sandy Beck

Summer is a good time for children to have the unscheduled, unplugged freedom to explore their natural world—paddling, peddling or wandering a patch of woods with a friend or friendly dog. When the day begins to sizzle, they can retreat to a shady spot with a good book. Here are three to share with your budding naturalist.

*The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*, by Bill Thompson III (editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*), is a field guide that, in Thompson's words, "provides just the right amount of information to be useful and fun." This colorful, easy-to-use book shows children what to look for, listen for, how to find it and what to remember. Fun "wow facts," and colorful photos and drawings by talented wildlife illustrator and writer Julie Zickfoose (Thompson's wife) will engage young birders.



In *Flute's Journey, the Life of a Wood Thrush*, by Lynne Cherry, children can fly along with a young Wood Thrush on his first round trip migration from a North American woodland to a Central American rain forest. Cherry's beautiful prose and illustrations teach readers about Flute's dangerous journey and suggest what they can do to help the Wood Thrush and other migratory species whose numbers are plummeting.

Enrich your child's reading experience by playing a recording of the magical Wood Thrush song at [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org) or on a birding app, such as Audubon's Florida Birds or BirdTunes. Then take a trip to Tall Timbers Research Station in Tallahassee where the Henry M. Stevenson Memorial Bird Trail leads to a cabin with a bird window on a secluded pond. *Apalachee Audubon Society Great Birding Spots in Wakulla,*

*Leon and Franklin Counties* notes that Wood Thrushes can be found in "the hardwoods around the edge of [this] pond" in spring and summer.

Spring and summer, "wild baby season," is also prime time for discovering a baby bird or other wild animal that may appear to need help. St. Francis Wildlife, a wildlife rehabilitation and education center, has been caring for orphaned, injured and sick wildlife in our community for more than three decades. *How to Help Wildlife*, at [www.stfranciswildlife.org/HelpWildBabies.pdf](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org/HelpWildBabies.pdf), is their simple guide to when and how to rescue wildlife with St. Francis Wildlife's phone number and two local drop-off locations. Wildlife rehabilitator Teresa Stevenson says, "People can call us anytime for advice or to ask us to rescue an animal."

In *Animal Helpers: Wildlife Rehabilitators*, by Jennifer Keats Curtis, lovely, large photos of a fawn, baby opossums, Mourning Dove, Bald Eagle and other wildlife give young children a behind-the-scenes look at wildlife rehabilitation. Simple text explains how the animals are nursed back to health and returned to the wild.



Fawn

Photo by Nick Baldwin

There are so many great books that can fire children's natural curiosity. A library card or gift card to a local bookstore or nature center might be the key to helping them discover the wonder of their natural world this summer.

Sandy Beck is St. Francis Wildlife's Education Director. For more information about wildlife rescue or outreach wildlife education programs, go to [www.stfranciswildlife.org](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org).

Left: Baby Screech Owls at St. Francis Wildlife

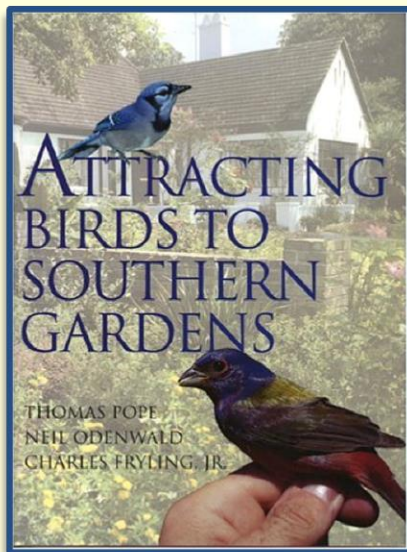
Apalachee Audubon Society

[www.apalachee.org](http://www.apalachee.org)

Summer 2014

5





## Southern Gardens Are a Treasure

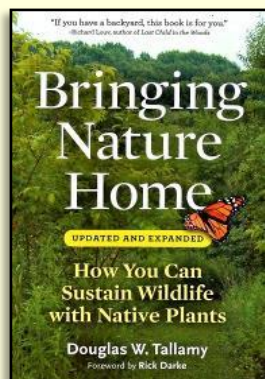
By Pat Press and Carol Franchi

*Apalachee Audubon Education Committee Co-Chairs*



When we were imagining our thirty acres as a bird sanctuary my sister and I searched the shelves for books to guide us. Being retired educators and life-long lovers of books we wanted to find a guide on how to attract birds to our yard in Florida's panhandle. We were looking for a book that held knowledge with answers and which dispelled myths and uncertainties. One of the most helpful books we found is titled *Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens*. It was written by Drs. Thomas Pope, Neil Oldenwald, and Charles Fryling. Pope is a renowned academic and author of more than 40 gardening publications, while Professor Oldenwald and Professor Fryling are highly recognized authors, speakers and consultants on landscape architecture from Louisiana State University.

*Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens* is a treasure trove of information for gardeners and birders in general. Even if you don't garden you should read this book. It is thoroughly researched and beautifully presented. This book helps the southern gardener plan and establish gardens and landscape habitats which attract native and migrating birds. It is especially helpful in matching the most popular and prevalent species to the particular type of garden that attracts them. The authors singled out 61 species of birds to highlight, especially ones that like easily constructed matching habitats. Landscaping from woodland gardens to formal gardens is presented with diagrams and suggestions for their designs. There are attractive photographs and art work along with easily understood commentary. There is a list of trees, shrubs, plants, and vines, and a list of perennials and annuals is included. By referring to *Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens* as a guide anyone in this area of Florida should be able to plan and enjoy their own "southern garden." The ISBN number is 0-87833-830-6 (1993) and the book is available at your local libraries and bookstores, as well as on the internet. Happy gardening, all you bird lovers!



## ***Bringing Nature Home – A Book by Dr. Doug Tallamy***

Reviewed by Suzanna MacIntosh

Nationally we are seeing a steep decline in many of America's common bird populations. One of the leading causes is habitat loss and degradation. One way we can try to stall or reverse this trend is to provide needed habitat in our own yards. In *Bringing Nature Home* Dr. Doug Tallamy explains something so fundamental that almost all of us had overlooked it --- it is that native plants and plant-eating insects (like butterflies) evolved together and depend on each other for their survival; this relationship is a critical link in the chain of life. Tallamy's work is seen as pivotal and this book has largely been responsible for a paradigm shift in the way many people garden and landscape.

Tallamy explains that native plants are essential since most plant eating insects (like butterflies) won't lay their eggs on just any green leaf; if their specific (generally native) 'host plant' is unavailable, they will not reproduce. Monarch butterflies need milkweed, for example. In the caterpillar stage, these insects can only digest the leaves of their specific 'host plant'. These insects are often the pollinators that we (and so many plants and crops) depend upon. Terrestrial birds depend on these insects too in order to raise their young because the insect's protein biomass is needed to sustain the nestlings during their growth burst. To learn much more, see: [www.plantanative.com](http://www.plantanative.com).

Keep in mind that native plants are 'native' to a specific area. The Florida Native Plant Society has great information available at [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org). A good local nursery can provide invaluable information, save you much time, money and heartbreak too. The Florida Wildflower Foundation, [www.flawildflowers.org](http://www.flawildflowers.org), also provides great resources and Dr. Tallamy will be the keynote speaker at the Florida Wildflower Symposium held September 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>. Two additional books that are very informative are *The New American Landscape: Leading Voices on the Future of Sustainable Gardening* edited by Thomas Christopher and a newly released book by Doug Tallamy and Rick Darke, *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden*.



# Wakulla Springs

By Dr. Seán E. McGlynn



Double Crested Cormorant

Photo by Bob Thompson

Wakulla is primeval; a visit is like stepping into a 'source' and having a timeless glimpse of the immensity of immortality. It leaves you awestruck, breathless and invigorated. Wakulla Springs is unique; it is a natural feature which has remained basically unchanged over the past 10,000 years. It is full of the bones of Mastodons and other animals from that ancient age of giant mammals, like saber-toothed tigers, which came to the fresh Wakulla waters during the last ice age when it was a sinkhole. In the modern era, with sea level change it has become a spring; it always was and still is a karst window into the aquifer. The great Mastodons may be long gone, but now we have

massive Manatees and giant alligators lounge on its shores year round, a benefit of its constant temperature.

Wakulla Springs is like a lost world. There are numerous birds from the noble egrets and the Great Blue Herons to countless hummingbirds. Cabbage palms and cypresses, draped in Spanish moss and festooned by cypress knees, take you back to a time long ago, when the earth was wild and primeval.

Springs attracted the first Europeans to Florida; it was the quest for the 'Fountain of Youth' that brought the early Spaniards here, drawn to these magical issues of water that burble from the ground with crystalline purity. The springs are ancient and yet eternal, constantly reborn and fresh.

Some of the earliest words penned about Wakulla Springs, were by the cartographer John Lee Williams back in 1837. In his book, *The Territory of Florida*, he wrote that Wakulla Springs "Rising from the earth, presets the finest spring in West Florida, probably the world. It is perfectly transparent. In looking into it, the colour is similar to a clear sky; except that the reflection of the surrounding verdure, gives it a slight shade of green."

Even today this description runs true. While most of the other springs in Florida are running dry, the Wakulla is flowing merrily to the sea and is now the largest single vent spring in Florida and possibly the world. It still flows to the sea, but its water is a little browner than before, tainted and stained by the tears of time, but reborn, a fountain of youth, a Florida Spring eternal.

