

APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Apalachee Audubon Society Mission Statement:

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

MARCH - APRIL 2014



Speaker Series

Free and open to the public.

Social begins at 7 pm & meeting at 7:30 pm (unless otherwise noted). Located at the Historic Amtrak Station, 918 Railroad Avenue, Tallahassee. For more information: (850)322-7910 or www.apalachee.org Map: <http://tinyurl.com/3q9q77s>

In This Issue

President's Message	3
Officers & Directors	2
Speaker Series Program	1
Wakulla Springs	4
In Your Yard	7
Landscaping for Wildlife	8
State Road 65	9
Yards Tour -Thank You!	10
Birdathon 2014	11
Camp Talon	12
Sharing Books	13
Hummer Update	13
Activities and Events with AAS & Our Friends	14

Save the Date!

Annual Banquet

Thursday, May 15th
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Lafayette Presbyterian Church
4220 Maban Drive
Tallahassee, FL

Speaker Series March Program: Thursday, March 27th
Social at 7 p.m. with Program at 7:30 p.m.

Why Cooperate? Costs and Benefits of Cooperative Courtship Displays in a System with Variable Cooperative Partnerships

Speaker: Megan A. Jones

Megan is interested in the many aspects of behavioral and evolutionary ecology. Her dissertation research at FSU looks at the costs and benefits of cooperative courtship display to dominant individuals within tropical manakins. The work addresses a previously unexplored aspect of cooperative courtship display and contributes significantly to the more general understanding of the costs and benefits of cooperation. Understanding cooperation among manakins groups sheds light on how cooperation may have evolved in other animals, including humans, and her work involves field work in Costa Rica and Panama as well as genetic studies at FSU.

After completing a B.S. in Wildlife Biology at Humboldt State University, Megan pursued her interests in avian behavior ecology while working on field jobs around the world. Her interest in the natural world goes beyond research to a passion for teaching and sharing nature with others. To support her goals of teaching alongside research, Megan is dual-enrolled in a Master's of Science-Teaching at FSU. She enjoys the opportunity to mentor undergraduate students and recent graduates during her field work. When teaching lab-based taxonomy courses, her goal is to serve as a guide while each student first learns to see differences and similarities, and then to identify species. Through this learning process she hopes to draw out a student's curiosity in the natural world and scientific processes. For Megan, science and natural history are not only a career but also a passion. Megan is a Ph.D. candidate at Florida State University.



Megan A. Jones

April Speaker Series Program - Continued on Page 2



Birdathon 2014 is Coming!

Find out how you can help on page 11

Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

2013 – 2014
Officers & Directors

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

President: Seán McGlynn 570-1476
Vice-President: Adrienne Ruhl 813 293-1081
Secretary: Helen King 765-2488
Treasurer: Harvey Goldman 385-5222
Past-President: Kathleen Carr 322-7910

Directors:
Nick Baldwin 877-0249
Jim Cox 942-2489
Carol Franchi 459-2066
Ben Fusaro 297-2052
Aubrey Heupel 312 290-2773
Pat Press 539-5765
Budd Titlow 320-6480

AAS Logo Design: Charlotte Forehand

Newsletter Editor: Suzanna MacIntosh
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.

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April Speaker Series Program - Continued from Page 2

April: Thursday, April 24th

Social at 7 p.m. with Program at 7:30 p.m.

Beach-Nesting Birds: Florida's Original Beach Babies

Speaker: Bonnie Samuelsen



Bonnie Samuelsen

Did you know beach-nesting birds like Snowy Plovers, Black Skimmers, American Oystercatchers and Least Terns lay their eggs on top of the sand and raise their young on our local beaches? Chicks less than 6 inches tall can be seen feeding along dunes, coastal lakes and the tidal zone. Want to see it for yourself? Dramatic courtship displays and the sight of adorable chicks taking their first steps await you!

Join Bonnie Samuelsen, Project Manager for Audubon Florida's Coastal Bird Stewardship Program for an amazing photo presentation to learn more about these rare and declining birds and the statewide efforts to protect them.

Bonnie first discovered beach nesting birds over 15 years ago and became actively involved in 2005 with statewide efforts. Both volunteering and working with Sarasota Audubon Society, Florida Fish and Wildlife Services, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife, she has been busy conducting surveys, posting nest sites, working with communities and developing volunteer stewardship programs. She was an early member of the Suncoast Shorebird Partnership that ultimately grew into FWC's Florida Shorebird Alliance. Bonnie is now the Project Manager for Audubon Florida's Coastal Bird Stewardship Program in the Panhandle.



