

APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Apalachee Audubon Society Mission Statement:

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

MAY - JUNE 2014



You are invited to

Apalachee Audubon Society's Annual Awards Banquet

With Guest Speaker Susan Cerulean

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Dinner will begin at 6:30 pm



Dinner will be provided by Chef Tim Smith. This year's menu is Alfredo Pasta Bar featuring chicken, shrimp and a vegetarian option along with salad and sides. Tickets are \$10 per person. They may be purchased in advance at Native Nurseries or Wild Birds Unlimited. If you wish to buy your ticket at the dinner, please call Tim at (850) 933-5979 by May 13 to make your reservation. Please come and bring a friend...non-members are welcome.

Lafayette Presbyterian Church

4220 Mahan Drive - Tallahassee, Florida

Banquet Speaker: Susan Cerulean

"Can Sveit Save Us?"

Strengthening our Connections to our Place

Sveit, an Icelandic concept, refers to that which connects us to earth, to history, to nature, to humanity. We have worked hard to deepen a sense of place in our Red Hills and Gulf Coastal Plain bioregions. But as climate change bears down, we must commit ourselves to grow ever more intimate with our place and the wild things that share it. This love will sustain and empower us while we work on behalf of our planet.

Susan Cerulean is a writer, advocate and lover of wild birds. Her latest work,

Coming to Pass: Florida's Coastal Islands in a Gulf of Change, will be published in early 2015 by University of Georgia

Press. Previous books she's written or edited include *Tracking Desire: A Journey After Swallow-tailed Kites*; *Between Two Rivers: Stories from the Red Hills to the Gulf*, *The Book of the Everglades*; and *The Wild Heart of Florida*.



Susan Cerulean

Photo by Jeff Chanton

Inside This Issue



President's Message	3
Officers & Directors	2
Slate of Officers	2
White Ibises	4
In Your Yard	5
Roadside Cooperation	6
Lake Lafayette	8
Audubon Academy 2014	11
Water & Land Amendment	12
Sharing Books	13
AAS History	13
Hummer Report	13
Beach Stewards	14
Birdathon 2014	14
AAS & Our Friends	15

Birdathon 2014!

Find out how you can
help on page 14

Save the Date!

Annual Banquet

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

Lafayette Presbyterian Church
4220 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL

Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

2013 – 2014
Officers & Directors

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

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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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and enjoy free membership in Apalachee Audubon!

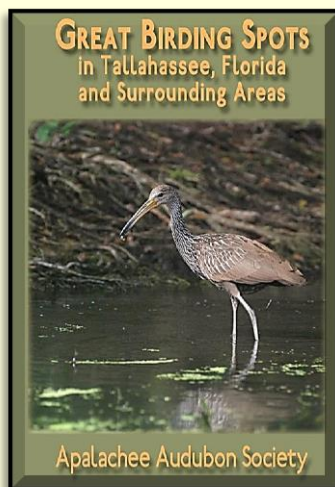
Membership includes *Audubon*, National Audubon's bimonthly flagship publication. Each issue of this award-winning publication features beautiful photography and engaging journalism. Our Apalachee Audubon Chapter newsletter will keep you informed of local and statewide Audubon and other nature-related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

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2014-2015

Slate of Officers and Directors

Following are the nominations for next year's Board that have been selected by the nominating committee. We will be voting for the Slate of Officers and Directors at the Annual Banquet on May 15, 2014. AAS Secretary, Treasurer and Directors are elected for two-year terms and Secretary, Helen King, and Treasurer, Harvey Goldman, and Directors Carol Franchi and Pat Press will be returning for the 2014-2015 term.

2014 - 2015 Officers

President: Adrienne Ruhl
Vice-President: Budd Titlow
Past-President: Seán McGlynn