Nothing is certain. Right now Wakulla is preserved; it is set aside from the crush of development, isolated and safe. Yet nothing is promised, sacred and inviolate, without the coordinated efforts of Apalachee Audubon, the Friends of Wakulla Springs, the Wakulla Springs Alliance and all who love this amazing spring of rebirth. It could someday be forsaken, even pillaged, unless protected because we are watching, silently, like the saber-toothed tiger, staring alertly into the night watching and waiting ...



Snowy Egret

Photo by Nick Baldwin

# Wakulla Springs Boat Tour & Tallahassee Museum

By Glenda Simmons



Wakulla Boat Tour

Photo by Glenda Simmons

One of my favorite birding/wildlife summer activities is to take the boat ride at Wakulla Springs. No matter how hot, you still have a little breeze with the movement of the boat. The best time to go is the first boat ride of the day. It is the only one that has a designated start time, of 9:40 am, with the ticket office opening at 9:30 am. It's cooler, generally, more wildlife, at that time of day, feeding, and better lighting for photography. There are also two special early morning boat tours on July 26<sup>th</sup> and August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8 am. Another great attraction is the Tallahassee Museum,

[www.tallahasseemuseum.org](http://www.tallahasseemuseum.org).



**July 26**  
Saturday

**August 23**  
Saturday

## Wakulla Early Morning Boat Tour

### Early Boat Tour

**8:00 am**

The whole family can enjoy nature's early morning sights and sounds as they cruise the scenic Wakulla River. Be the first people of the day to greet the wildlife. The early morning light is ideal for photography.

**\$10 Adults, \$7 Children. Please call 850-561-7286 to reserve a space for the tour.**

### Early Boat Tour

**8:00 am**

Search for the flaming red cardinal flower along the river banks as you cruise the serene waters of the Wakulla River on this early August morning. Get an extra early start enjoying the wildlife along the Wakulla River. This tour is a must for the birder or photographer.

**\$10 Adults, \$7 Children. Please call 850-561-7286 to reserve a space for the tour.**



Least Bittern

Photo by Nick Baldwin

## The Least Bittern

By Nick Baldwin

The very least I could say about this 1<sup>st</sup> cousin to the famous "Thunder Pumper," is, a very surreptitious, crepuscular (not always), carnivorous, cryptic bird with both dimorphic and "powder down," plumage!

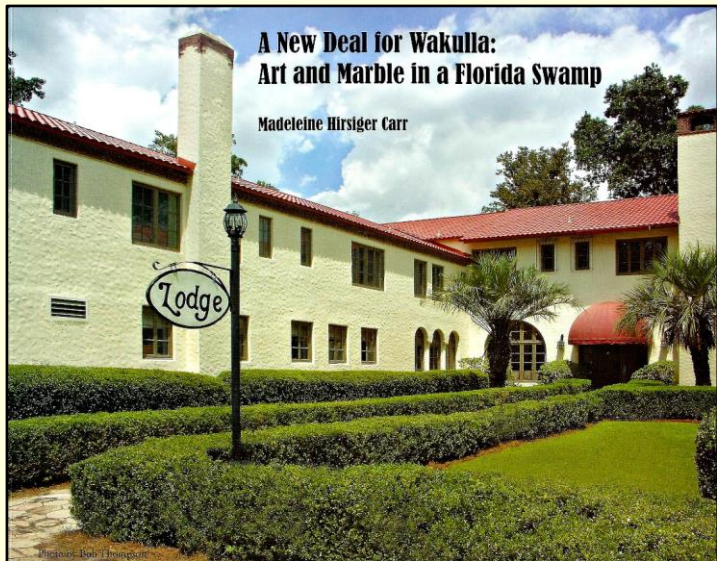
As the smallest of the heron family, it is only slightly larger than a Red-winged Black Bird, or as Pete Dunne puts it, "...with its neck retracted about the size of a softball, with its neck extended about as big as a football."

Their body is ideally built for stealthy mobility through the reeds, cat tails and other waters' edge vegetation where it hunts mainly for small fish. But will take about anything passing by, from dragonflies to a snake.

The nests are built of those same reeds/brush and are very close by where they hunt, just a bit higher. The young, whose feet grow very quickly, could leave the nest at 6 days old, if threatened, but usually not until 2 weeks.

Migration if at all is very short; from here to central Florida and back, not much further. Again from Pete Dunne, "...a scoop of butterscotch clinging to the reeds or crouched on a snag just above the water."