Black Skimmer Family, above



Least Tern Chick, left

Photos by Rick Greenspan

President's Message
Dr. Seán E. McGlynn



Seán McGlynn
Photo by Nick Baldwin

Stormageddon

Polar ice is melting and glaciers are shrinking. The Arctic is warming, yet the Central and Northeastern U.S. is frozen. This is a record breaking winter. How could this seemingly contradictory situation exist? It seems that the warming of the Arctic has caused a shift in weather patterns. The currents of air in the atmosphere, like the jet stream (a windy noodle, thirty thousand feet up), seems to oscillate wildly at times and currently it is stuck over the continental United States, in a frigid dip, spewing successive polar vortices.

This relentless winter has buried India, Japan, and the northeastern United States in snowfall. It has desiccated California and the American West with drought and drenched the British Isles with rainfall that never seems to end. Much of England and Ireland are experiencing record floods with Katrina like scenes, seemingly out of place all over the British countryside.

The melted Arctic ice and snow does not reflect the sun's rays, instead the sunlight is absorbed by the dark ground and water, and transformed into heat. At the same time, the Great Lakes are covered with ice which is reflecting the warmth of the sun, enhancing frigid frozen temperatures. It is chilling the area. It has stopped the 'Lake Effect Snow' that used to blanket the area. We now have extreme weather, more variable and volatile. Atmospheric currents dip and drag, plowing different courses through the stratosphere, disrupting normal climate cycles, turning our weather patterns upside down.

Here, in the Florida Panhandle our climate is changing. We have been on the cusp of the polar vortex, many times. We have missed the brunt of the frigid weather, often by only a few hundred miles. We have been lucky to receive ample rainfall from this turbulent winter. The storms are recharging our springs, filling our lakes and flushing our beloved Apalachicola Bay with fresh water, replenishing and feeding our drought starved oysters, scallops, red fish and speckled trout. Exotic invaders which are a bane to our native wildlife and tropical species which have been taking over precious habitat have taken an exceptional beating with the inclement weather. Invasive exotics like the Mediterranean gecko and the Cuban anole may vanish. Most citrus survived, as did the manatees.

Our neighbors just to the north did not fare so well. The warm temperatures at Christmas time brought many creatures out into the spring like weather. The bayou crayfish were out for Christmas, and it seemed we were warming to a year-round crawfish boil. Then the sequence of freezing polar vortices caught them. There are no crawfish to harvest. No crawfish for Mardi Gras. The sudden cold made them go dormant. They are not growing, and as warmer temperatures approach, their growth cycle, which never started, will stop and there will probably be no season this year. The strawberry crop to the north also froze, killed by ice storms. There was worry that there would be no strawberry ale this year. But Florida's strawberry crop survived and they can be put to good use.

Our neighbors to the north suffered mightily during this perilous winter, Atlanta was shut down. Many of our ancient trees (prime bird habitat), met their doom. The mighty Eisenhower Tree, a landmark at the Augusta National Golf Club, succumbed to heavy layers of ice coating its branches, all of which broke off, leaving only a scraggly trunk. This grandmother of Live Oaks resisted a powerful man's ire. President Eisenhower attempted to remove it from the golf course and was stopped by Audubon. That powerful tree was felled by ice. Florida should feel lucky and blessed, we were spared, being just south of the worst winter ever.



Pileated Woodpecker *Photo by Brian Baldwin*



Alligator at Wakulla Springs Photo by Bob Thompson

Wakulla Springs

Safeguarding the Wakulla Spring/Spring Creek System

By Dr. Seán E. McGlynn

Wakulla Springs is one of the largest spring systems in the world, and is renowned for its birding. It deserves the highest level of protection. That is achievable only if we understand the springs and river better from a scientific standpoint. *Wakulla Spring with an average flow of over 300 million gallons each day has the highest flow of any spring with a single vent in Florida.*

It is one of Florida's finest state parks, attracting up to 200,000 visitors a year. Wakulla Springs State Park generates an annual employee payroll of \$1.8 million annually and has a total local economic impact of \$22 million per year. It is one of the premiere wildlife observation areas in the state. Recently Wakulla Springs State Park has attracted up to 75 manatees seeking warm water refuge. Wakulla Springs State Park includes the upper three miles of the Wakulla River, a river which flows about nine miles from Wakulla Springs to the confluence with the St. Marks River. The Wakulla River supports fresh water fisheries and significant estuarine resources.

There have been recent improvements at Wakulla Springs. The quantity and abundance of the invasive exotic aquatic plant, hydrilla, has been reduced to such an extent that herbicide treatment, which cost almost eighty thousand dollars per year, has been deemed unnecessary and was canceled for the first time in over a decade. Remarkably, there has also been a hundred percent increase in the number of manatees, as many as eighty have wintered at the springs. Many equate the disappearance of the noxious weed hydrilla with the herbivory of the manatees. *Each manatee consumes 100 to 140 pounds of plants each day* but during the growing season, they leave the park for the warmer waters offshore.