New Directors 2014 – 2016

Nick Baldwin Jim Cox
Kathleen Carr Ben Fusaro

President's Message
Dr. Seán E. McGlynn



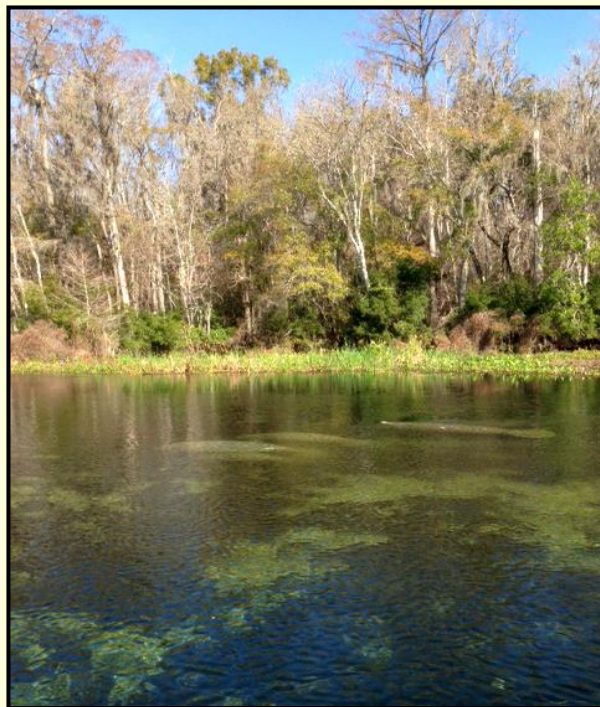
Seán McGlynn
Photo by Nick Baldwin

My mother told me never to be a biologist. It is a very bad job. The natural world always gets worse. We are the cause. We are destroying the Earth, turning its resources into profits and jobs. Nature is essentially our slave; we take from it without giving back or recognizing any basic rights, while it suffers continuous exploitation. We push species to extinction. We fouled the air and the water. We find new ways to extract and exploit the ground. We changed the climate. Could this be catastrophic failure?

Yet nature prevails. I have seen encouraging things. We had a spectacular wildflower season. The unrelenting cold winter and succession of polar vortices caused the flowers to rush to blossom simultaneously in a symphony of color unparalleled and much appreciated. I have seen a very special bird, the limping Limpkin disappear from its haunt at Wakulla Springs when their food, the native Apple Snail population died out. Yet the noble Limpkins spread throughout our lakes, gobbling up thousands of the newly introduced exotic Apple Snails.

Wakulla Springs came back, not sparkling clear and nutrient free, like it was in my younger days, but released from the plague of nuisance exotic and invasive plants, cleared by a mysterious behemoth leviathan herbivore Dugong, the magnificent Manatee, who gobbled up the exotic hydrilla and scarfed the clumpy algae. And most of the Manatee's formerly from South Florida moved to Wakulla Springs. That precious rarity became common.

I have also found a group of people who want to heal the earth, like I do. And it has been my greatest honor, to serve them as their president for the past year. Thanks.



Manatees at Wakulla Springs

Photo by Seán McGlynn



*"In nature we never see
anything isolated,
but everything in connection
with something else
which is before it, beside it,
under it and over it."*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Limpkin with snail

Photos by Nick Baldwin. www.nickbaldwinphotography.com

White Ibises

Florida's Friendly Neighborhood Birds

By Budd Titlow



An adult and juvenile White Ibis feeding together near a lawn in Southwood's Central Park

Photo by Budd Titlow

On our morning walks, my wife and I are treated to a profusion of wildlife, including red foxes, river otters, and Pileated Woodpeckers, plus a variety of wading birds, hawks, Ospreys, and even an occasional Bald Eagle. But we always get a kick out of the omnipresent White Ibises—birds we had previously thought of as rare—that are always strolling around on our neighborhood's grassy lawns.

Classified as a wading bird of the Deep South, White Ibises are a very gregarious species, roosting and feeding together in large colonies during all seasons of the year. With chunky, goose-sized bodies, these ibises also have overall white plumage with black wingtips, long, bright, red-orange, down-curving bills, medium-length legs, and piercing blue eyes. Their primary nesting range runs along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts of the US, as well as the coasts of Mexico and Central America. Full-time residents throughout the state of Florida, White Ibises often nest together in mangrove thickets, with as many as thirty thousand birds being counted in one huge breeding colony. Unlike many other wading birds, they are not always faithful to their nesting areas, and massive breeding colonies of ten thousand birds or more birds may shift to different locations from year to year.