**A New Deal for Wakulla:  
Art and Marble in a Florida Swamp**

Madeleine Hirsiger Carr

***A New Deal for Wakulla:  
Art and Marble in a Florida Swamp***

A Book by Madeleine Hirsiger Carr

Review by Suzanna MacIntosh

When Edward G. Ball built Wakulla Springs Lodge in the mid-1930s no expense was spared. The leading architectural firm of Saxelby and Marsh designed the Lodge and the finest artists and craftsmen helped with the construction of this outstanding example of Mediterranean Revival architecture. Marble from Tennessee, France and Italy was used throughout. The floors of the Lodge along with the stairs and risers are of Tennessee marble. There is an immense fireplace in

in the large reception area where Great Blue Herons in profile are featured on hand-wrought andirons. The stair balustrade leading to the second floor includes images of limpkins and herons in bronze and on the main floor a marble soda fountain which is over 70 feet long was built to delight and entertain young and old with its intricate marble patterns along the façade. While adding a style of living that had not commonly been seen in the area, this privately funded undertaking provided much needed employment for millwrights, blacksmiths, masons, stonecutters, painters, artists, cooks, and service personnel during the hardships of the Great Depression.

Among the most outstanding features of Wakulla Springs Lodge is the artwork that decorates the hand-hewn cypress panels on the ceiling beams in the reception area. In *A New Deal for Wakulla: Art and Marble in a Florida Swamp* author Madeleine Hirsiger Carr shares a history of the early days of the Lodge along with a close-up look at these beautiful images which were painted over three-quarters of a century ago. The paintings are meticulously documented and photographs of each panel are included which were taken by Richard Brunck who spent many hours on scaffolding while photographing these priceless works. Photographs by Bob Thompson and David Moynahan are also included.



Ceiling at Wakulla Springs Lodge

Copies of *A New Deal for Wakulla: Art and Marble in a Florida Swamp* can be purchased at Native Nurseries ([www.nativenurseries.com](http://www.nativenurseries.com)) at 1661 Centerville Road, Tallahassee and at the Wakulla County Historical Society Museum ([www.wakullahistory.com](http://www.wakullahistory.com)) at 24 High Road, Crawfordville, FL. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park (FWSSP).

Madeleine Hirsiger Carr is a founding member of Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park, [www.wakullasprings.org](http://www.wakullasprings.org), and currently serves as FWSSP President.





## Come Visit the Gulf Specimen Marine Lab A Hidden Gem South of Tallahassee By Tom Harrah



Aquarist Victor Spencer with students

Giving people an appreciation for the diversity of life in the sea and a desire to protect it is Gulf Specimen's primary mission. We do so by using our touch tanks, graphic exhibits and conducting field trips to provide a unique "hands-on" experience enabling students to touch, smell and hear the odd and interesting creatures of the Gulf of Mexico, and develop an awareness and desire to protect the fragile life in the sea.

To help maintain this facility, we supply schools and research laboratories with a wide variety of living marine life from the Gulf of Mexico. That service is essential to researchers all over the United States in many different fields of science; hence we have won state, national and international [awards](#) for our efforts.

While most aquariums feature large charismatic marine mammals and sharks, Gulf Specimen Marine Lab focuses on the fascinating world of the small. More than a hundred school groups and 16,000 individuals visit our laboratory each year to view hundreds of species of local invertebrates, fish and algae as well as sharks and sea turtles from the Gulf of Mexico.

Our exhibits are never the same twice! The marine biological supply operation that supports the laboratory provides a constant flow of animals coming through the lab. A wide variety of invertebrates, fishes and algae are routinely collected and shipped to schools and research laboratories, hence no aquarium or standard marine laboratory with static exhibits can compete with it. At any given time, between one and two hundred species are present. Visitors are allowed to pick up and touch many of the animals, including starfish, sea pansies, sand dollars, whelks, clams, etc.



Sea Mobile Touch Lab

Whether pre-schoolers, high school, college students or casual visitors, all ask the same fundamental questions: "What is it? Where does it live? What does it eat? What eats it, and how does it reproduce?" After a visit to our lab, instead of stepping over or on much of the life when they're on the beach, people will notice. No longer will they stare puzzled at the "blob on the beach". They will understand the diversity of life in the sea and perhaps have a desire to protect it.



Biologist Tom Harrah leading an interactive field trip

*The Gulf Specimen Marine Lab at Panacea is open Monday through Friday from 9 am - 5 pm, on Saturdays from 10 am - 4 pm and on Sundays from 1 - 5 pm. Closed on some holidays.*

*For more information and directions, please see [www.gulfspecimen.org](http://www.gulfspecimen.org).*

*Photos courtesy of Gulf Specimen Marine Lab.*



The Sea Mobile, a marine lab on wheels





## Birdsong Nature Center

By Carol Franchi and Pat Press

Located on a winding road in the middle of plantation country between Thomasville and Tallahassee is a cultural and environmental treasure called Birdsong Nature Center. Owned by Ed and Betty Komarek the Birdsong lands became an educational site for the practice of prescribed burning used for the maintaining of southern pine forest lands. The renowned naturalist Herbert Stoddard lived nearby and he and Betty exchanged bird information about what was happening at their respective feeding stations for many years and Birdsong sightings showed up regularly in Stoddard's book, *The Birds of Grady County*.