Changes are evident in the concentrations of wildlife at the Park. The park has monitored 34 species of wildlife for the past 20 years. Only two of these species have actually increased: the Pied-billed Grebe and the Florida manatee. Ten species had significant losses including the Purple Gallinule, Common Moorhen, Anhinga, American Alligator, Green Heron, Wood Duck, and Snowy Egret. Three species have almost disappeared: the Blue-winged Teal, American Widgeon, and Limpkin. The native apple snails are basically gone too, but they are not included in the Park survey.



Great Blue Heron at Wakulla Springs

Photo by Bob Thompson

The ecology and health of Wakulla River is in trouble. It is famous for extremely clear water, which is now often stained a dark brown. Glass bottom boat tours do not run in 'black water.' They cannot see the fish or the expanse of the spring boil. Underwater movies can no longer be filmed; the water is not clear enough. Excessive quantities of nutrients contaminate the water. Nitrates are over ten times natural levels. These nutrients cause the excessive growth of exotic invasive plants and algae. These plants fill up and top out the spring run. Dense mats of vegetation impede navigation, make swimming impossible and obliterate native wildlife habitat. The changes in wildlife have caused us to look at our environment more closely to discern possible causes.

Continued on page 5

The City of Tallahassee wastewater sprayfield has been the largest source of nitrogen. Litigation compelled them to spend \$227 million to upgrade the plant to advanced standards with nitrogen removal. Other local governments, including Leon and Wakulla counties, are also undertaking efforts to reduce nutrient inputs to Wakulla Springs by protecting wetlands, replacing septic systems with sanitary sewer and advanced treatment and clustered septic systems, cutting back on fertilizers and cleaning up their stormwater runoff. FDEP's TMDL set a nitrate limit at the springhead of 0.35 mg/L. So far nutrient load has been reduced by about 60%. Wakulla Springs is half clean; the cleanup is not over yet. The remaining nitrate is still about twice the TMDL target.

Another part of the problem is the general reduction in flow in the Floridan aquifer. Monitoring wells show there has been a steady drop in Floridan Aquifer levels at the Florida/Georgia border of about 1 foot per year for the past 20 years. South of Tallahassee it is even worse. Millions of dams hold back the surface water in northern Georgia. Uncounted agricultural supply wells in South Georgia suck the aquifer water to irrigate crops. Hundreds of Aquifer Recharge and Storage wells (ARS) are planned to store Floridan Aquifer water deeper in the ground where it can be withdrawn when needed. The Floridan Aquifer is running low.



Little Blue Heron at Wakulla Springs

Photo by Bob Thompson

There is no longer enough head pressure in the Floridan Aquifer to keep all of our springs flowing. The flow at our largest first magnitude spring, Spring Creek Springs, has all but stopped. Salt water is entering this marine spring and back flowing approximately five miles inland. Spring Creek flows in the right direction, to the sea, only a few times a year, after major storm events, when the system is flushed with stormwater.

Furthermore, the lack of aquifer water and the capture of the remaining flow at Spring Creek by Wakulla Springs have caused an increase in darker, tannic colored water to Wakulla Spring and saltwater intrusion to the Floridan Aquifer through the cave system that connects the two springs. Water in our wetlands is stained dark brown, like tea, from the leaves of the cypress and tupelo trees that grow in the water. We are continually seeing more and more water filtering into the aquifer and coming up in our springs as the flow of the Floridan is diminished and wetlands are destroyed and degraded. The increased color of the spring water is an indication of the increasing

influence of water from wetlands in Wakulla Springs. One consequence is fewer and infrequent glass bottom boat days at Wakulla Springs.



Double-crested Cormorant at Wakulla Springs

Photo by Bob Thompson

The ecological health of the springs and river is of regional importance because of the influence of this large volume of water on local estuaries and the Gulf of Mexico, all of which affect Wakulla County. *The Friends of Wakulla Springs are proposing a comprehensive ecological assessment and monitoring effort that is necessary to document the health of the spring system.*

Continued on page 6



Great Egret at Wakulla Springs

Photo by Bob Thompson

Wakulla Springs by Dr. Seán E. McGlynn – Cont. from page 5

We are asking for funding from BP as well as other sources. Monitoring will cost less than half of one percent of the total cleanup cost. Monitoring is our assurance for the success of the TMDL cleanup as well as unforeseen threats in the future. Our observations of the creatures living in our beautiful spring will reveal their response to improving conditions or declining conditions. We are already seeing changes. Submerged aquatic plant concentrations are so diminished that the park did not have to do a herbicide treatment this year. The manatee population also increased steadily. While we are monitoring the birds, the plants, the algae and some of the wildlife, we are currently not monitoring the fish, invertebrates, or amphibians. No monitoring is done outside the Park in the Wakulla or St. Marks Rivers. The St Marks is a good reference for the Wakulla, and the changes offshore are not investigated.

All this could change as this grant would set up a long-term safety plan, something new for Wakulla Springs. It is not possible to protect the Wakulla/Spring Creek system if we do not understand the state of that system, its ecological drivers, and the major threats to system health. This research is essential to measure ecological changes and to guide management restoration efforts. All biological, hydrologic, and water quality data will meet highest standards for federal and state regulatory programs.