White Ibises prefer to roost in coastal estuaries and then fly during daylight hours to feed in freshwater wetlands that may be some distance away from their overnight habitats. Most bird guides describe the ibis's diet as consisting primarily of small aquatic prey organisms such as marine worms, small fish, amphibians, and crustaceans. In some coastal areas, ibises are credited with benefitting local fish populations, since their preferred food—crayfish—eat primarily fish eggs.

The bills of White Ibises have several special adaptations for underground feeding. With nostrils at the base of their bills, ibises can breathe while sticking their beaks deep into water or mud. Sensitive feelers on the inside of their probing bills help ibises identify and capture food sight unseen. Once food is caught, these birds then use their slender, forceps-shaped bills like skilled surgeons, breaking up larger prey items into edible pieces while swallowing smaller items whole—all underground!

While I'm not disputing the well-documented feeding preferences of White Ibises, I do know—based on our personal observations—that they sure like using their long bills to find and root out tasty earthworms and dry-land insect morsels living in the mowed grassy meadows near our neighborhood ponds. When it comes to good meals, I suspect White Ibises are just like people. The easier the food is to find, the better. *Budd Titlow serves on Apalachee Audubon's*

*Board of Directors. His latest book, **Bird Brains: Inside the Strange Minds of Our Fine Feathered Friends** is available at fine bookstores and on Amazon. Enjoy recent posts by Budd at <http://blogs.tallahassee.com/community/author/birdbrains/>.*



A juvenile White Ibis attempts to snatch a snake from its none-too-pleased parent.

Photo by Budd Titlow



IN YOUR YARD

By Fran Rutkovsky

What's in your yard? April, May, and June are peak baby bird months, though some birds, like Carolina Wrens, are already on their second broods. A couple of weeks ago I watched a pair of Carolina Wrens going back and forth with nest-building activities. They were working on two nests at the same time--one in a gourd hanging close to the house and one in a ceramic jar birdhouse under the carport. They settled on the gourd to raise their family. I think the ceramic jar house must have been a dummy nest, as it's messy and still has twigs hanging out of it. This used to be a favorite house for them. I enjoy watching the parents feeding babies, who are begging and flapping their wings. I go through more suet cakes this time of year than I do in winter. I've watched Chickadee parents come into my yard and get suet, then fly across the street to the birdhouse there.



Bluebirds

Photo by Glenda Simmons

As the summer heats up, be sure to keep fresh water in your birdbaths. I have a couple of mist-sprayers over birdbaths that I turn on at mid-day while I eat lunch so I can watch the bathing. Sometimes a Cardinal or Chickadee will sit on top of the mister and use it like a spa, to the consternation of the other birds who don't like the spray cut off. If it's been hot and dry for awhile, the birdbaths become even more important. A new Facebook group called "Florida Backyard Birding" is a fun site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FLBACKYARDBIRDING/>.

In the summer my attention turns to butterflies, dragonflies, and other insects. Sometimes the one I'm watching becomes food for a bird, but that's the nature of things. The more native plants you have in your yard, the more native insects you'll have for the birds.

The May/June issue of Audubon magazine has a nice article about moths called, "The Night Stalkers". Over the past four years, I've been photographing moths in my yard. I don't collect them, just take photographs and try to identify them. Four years ago I discovered a group on Facebook called "Mothing & Moth-watching". At that time there were 75 members, mostly from NC/TN and some from the northeast. Currently there are over 1,850 members from all over the world. This has been a great place to post photographs and learn from the experts. -- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/137219092972521/>



Tulip-tree Beauty Moth, *Epimicis hortaria*

Photo by Fran Rutkovsky

There are several online guides for moth identification, such as Moth Photographers Group, BugGuide, DiscoverLife and Butterflies and Moths of North America. I have posted my moth photos on Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/53037107@N02/sets/72157624605377365/> ---I don't guarantee the accuracy of my identifications, but it sure is fun. Most of these photos were taken on the back of my house, with some in the yard--currently about 445 moth species (some photos show different versions). With a background in art, I'm always interested in the variety of color and pattern in these creatures that are usually dismissed as "those pesky brown insects". Leave a light on, and see who shows up. Happy summer, everyone!