The 565 acre Birdsong Nature Center has the original Dickey plantation house on the site which is surrounded by well-maintained gardens and bird and butterfly habitats. Betty Komarek's "Bird Window" is a gem for bird-watchers who might spot up to 24 species of birds on a very good day (Betty's lifetime list was 130). The Gin House Field is a popular setting for viewing a variety of seasonal wildflowers. The Big Bay Swamp portion of the center is home to wood ducks, wood storks, egrets, anhingas, alligators, and other reptiles and mammals.

Birdsong Nature Center has a number of monthly activities for the bird and nature lovers of South Georgia and North Florida. Some of these activities include preservation projects, native plant sales, nature study, hiking, birding, and solstice watches. Their website is [www.birdsongnaturecenter.org](http://www.birdsongnaturecenter.org). Their phone number is 229-377-4408 and they are located at 2106 Meridian Rd., Thomasville, Georgia. Enjoy Birdsong Nature Center on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube too!



*Photos, left to right: Butterfly Garden; Bluebird Trail; and Farm Pond and cabin.*  
Photos by Suzanna MacIntosh



## The Viera Wetlands

By Budd Titlow



*The best thing about the Viera Wetlands is that you can drive everywhere throughout the wetland cells. This allows you to stop whenever you see something you like and watch and/or photograph until your heart's content. The birds are so used to cars and people that they don't even notice you, even when you are just five feet away. The "Click Ponds" are great at sunrise. Brimming with flocks of egrets, herons, ibises, and pelicans, the Click Ponds seem like a marshland vision from a bygone era.*

White Pelicans working together to "herd" fish into shallow water Photo by Budd Titlow

*The Viera Wetlands as reviewed by John Kegley*

at <http://www.wildlifesouth.com/Locations/Florida/VieraWetlands.html#website>

Located conveniently off of I-95 in Brevard County Florida, Viera Wetlands is part of a water reclamation facility managed by the county. The 200 acres of wetlands are divided into 4 cells at various water levels, each cell offering a different and unique environment for specific wildlife. A deep water lake is positioned in the middle and is surrounded by all 4 cells.

The dikes surrounding the cells and lake offer an exceptional wildlife auto touring experience. Other popular activities on the dikes include walking, biking, birding, and photography. Amenities are limited to a parking area with two port-a-johns.

In addition to the wetlands area, there are a couple of ponds off Four Mile Road directly north of the facility that also provide wildlife habitat. These ponds are the original storage ponds of the treated effluent at the facility and are still used today. They are referred to by locals as the "click" ponds.

This area is a mecca for birding, especially waterfowl, long legged waders, and raptors. Obviously winter time will be the best time for wintering waterfowl. Expect to see other birders.

More information at: <http://www.brevardcounty.us/NaturalResources/EnvironmentalResources/VieraWetlands> and [http://floridabirdingtrail.com/index.php/trip/trail/Ritch\\_Grissom\\_Memorial\\_Wetlands\\_at\\_Viera\\_aka\\_Viera\\_Wetlands/](http://floridabirdingtrail.com/index.php/trip/trail/Ritch_Grissom_Memorial_Wetlands_at_Viera_aka_Viera_Wetlands/)

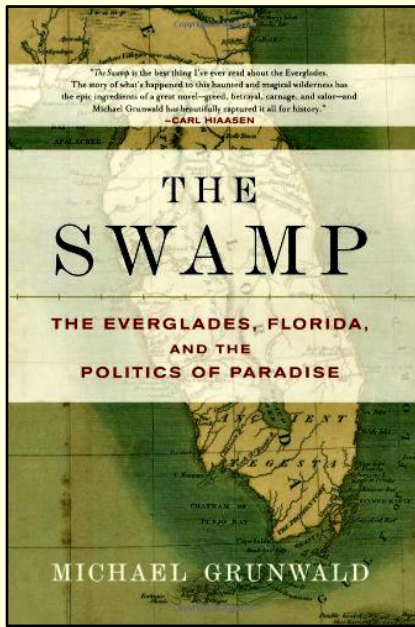


A Glossy Ibis struts its stuff while hunting in a shallow marsh just off one of the Nature Center's gravel roads. Photo by Budd Titlow



I had to wait for this limpkin to move down off the road so I could get a "habitat shot". Photo by Budd Titlow