For more details please see, *Trends in the Number of Animals Observed during Wildlife Surveys on the Wakulla Springs River Boat Tour*, by Robert Thompson, 2013, available at <http://wakullaspringsalliance.org/resources/>

Presented at the 'Friends of Wakulla' Annual Meeting, Feb. 9, 2014, by Seán E. McGlynn, Ph.D.; Apalachee Audubon Society, President; Friends of Wakulla Springs, Board of Directors; Florida Lake Management Society, NW Florida Chapter President



**Great Blue Heron at Wakulla Springs, above;
Anhinga at Wakulla Springs, right**

Photos by Bob Thompson



IN YOUR YARD

By Fran Rutkovsky

What's in your yard? We will say good-bye to our winter birds until next fall, though some may linger into May. March and April bring the excitement of spring migration and the return of summer breeders. We don't usually see most of these migrants at our feeders, but some may stop off to bathe and drink water before continuing the journey north.

I'll be listening for the buzzy trill of the Northern Parula warbler toward the end of February that heralds the arrival of spring.

Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will be showing up at the feeders in early March, with the females coming along a couple of weeks later. Any Rufous or other species of hummingbirds that have spent the winter here will be doing double duty defending "their" feeders against these returning hungry Ruby-throats. Put up your feeders now and watch for the hummer antics.

Many birds are already investigating nest boxes and will be looking for spots to raise their families. You can help by providing nest boxes or other containers and nesting materials. It's always a treat to see a Great Crested Flycatcher or Tufted Titmouse pulling out the cat hair/cotton fluff from a basket. You can buy clean nesting materials at our local retail shops or provide any human or animal hair, cotton batting, string, strips of cloth, etc. All materials should be clean. Some birds use moss and lichens as well as leaves, twigs, strips of bark.

Carolina Chickadee

Photo by Glenda Simmons



Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a Citizen Science project called NestWatch, www.nestwatch.org. This is a nationwide monitoring program that tracks nesting birds. Perhaps you could participate by adding data to this program. And, Project FeederWatch has a great regional chart to keep up with the "Food and Feeder Preferences of Common Feeder Birds", <http://feederwatch.org/learn/common-feeder-birds/>

(Editor's note: Fran Rutkovsky is a "Featured Participant" of Project FeederWatch and Glenda Simmons' beautiful photographs are often featured!)



Great Crested Flycatcher

Photo by Glenda Simmons

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Attract More Wildlife with Habitat Landscaping

By David Copps

Songbirds, butterflies and other wildlife enhance our environment all year long with beautiful colors and songs and interesting behaviors. Why not give back to them with habitat landscaping practices to keep them happy and healthy. Below are a few ideas guaranteed to attract more critters to your garden.

Replace some of your lawn with patches of wildflowers and native grasses. This will provide an abundance of nectar-producing blooms for butterflies and hummingbirds, insects for bluebirds, warblers, wrens, and kinglets and seeds for sparrows, cardinals and goldfinches. Consider planting grasses like purple-top, switch grass, bluestems, muhly grass, Indian grass, and love grass. Good wildflowers include sunflowers, goldenrod, mistflower, ironweed, asters, blazing star, Rudbeckias, and Indian Blanket.



Baltimore Oriole on a Weeping Yaupon

Photo by Glenda Simmons

Increase the width of hedges on property boundaries and diversify them by planting a mix of deciduous and evergreen shrubs, small trees, and vines. Dense shrubbery is the primary nesting zone for many of our common songbirds including catbirds, mockingbirds, brown thrashers, cardinals and towhees. A mix of plant species will provide flowers, fruits and seeds at different times of the year to accommodate the needs of a variety of insects, songbirds and small mammals. Yaupon holly, wax myrtle, viburnum, beautyberry, red cedar, wild plum, and hawthorn are just a few of the good hedgerow and thicket plants for our area.

Increase the diversity and complexity of urban woodlands. Provide all forest layers by planting a canopy of large trees, an understory of small trees and shrubs, and a groundcover of wildflowers, ferns and grasses. This will maximize the feeding and nesting locations for wildlife. If possible, leave standing dead trees for cavity nesting species such as woodpeckers, flycatchers, and chickadees. Let leaves stay on the ground to provide a carpet of mulch. This enriches the soil and provides insects and earthworms for box turtles, toads, and ground feeding songbirds. The list of woodland plants for our area is extensive. Some of the best are oaks, hickories, magnolias, redbud, ironwood, hophornbeam, needle palm, ferns, spike grass, woodland phlox, violets, and trilliums.