Native Plants Provide Beauty and Important Habitat Along Florida Roadsides *Photo by Eleanor Dietrich*

Roadside Cooperation Creates Important Habitat Corridors By Eleanor Dietrich

For the past few years I have been spending a significant amount of my time and energy on supporting a different kind of management for our roadsides, a kind of management that seeks to see and develop roadsides as biological corridors, corridors that connect fragmented habitats and thereby allow much greater biodiversity to exist and hopefully flourish. This is so important for our migrating birds, our pollinators and other wildlife. Without biodiversity, ecosystems become weak and inadequate. All living things, including us, need healthy ecosystems to dwell in.

Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home* (*learn more at www.plantanative.com*), says that plants and animals are the rivets that hold the ecosystem together. Plants are the bottom line of the food web and that makes them literally a matter of life or death. No plants, no insects. No insects, no birds. And so it goes.

But not just any plant will do for our plant-eating insects. Over the course of evolution, plants developed toxic chemicals to keep them from being devoured by every kind of insect. Insects then began to select certain plants on which to forage and developed immunity to the toxic chemicals of those selected plants. This means that a particular group of insects must have a particular group of plants (its 'host plant') on which to dine. Monarch butterflies may be the most well-known example of this; Monarchs will only lay their eggs on milkweed plants as their larvae can only eat and digest milkweed. So, the diverse insect population requires a diverse selection of the native plants they evolved with in order to survive. In turn, most of our terrestrial birds depend on insects to help them survive. Many of these insects are also pollinators which we all depend upon.

However, all too frequently the way we have come to manage our lawns, our gardens, and our roadsides is heavily dependent upon plants that are not native to the areas in which we plant them. *If we change our management procedures to bring back plants native to the areas in which we live, we can begin to mend these vital connections by reestablishing essential habitat.* Fortunately, this is often not all that difficult to do if you encourage the wildflowers to come back in natural areas. For example, in north Florida, State Road 65 runs north and south through the Apalachicola National Forest. For many years almost all of the roadsides were regularly mowed the full width of the right of way, often right up to the tree line. The consequence of this was the elimination of roadside wildflowers and other native plants. Roadsides that have sunlight, moisture, and minimal competition from larger plants provide ideal habitat for a wide variety of native plants. All we had to do to help reestablish wildflowers along these roadsides was to mow less during the growing season, and mow the full right of way after the seeds had set in the fall. They now grow in abundance along these roadsides because they can!

It takes a team to care for our roadsides as natural habitat. It takes many connections between a variety of people who come together to manage the roadsides for wildflowers; no one person or entity alone can do this effectively, because it's complex. In the Florida Department of Transportation, for instance, the mowing line for state-maintained roads starts in the office of the Secretary of the Department, runs down the corridor to the office of the person in charge of all maintenance operations, then picks up the State Transportation Landscape Architect before branching out into all of the Districts. *Continued on page 7*



FDOT District 3 Wildflower Coordinator Dustie Moss and Dr. Lorán Anderson Monitoring Roadside Wildflowers *Photo by Eleanor Dietrich*

Cont. from page 6 - Roadside Cooperation Creates Habitat by Eleanor Dietrich

In a District there are multiple field operations offices where mowing is one of the duties performed. In turn, the maintenance field offices contract out much of the mowing operations to a company, which then contracts with local mowers who are the people on the tractor, and who have the ultimate responsibility to mow correctly.

Last fall, one of the mowers in our area was instructed to avoid mowing down large stands of wildflowers that were an essential food source for migrating butterflies. When the mower became aware of this, she took pictures of the flowers and the butterflies (see photo below) and took pride in their protection, something she had not known about before. She became an important part of the team when it came to modifying roadside wildflower management practices.



Ironweed with Gulf Fritillary Butterfly Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Last year, FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad learned that routine mowing practices were cutting down the wildflowers that Floridians and visitors enjoy so much and he declared that that had to change. “We love wildflowers,” he said, and with that, action to modify FDOT mowing practices to allow management of wildflower areas began. The new procedures took effect in January of this year, and now efforts are underway to implement them. It won’t be quick, it’s a big change, but it is already underway. Each FDOT District now has a District Wildflower Coordinator. In District 3, the western panhandle where I live, Dustie Moss is our Wildflower Coordinator and she is already hard at work identifying sites that can be designated as wildflower areas and managed accordingly. But this is not her job alone, we must help her.