One of Budd Titlow's Favorite Books

## *The Swamp*

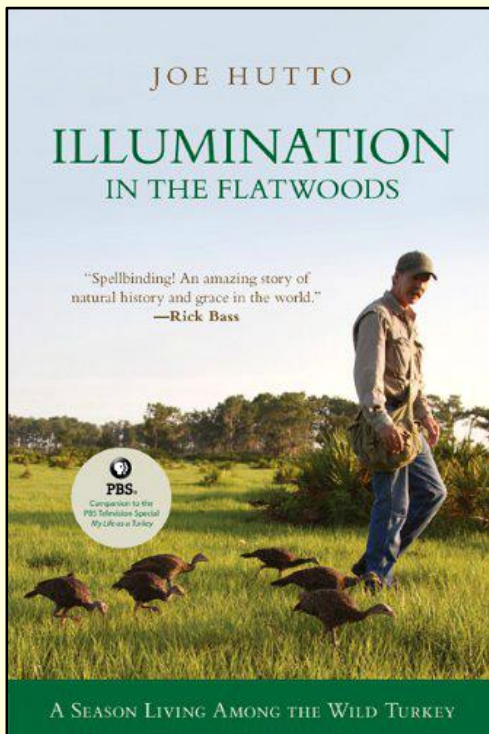
A Book by Michael Grunwald

With a Review from Amazon.com

The Everglades was once reviled as a liquid wasteland, and Americans dreamed of draining it. Now it is revered as a national treasure, and Americans have launched the largest environmental project in history to try to save it. *The Swamp* is the stunning story of the destruction and possible resurrection of the Everglades, the saga of man's abuse of nature in southern Florida and his unprecedented efforts to make amends. Michael Grunwald, a prize-winning national reporter for *The Washington Post*, takes readers on a riveting journey from the Ice Ages to the present, illuminating the natural, social and political history of one of America's most beguiling but least understood patches of land.

The Everglades was America's last frontier, a wild country long after the West was won. Grunwald chronicles how a series of visionaries tried to drain and "reclaim" it, and how Mother Nature refused to bend to their will; in the most harrowing tale, a 1928 hurricane drowned 2,500 people in the Everglades. But the Army Corps of Engineers finally tamed the beast with levees and canals, converting half the Everglades into sprawling suburbs and sugar plantations. And though the southern Everglades was preserved as a national park, it soon deteriorated into an ecological mess. The River of Grass stopped flowing, and 90 percent of its wading birds vanished.

Now America wants its swamp back. Grunwald shows how a new breed of visionaries transformed Everglades politics, producing the \$8 billion rescue plan. That plan is already the blueprint for a new worldwide era of ecosystem restoration. And this book is a cautionary tale for that era. Through gripping narrative and dogged reporting, Grunwald shows how the Everglades is still threatened by the same hubris, greed and well-intentioned folly that led to its decline.



One of Beth Grant's Favorite Books

## *Illumination in the Flatwoods*

A Book by Joe Hutto

Review by Beth Grant

Joe Hutto's book *Illumination in the Flatwoods* shares his experiences during two years rearing two clutches of wild turkey from the eggs. It's a meditation - living in the moment, experiencing life from a wild creature's world view! It's worth reading over and over! The PBS special can be found online at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episodes/my-life-as-a-turkey/full-episode/7378/>.

Now he has a new book, *Touching the Wild: Living with the Mule Deer of Deadman Gulch*. There is a PBS special on this project with mule deer and the full episode, *Touching the Wild*, is available at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episodes/touching-the-wild/touching-the-wild/8679/>.

*A Favorite Book of all of us!*

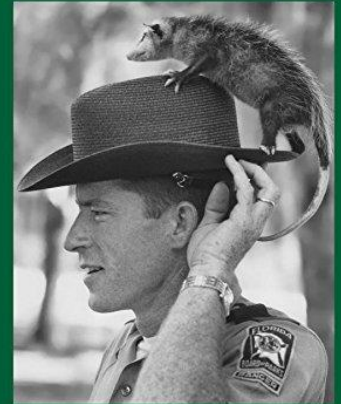
## ***My Journey in Florida's State Parks: A Naturalist's Memoir***

**A Book by Jim A. Stevenson**

This book is an informative and entertaining set of short stories and essays of the evolution of Florida's state parks from 1965-1989. Jim began writing these stories for his retired park service associates. Since the history of state park interpretation and resource management is not recorded elsewhere, he expanded it to inform the park rangers of today about the management of the parks during this 24 year period. Jim began his career as a park ranger and later became the chief naturalist of the state park system. Prior to his retirement in 2003, he became the Department of Environmental Protection's lead on the protection of Florida's springs. He continues that effort today through tours and presentations and serving on the Board of Directors of the Florida Springs Institute and the Wakulla Springs Alliance.