Cardinal on a Chickasaw Plum

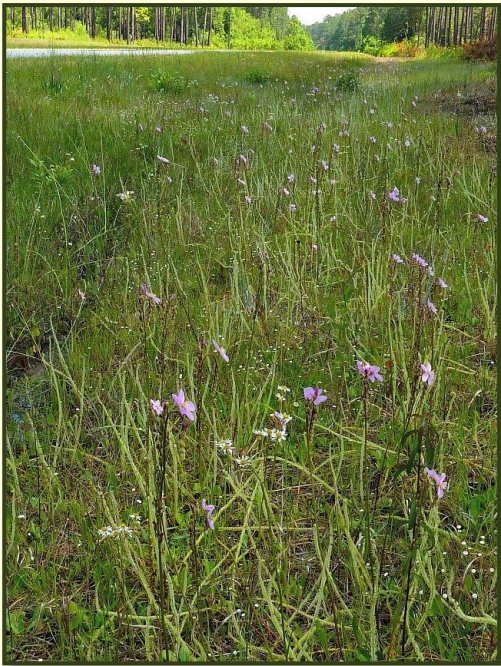
Photo by Glenda Simmons

Remember, the more habitat the better where wildlife is concerned, so be sure to partner with your neighbors to increase the amount of meadow, hedgerow, and woodland habitat in your neighborhood. Your efforts will be rewarded with a bounty of nature and the satisfaction of participating in the long tradition of Red Hills wildlife conservation.

David Copps is a landscape designer and certified arborist. He specializes in the design and management of natural habitat gardens to protect Red Hill's water, wildflowers and wildlife. He can be contacted at 850.570.2422 or meadowman3@yahoo.com

Spring Wildflowers along State Road 65

By Eleanor Dietrich



State Road 65

Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Want to take a tour and see lots of beautiful wildflowers? There is a very special place right here in north Florida--State Road 65--and spring is the perfect time for a great day trip. The link below will take you to photos of wildflowers that bloom from March through May. It also provides information about the businesses you'll see along the way where you can stop and enjoy a delicious meal or snack and, perhaps, find a special gift or antique. Please patronize these great businesses. By giving them your business, you are giving a vote to preserve and protect the beauty and life along this wonderful road.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/wildflowersflorida/sets/72157632884880588/>

State Road 65 runs through the Apalachicola National Forest, and as it does, it provides habitat for an unusual group of plants – those that are carnivorous, or insect-eating. While the forest is rich in many ways, it also has many sandy areas, remnants of when the gulf waters were much farther inland. These sandy soils are poor in nutrients, but

rich in the plants that can survive there – the plants that depend on insects as a major source of food. They have adapted their leaves to be able to trap insects in a variety of unique and unusual ways. Study them closely and you will learn how they are able to do so. Visit <http://www.wildgarden.com/wildflowers/cp.htm> for descriptions and photos. When you look closely along the roadsides, you will be amazed at how many of these plants you will see. The pitcher plants are taller than some of the ground-hugging plants. The Yellow Trumpet pitcher plants with their tall light green leaves stand up like flags and are easier to spot. When the Rose and Parrot pitcher plants are blooming, their blossoms will be easy to spot as you cruise along the roadsides. The link below takes you to photos of the five different pitcher plants that that grow in the National Forest—the Yellow Trumpet, Rose, and Parrot pitcher plants are the ones you will be most likely to see:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/wildflowersflorida/collections/72157641467871114/>.

There are many different kinds of carnivorous plants along State Road 65 – sundews, butterworts, bladderworts, pitcher plants, and even some Venus flytrap plants in a few hidden places. They begin blooming in late March and continue to early May.

The sundews (genus *Drosera*) are also abundant along the open damp roadsides and one of the showiest of these is the Dewthread Sundew. Its tall thread-like leaves are covered with glistening sticky glands that catch the unwary insect that lands upon them.

I hope you'll enjoy these and the many other wildflowers along this stretch of highway that transports you to a rare glimpse of Florida.

Eleanor Dietrich is a longtime member and Past President of the Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, www.magnolia.fnpschapters.org.

For more information about the FDOT Wildflower Program, see <http://www.flawildflowers.org/news.php>.



Dewthread Sundew

Photos by Eleanor Dietrich



2014 Wildlife-Friendly Yards Photo by Fran Rutkovsky

Thank You for a Great

2014 Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour!

By Ann Bruce

The early morning thunderstorm that rolled through the area on February 15th was gone by the time visitors started arriving at 10 a.m. Each yard had a steady stream of visitors and by the end of the day 181 tickets had been sold, making this year's 7th Annual Wildlife-Friendly Yard Tour a great success. Without help from everybody, the tour couldn't have come together and we appreciate everyone's outstanding efforts!

Special thanks to the **Tallahassee Democrat** for publishing a fine article promoting our event and which helped inform readers and increase our ticket sales. More thanks as well to our faithful friends at **Native Nurseries** and **Wild Birds Unlimited**. They've generously served as our ticket outlets for all seven years.