The Florida Wildflower Foundation (FWF) is a partner on the team and they are supporting the Panhandle Wildflower Alliance which is a loose network of people who care about wildflowers. There is a page on the FWF website (<http://www.flawildflowers.org/fpwa.php>) where you can report on sites of beauty and/or places of concern. People tell me about how sad they are to see wildflowers cut down on a certain road. I say, tell someone every time you see that, and tell someone ‘Thank you’ too as soon as you see a beautiful area of wildflowers. We must shoulder some responsibility, as each of us can be an important part of the team. Just think, if 50 people a month did this, how much valuable information we would have that is not now available.

Together we have great power to influence the establishment of wildflower areas on our roadsides; let’s exercise that power. I used to see beautiful places on the roadsides and feel helpless to save them. I don’t feel that way anymore because there is both opportunity and access now in place. It takes a team that includes our FDOT Wildflower Coordinator, coordination with county officials, and identification efforts by us all. For example, last week retired FSU botany professor Dr. Loran Anderson and I spent the day riding the state roads of Washington County with Wildflower Coordinator Dustie Moss. We surveyed, photographed, and documented in writing about 20 potential sites for wildflower areas, and now Dustie has that information at her disposal.



It would have been difficult for one person to compile all of this alone, not just because it is a big job, but also because each of us on the team had/has a unique contribution to make to the outcome. And it isn’t just about a list of wildflower sites; it is also about lots of communication and understanding, learning how to work toward a common goal. Together we can mend the connections that each of us have to the natural world as we work together, blending our different strengths. It was a great day working with Dustie Moss and Dr. Anderson. I am looking forward to many great days in the future as more and more of us join the effort to conserve and protect wildflowers for the natural world we all love and depend upon.

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

Roadside Wildflowers and Pollinators

Wakulla Springshed/St Marks Watershed - Lake Lafayette

By Seán E. McGlynn and John Outland

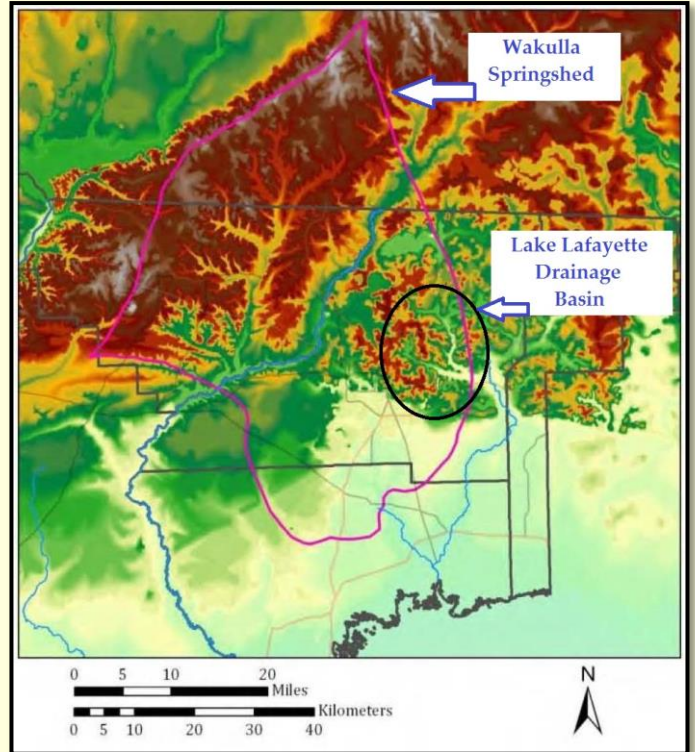
Early maps call Lake Lafayette, Prairie Lake, a name associated with karst lakes that have uniquely fluctuating water levels, from wet to dry due to their direct connection to the aquifer. This a very unusual type of lake defined by the Florida Areas Natural Features Inventory as the most endangered lake type in Florida. Karst, or Disappearing Lakes, host rare and unusual plant and animal species, specific to this extreme and unique habitat.

Today Lake Lafayette does not resemble a prairie at all. It has very little open water and is mostly covered with native cypress trees. Almost all of the cypress trees are less than a hundred years old, indicating that they are recent additions to the ecosystem. Contrary to the relatively young cypress trees, Lake Lafayette is still surrounded by a ring of patriarchal southern live oak trees mostly over 250 years old. They circle the lake at the original high water elevation, as it existed before the relatively recent berms, proving that this was a once whole larger lake. The live oaks are upland trees which sicken and die if their roots are inundated with water for more than a month at a time.