*Here's an excerpt: "When I was five years old, they 'rescued' me from Michigan and brought me to Florida. When I was not in school, I was free to wander. I had a Huck Finn life--barefooted all summer, wading the canal that bordered our yard, riding the horses that were boarded in our pasture, climbing trees, and exploring the countryside. I caught snapping turtles, frogs and crayfish in the canal and raised baby screech owls."* Of course, you'll want to read more! Available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

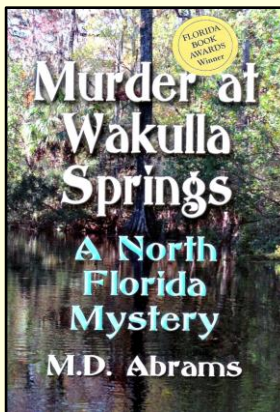
### **My Journey in Florida's State Parks: A Naturalist's Memoir**



Jim A. Stevenson

*Two favorite Florida authors – you can't overestimate the value of a good mystery to entertain and enlighten!*

*Reviews by Suzanna MacIntosh*



### **“A North Florida Mystery” – A Series by M. D. Abrams**

It's so much fun to discover M. D. Abrams delightful and informative “North Florida Mystery” series. Who wouldn't want to pick up and read a book with the intriguing title of *Murder at Wakulla Springs*! This book, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the series, begins during a Tallahassee Film Society's Creaturefest with the murder of a guest at Wakulla Springs Lodge. It is not surprising to learn that it appears the motive centers around, you guessed it, water....but, whodunit? There is also *Murder on Hogtown Creek* and *Murder on the Prairie*. You will feel right at home as you enjoy these entertaining mysteries.

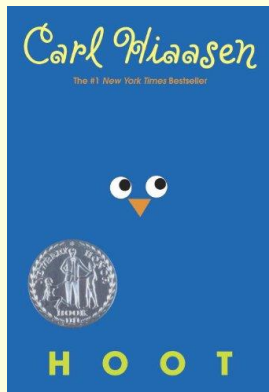
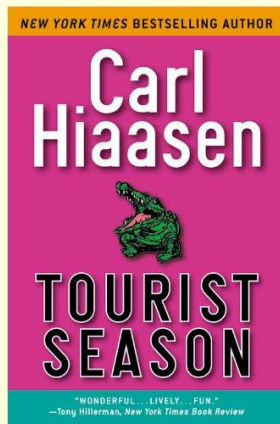
### **Carl Hiaasen - A Florida Treasure!**

*“Truth is weirder than any fiction I've seen.” ~ Hunter S. Thompson*

We've all heard “Truth is stranger than fiction” and someone has said that satire is often, in fact, the unvarnished truth that we try to gloss over in our everyday lives; for after all, who would ever believe it could happen? But it does, at least in Florida, I'm told, and

Carl Hiaasen has found a way to make the most of it! You'll laugh along with this outstanding environmentalist as his novels make mincemeat of some very menacing villains. *Tourist Season* is just one of Hiaasen's many books to enjoy...over and over again!

Hiaasen has written some great books for young readers too. You'll want to enjoy (and share) *Hoot*, *Flush*, *Scat* and *Chomp*! *Hoot* has been made into a family movie and features live burrowing owls and music by Jimmy Buffett, who also plays a science teacher in the movie. More at [www.carlhiaasen.com](http://www.carlhiaasen.com).





## Panhandle Wildflower Brochure Migrates to the Web

By Eleanor Dietrich



Thanks to a grant received from VISIT FLORIDA, one of the Florida Wildflower Foundation's most popular brochures, Native Wildflowers in Florida's Eastern Panhandle, is now easily accessible using smartphones and tablets via [flawildflowertrips.org](http://flawildflowertrips.org).

Like the paper brochure, the website features the five-county wildflower viewing route, which includes sites along the Big Bend Scenic Byway, in state and national parks, and near towns and communities in Liberty, Gadsden, Wakulla, Franklin and Leon counties.

Users can identify common wildflowers in the **“Common Species”** section by sorting the gallery of photos by bloom color or season.

The **“What’s in Bloom”** section of the website includes two features – a Bloom Map and a form you can use to send in your photos to be included on the map. When you send in GPS information along with your photo, the image can be pinned to the Bloom Map very accurately. When a user clicks on a pin on the map, the image opens with its description and location. When you see a circle with a number in it, there are lots of images clustered in that area! Zoom closer to see them.

The **“Plan Your Visit”** section of the site also provides links to attractions and other resources, such as the Nature Viewing App developed by the Florida Museum of Natural History and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission with support from the Florida Wildflower Foundation. There are also links to the websites of each county, which helps visitors find local places to stay, eat, and shop, thereby supporting the local economy.

*Eleanor Dietrich is a Past President of the Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, [www.magnolia.fnpschapters.org](http://www.magnolia.fnpschapters.org), and currently serves as Florida Wildflower Foundation FDOT/Panhandle Alliance liaison, [www.flawildflowers.org](http://www.flawildflowers.org).*



### Conservation – Yes, There is an App for That

*New smartphone app makes invasive species reporting user-friendly and fun!*

By Jonathan Webber

*Audubon Florida Conservation Campaign Manager*



An invasive species is any species that is non-native to an ecosystem and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Non-native species often compete with and ultimately displace the native flora and/or fauna communities. It is estimated that half of all the birds threatened with imminent extinction are threatened either wholly or in part by introduced plant and animal species.