Our deepest appreciation goes to our **Yard Hosts**, who graciously shared their yards and talked to guests throughout the tour about their special landscaping which attracts birds and other wildlife. Our 2014 Yard Hosts were: **Russ and Robin Frydenborg, Sarah and Terry Sherradan, Robin Preston, Francie and Jim Stoutamire, Rick and Jovita Ashton**. We also gratefully acknowledge family and friends of our hosts for their help as well. Each yard had unique features to offer guests in both urban and rural locations.

Thanks to all of our **Yard Volunteers** too. Without them, this event could not happen. We would like to thank: **Tammy Brown, Ann Bruce, Mickey Burton, Kathleen Carr, Marian Fugitt, Judy Goldman, Joanne Herrington, Laurie Jones, Helen King, Elizabeth Platt, Karen Pritzl, Fran Rutkovsky, Pat Tiff, Mike Tucker and Dee Wilder**.

Many Thanks To Our Extraordinary Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour Coordinator, Pam Flynn!

This year we acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our primary tour organizer, Pam Flynn. Every year Pam has worked her special magic in pulling things together. She coordinates finding the yards to be on the tour. She writes the publicity flyer and she works with the *Tallahassee Democrat* to publicize the tour. She is our liaison with Native Nurseries and Wild Birds Unlimited. She puts together the 2-page "tickets" that include a description of each yard, names of yard hosts including home addresses and directions. One year Pam even built our fine wooden Audubon signs that help tour-goers locate each yard. In short, there is nothing that Pam hasn't done to make each tour a success! After seven years, Pam is stepping back from her duties as our primary tour organizer. *We deeply appreciate all of Pam's leadership and hard work.*

Thank you, Pam!



Photo above by
Glenda Simmons
Photos right & below by
Fran Rutkovsky





Photo by Nick Baldwin

Birdathon 2014 is Coming!

Each year Apalachee Audubon teams hit the road for Birdathon! This spring as birds migrate north across the Gulf from South and Central America, Birdathon teams will be searching the skies, water, bushes and trees for all the species of birds that they can identify by sight or sound within a 24 hour period.

In addition to the thrill of seeing a large number of birds and enjoying kindred companionship, participants will be raising money for Birdathon, Apalachee Audubon's very important long-standing annual fundraiser. We need your help to make this another successful year. Apalachee Audubon is an all-volunteer organization and the success of our work depends upon your support. Although AAS works collaboratively with the National Audubon Society on issues of mutual concern, very little of our funding comes from National Audubon. The funds raised during Birdathon helps Apalachee Audubon throughout the year fulfill Audubon's mission with programs and environmental activities.

For many years Birdathon has helped provide AUDUBON ADVENTURES, www.audubonadventures.org, to requesting elementary teachers in surrounding counties. As Audubon Adventures celebrates its 30th year, National Audubon recognized Apalachee Audubon's outstanding efforts as one of the top 50 chapters across the nation supporting this important program.

Birdathon also helps raise the funds needed to provide a scholarship for a local teenager to attend a fantastic summer birding program known as Camp Talon (see page 12). Camp Talon immerses young birders in a world of like-minded souls and provides stories and bonds that last a lifetime. These are just two of the important goals of Birdathon.

Birdathon 2014 is being organized by Harvey Goldman with help from a host of great AAS members. If you would like to help on a team, please let Harvey know at Goldman@hep.fsu.edu. This is a perfect way to learn about birding areas, get help identifying birds, have fun and make lasting friendships. Team members secure pledges from friends and members, either per species or by fixed amount contributions and teams compete to see which team can raise the most money. Please consider helping with a team or making a contribution when a team member comes calling. In advance, we all thank you for your help!

This year, together let's help make this the best Birdathon ever!

For a list of past Birdathon counts:
<http://www.apalachee.org/aas/birds/aas-birdathon-data/>

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Camp Talon - Teen Essay Competition

By Jim Cox



Apalachee Audubon is pleased to announce an exciting essay competition that will send a local teen on a week-long birding spree. Please share the attached information with the parents of any bird-crazed teens that you might know. Camp Talon is a 5-day, dawn-to-dusk summer birding adventure organized by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Georgia Ornithological Society.

The camp is in its 12th year of operation and runs from June 1 - 5 in 2014. The camp is based at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island, but field trips include Little St. Simons Island, Blackbeard Island, Sapelo Island, Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and St. Simons Island. The camp features a 2:1 student to teacher ratio, and the instructors are professional biologists and teachers that have 20+ years of experience.

Apalachee Audubon will provide a full scholarship to the winning essayist as well as a travel stipend to parents to help cover travel to Macon, GA (departure point for camp). The deadline for the submission of essays is Friday, April 4th, and the winner will be announced two weeks later and encouraged to attend Apalachee Audubon's annual year-end banquet on Thursday evening, May 15th.



DO YOU KNOW A TEEN WHO LOVES BIRDS?

The bird-watching bug often strikes at an early age. If you know a teenager who is interested in birds, please let them know about a special essay contest sponsored by *Apalachee Audubon* on the theme of **“What Birds Mean to This Teen!”**

The essay should be a maximum of 300 words and must be submitted by **Friday, April 4th, 2014**. Essays may be submitted as an email or attached PDF or Word file to necox@embarqmail.com. Printed or hand-written essays also may be submitted via normal mail addressed to: Jim Cox, 1503 Wekewa Nene, Tallahassee, FL 32301

Essays will be reviewed by Cox and two environmental education specialists. The essays will be judged on grammar, originality, inspirational qualities, and knowledge of local bird life. Essays with any profanity or derogatory language will be disqualified.

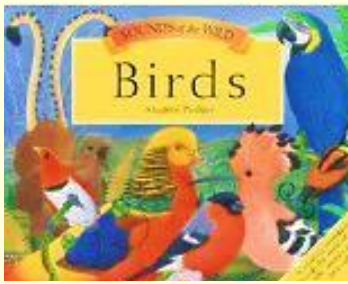
The winner of the contest will receive a free scholarship to **Camp Talon**, a five-day birding extravaganza sponsored by the *Georgia Department of Natural Resources* and *Georgia Ornithological Society*. The \$300 registration will be covered completely by *Apalachee Audubon*. The winner will be announced on Friday, April 18th and will be encouraged to attend the *Apalachee Audubon* year-end banquet on Thursday evening, May 15th.

What the winning student can expect at **Camp Talon** is tons of birding with 15 other teens. The camp is based at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island, but field trips include Little St. Simons Island, Blackbeard Island, Sapelo Island, Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and St. Simons Island. The camp features a 2:1 student to teacher ratio, and the instructors are professional biologists and teachers that have 20+ years of experience.

Students must be 12-16 years of age and live in Franklin, Gadsden, Leon, Liberty, Jefferson, or Wakulla counties.

The dates of the camp this year are Sunday, June 1st through Thursday, June 5th, and more information is available at the [Camp Talon](http://www.camp-talon.com) web site for 2013 (the 2014 site has not yet been posted).

Parents must transport the winning student to Macon, Georgia, to rendezvous with other students. *Apalachee Audubon* is providing a \$200 stipend to parents to cover travel expenses in addition to providing a full scholarship for the winning student.



Sharing Books for Fun and Pleasure

By Pat Press, Audubon Educator



I recently went on an adventure to find books to share with others as an Audubon educator. To my great surprise these books were as much fun for me and my friends and family as they were to the amazed parents and children who came to our wildlife festival display table. The first treasure is called *Sounds of the Wild Birds* by Maurice Pledger. This beautifully done book is a pop-up with sounds of the wild places birds live as a background. You can hear the melodious tune of songbirds at dawn, swan and eagle calls, the sounds of birds in the rain forest, and birds of prey readying for attack. All the while you are seeing the habits and backgrounds as these beautifully plumed birds rise from the page as 3D pop-ups. I was entranced as I turned each page. Only after several fun page turning thrills did I realize that there were pages and pages of wonderful information on each bird shown, which provided me with a further reasons to love this book and want to share it with adults and children. Maurice Pledger is a treasure that parents and grandparents should explore. I also purchased another gorgeously arranged find by Pledger called *Sounds of the Wild Bugs*. You should treat yourself and your family to this delicious treat, you won't regret it.

For elementary age children I also recommend a terrific book titled *Bird Calls* from a series called **Hear and There Books** written by Frank Gallo and beautifully illustrated by Lori Lohstoeter. Educators will testify that manipulative materials are the best teaching tools for kids. Well, here it is. You open the book, pull the tab, see the bird, read the riddle, make a guess, then press the button to hear the bird's call or song, then lift the flap to see which bird you thought you heard. It is so much fun we did it over and over, even though we knew the calls and birds. It just made you want to hear them again. Each page is filled with wonderful information on the bird's habitat, and particularities, such as their coloring, how they raise their young, search for food, and avoid predators. The book I bought has eight bird calls, but Frank Gallo has other grander and lovelier books with many more calls. Check with your favorite bookstore to you can get all these prize belongings or at amazon.com. Happy reading and listening!

Pat Press serves on the Board of Directors of the Apalachee Audubon Society, along with her sister, Carol Franchi. Together they co-chair the AAS Education Committee.

Winter Hummingbirds

By Fred Dietrich



I have just about gotten to all the homes that reported they had birds, but if you have a bird and I have not contacted you, please let me know and I'll make sure I get by your house.

Many of these winter birds will remain through March, so we've still got time to band a few more birds. It looks like this is going to be our third best year ever. I've already been to 22 new places this year so if you haven't seen a bird yet, don't give up and give me a call when yours shows up.