How can you help? If you have a smartphone, it just became a whole lot easier.

One of the best ways to combat the spread of invasive species (either plant or animal) is by accurate and detailed reporting. This information is used by scientists and researchers to develop strategies to eradicate the invasive species or to learn more about the spread---knowledge that can be used with future invasions. Using the photo and Global Positions System (GPS) capabilities of your smartphone, you can help by providing the “boots on the ground” information that would be impossible to collect by a single researcher or team.

As Audubon members, we are some of the most-frequent guests in our parks and on our public conservation land. If you are headed out on a field trip, encourage your group to download the *free* Ivegot1 app – available in the app store (iPhone and Android). Create an account so you can enter information and then you are on your way as Florida’s newest citizen scientist.

Next time you are in the field (or even in your neighborhood) and you spot an invasive species, open your app, snap a photo, enter location details and push send. It’s that easy. For more information, please visit: <http://www.eddmaps.org/florida/report/> or call Audubon Florida’s Jonathan Webber at 850-222-2473. Also, you can download and print instructions to bring on your next field trip: <http://bit.ly/1pdUnLB>.

~ Activities and Events ~

*Barred Owl*  
Courtesy of  
Steven D'Amato



Apalachee Audubon  
July Birding Field Trips  
With Helen King

For notification of coming field trips, subscribe to Apalachee Audubon's Google Groups email notification list available at [www.apalachee.org](http://www.apalachee.org). Birding reports are recorded at eBird and with Apalachee Audubon. Come bird with us when you can! Happy Birding!

**Sunday, July 20: Lake Jackson:** Meet at Lake Jackson Mounds State Park parking lot at 8 a.m. We will also travel to Crowder and Faulk landings. Please email Helen King at [thekingsom@gmail.com](mailto:thekingsom@gmail.com) if you plan to attend. Please indicate if you are a willing driver for the Apalachee trip. Call 850-765-2488 with any questions.



**Birdsong Nature Center**  
2106 Meridian Road  
Thomasville, Georgia

**Wednesday, Friday & Saturday: 9 am - 5 pm & Sunday: 1 - 5 pm \***

*Admission: \$5-adults; \$2.50-children, 4-12 years*

*\* Birdsong will be closed August 16 – September 2, 2014*

For a schedule of special activities, please see [www.birdsongnaturecenter.org](http://www.birdsongnaturecenter.org) and [Birdsong's Facebook Page](#) or call 229 377-4408 or 800-953-BIRD (2473)



**St. Francis Wildlife Association**

St. Francis Wildlife was founded in 1978 and ever since has been contributing to the community as a wildlife rehabilitation and educational organization. To learn more: [www.stfranciswildlife.org](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org)

**St. Francis Wildlife**

5580 Salem Road, Quincy, FL  
32352  
850 627-4151



**Wakulla Springs State Park**  
[www.WakullaSprings.org](http://www.WakullaSprings.org)

**Morning Nature Walk**

**Saturday, August 16, 2014  
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM**

Join this ranger-led trek through Wakulla Springs' varying forest communities.

Meet in the lobby of the Wakulla Springs Lodge. Space is limited. Please call (850) 561-7286 to make your reservation.

**GREAT BIRDING SPOTS**  
in Tallahassee, Florida  
and Surrounding Areas



Apalachee Audubon Society

**Available Near You!**  
*An invaluable birding guide  
for the Tallahassee and  
surrounding areas.*



*We love the great workshops at Native Nurseries!*

**Native Nurseries**

1661 Centerville Road, Tallahassee, FL 32308  
Monday-Saturday, 8am-6pm, 850-386-8882

Please see [www.nativenurseries.com](http://www.nativenurseries.com) for more great workshops and information!



**CAPTIVATING CARNIVOROUS PLANTS!**

Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> - 10am \$5.00

Call 386-8882 to register; class size limited

Jimmy Whitehead, Florida Certified Nursery, Professional and owner of North Florida Carnivorous Plants Nursery, will introduce you to the carnivorous plants native to the Florida Panhandle and share how easy they are to grow. We sell a variety of his plants - pitcher plants, sundews and venus flytraps.

**NATIONAL HONEY BEE DAY AT NATIVE NURSERIES  
WITH APALACHEE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

Saturday, August 16<sup>th</sup> - 10 am to 2 pm - Free

Drop in anytime between ten and two to talk informally with area beekeepers. There will also be honey tasting, recipes and more! 10am to 11am - Guest speakers: Local beekeepers, Charles Futch and Susan Drake, will discuss bee biology and what it takes to get started in beekeeping. The 10am program is free, but class size is limited; call Lisa Lazarus with the Apalachee Beekeepers Assoc. at 294-3372 to register.