Please contact Master Bird Bander, Fred Dietrich at 850 591-7430 or fdietrich@gmail.com. Fred will come out and do his best to band your bird. His work, along with other banders, is helping us to understand the migratory habits of these birds. More information and comprehensive updates from Fred and other banders are available at Hummingbird Research, Inc. at <http://hummingbirdresearch.net/>

Activities and Events



Native Nurseries

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

Some coming Workshops to Enjoy

ANNUAL HERBAL EVENT

Saturday March 22nd 10am

\$5.00 - Class size limited

Call 386-8882 to pre-register

Join professional herb grower, B. O'Toole of O'Toole's Herb Farm and Native Nurseries' Donna Legare to learn how to grow and enjoy herbs. They will discuss how to use herbs in cooking and how to incorporate them into the landscape. It will be fun and we will have a couple of herbal treats for you to sample.

COLORFUL CONTAINER GARDENING

Thursday April 3rd 10am

\$7 + tax - Class size limited

Call 386-8882 to register

Lilly Anderson-Messec will teach you how to choose plant combinations that provide interesting spring and summer color and texture. This is a hands-on class. Bring your own container, buy one here, or just come to watch. We will provide the soil; you buy the plants that you want to use during the workshop.

Field Trips & More!

For notification of coming field trips, please subscribe to Apalachee Audubon's Google Groups email notification list available at www.apalachee.org



Birding reports are recorded at eBird and with Apalachee Audubon

Come bird with us when you can!



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

Old Timey Plant Sale

Saturday, March 15, 2014 from 9 am - 1 pm

Welcome Spring at the 7th Annual Birdsong Old Timey Plant Sale!

Native Trees and Shrubs - Hundreds of Native Azaleas - Wildflowers

Old-Fashioned and Heirloom Plants

Here's a [Plant List with Pictures and Descriptions](#) of some of the plants, trees, and shrubs that will be available and here are lists of [Native Plants](#) and [Old Timey Plants](#) that will be available.

Nature-related gifts, books, t-shirts, and more for sale

Lunch: Hot dogs, Hamburgers, Veggie Burgers & more or you can bring a picnic!

CASH OR CHECKS ONLY, PLEASE.

All proceeds go to Birdsong Nature Center

For more information about this and many other great activities

Please see www.birdsongnaturecenter.org or call

229 377-4408 or 800-953-BIRD (2473)

GREAT BIRDING SPOTS in Tallahassee, Florida and Surrounding Areas



Apalachee Audubon Society

APALACHEE AUDUBON'S
GREAT NEW BIRDING GUIDE
IS NOW AVAILABLE!

Audubon Academy 2014

*"Walking the Walk -
Making Conservation Real"*
April 11-13

Complete information available at
<http://fl.audubon.org/2014-audubon-academy>

Early reservation deadline-March 10
Academy registration deadline-March 31



Wakulla Wildlife Festival

Saturday, April 19

by Jeff Hugo

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Wakulla Springs State Park will host the *Wakulla Wildlife Festival* on Saturday, April 19th. This event showcases the rich heritage and outdoor opportunities available throughout the Wakulla Springs Watershed. Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park will be the hub of activities designed to educate, inspire and connect people with their environment and heritage. Living history demonstrators will showcase a proud heritage of ingenuity and hard work. You can see the craftsmanship of a blacksmith and the gentle grace of the spinner as she creates thread from various fibers. All the while, bluegrass music will quicken the pulse and set toes to tapping on "The Green" of the festival grounds. Fine art, music, living history demonstrations, informative presenters and exhibitors, dynamic educational shows and guided tours will connect festival guests with the natural and cultural heritage of the region. People return year after year to enjoy the phenomenal Birds of Prey and Reptile shows presented by the *Center for Wildlife Education*, Georgia Southern University. All will enjoy viewing the wildlife and heritage of the region through the eyes of gifted artists at the festival Art Show held on the terrace of the Wakulla Springs Lodge. Children can play a game, create a craft or get their faces painted under the *Children's Activities* tent. Children's activities are also featured at the many exhibitors' areas as they introduce visitors to magnificent wildlife, area nature centers and museums, and recreational opportunities.

For more information and schedule, please see

www.WakullaWildlifeFestival.com

*\$6 Donation to Friends of Wakulla Springs requested at park entrance.
Fees for some Tours.*



Photo by Nick Baldwin

Wakulla Springs State Park



*Morning Nature Walk
Saturday, March 22, 2014
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM*

Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park will host a ranger-led trek through its varying forest communities on March 22nd. Leaves are budding, dogwoods are blooming, and life is awakening in the park's forests. The habitat beckons. Let your guide make the most of your visit as he points out nature's nuances. Arrive early and fuel up with breakfast in the historic Wakulla Springs Lodge prior to the walk. Meet in the lobby of the lodge. Space is limited. Please call (850) 561-7286 to make your reservation.

Wakulla Morning Songbird Walk



*Saturday, March 29
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM*

An early morning songbird walk to look and listen for the less seen but often numerous songsters that make the park's forests their haven. Search for new spring arrivals and be on the lookout for migrants passing through. Please bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Space is limited to 15 participants. Please call 850-561-7286 to register. Free with Park Admission