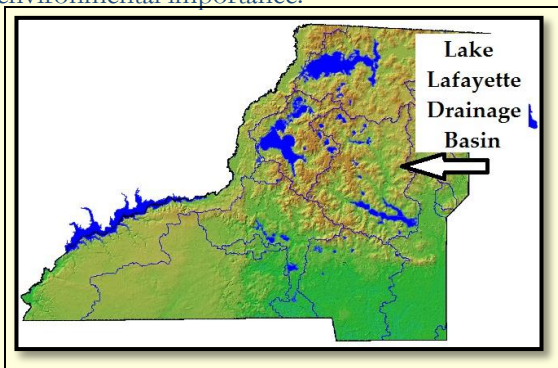
The Lake Lafayette drainage basin has been home to diverse and sophisticated Paleo-American cultures. Lake Lafayette is considered to be an outstanding Paleo-American Historical Site and a remnant coastal Pleistocene delta. Today it contains about ten Paleo-American archaeological sites including an ancient village, Swift Creek, numerous middens and burial mounds.

Lake Lafayette's current name comes from the Marquis de La Fayette (1757-1834), a French aristocrat and military officer, as well as a general in our Revolutionary War. For his service, he was given a Land Grant. He chose a parcel near his friend, Richard Keith Call. President John Quincy Adams signed the deed on July 4, 1825, which included Lake Lafayette and some of what is today Tallahassee. One area is still known as 'Frenchtown' another 'Lafayette Oaks,' and yet another 'Lake Lafayette'. The Marquis never visited Florida; however, by the 1830s several of his friends, including Prince Achille Murat, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, lived there. By 1855 all the land including the Lafayette Township (over 23,000 acres) was sold.

Lake Lafayette is perhaps the best example of a karst lake and yet it is not recognized by most people as a karst system, or even as a lake. This is quite unlike our other well-known Karst Lakes including, Lakes Jackson, Munson, Miccosukee, Bradford, and Iamonia. Misinformation and seclusion make it difficult for this lake to realize its cultural, historical, and environmental importance.



Final Nutrient TMDL Map for the Upper Wakulla River, Douglas Gilbert, FDEP 2012



Watershed Maps-Greg Mauldin, Tallahassee-Leon County GIS

Located east of Tallahassee, Lake Lafayette has a surface area of almost 2,000 acres with a watershed of approximately 51,000 acres, the largest watershed of any lake in Leon County. The lake stretches from near the Florida/Georgia border at Lake McBride in Bradfordville, all the way to Chaires Cross Road where a canal, built back in the mosquito control days, was dug to connect it with the St Marks River. This is a manmade canal and, like the berms, is not a natural feature. Historically, there was no direct connection between Lake Lafayette and the St Marks River. Today, this connector flows both ways depending on where the most

Continued on page 9



rainfall occurs. Much of the Lake Lafayette basin and the St Marks River are classified as Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW), which should have the most comprehensive environmental protection the State of Florida can give.

While the Lafayette drainage basin is in the St Marks drainage basin, this is only for surface flows, and most of the water in Lake Lafayette does not flow to the St Marks. Lake Lafayette is also in the Wakulla Springshed, and the groundwater in Lake Lafayette, seeps or drains through the porous

Left to right: Dan Pennington (1000 Friends of Florida), Jim Stevenson (retired Chief Naturalist of Florida's State Parks), John Outland (retired FDEP Physical Geographer) near a midden mound, a Paleo-American Archaeological site on Lake Lafayette

Photo by Seán E. McGlynn

lake bottom and numerous open sinkholes to the Floridan Aquifer and Wakulla Springs. We are raising money for dye studies to trace that flow. These sinks are significant contributors to groundwater recharge and degradation. The sink in Upper Lake Lafayette is one of the largest sinks in the area with approximately a third of the City of Tallahassee's storm-water disappearing into its depths.

Wakulla Springs is currently the largest single vent spring in the state, and perhaps the world. The recent demise of several rival springs, like Silver Springs, secured Wakulla's position as number one. Water quality at Wakulla Springs is verified impaired for nitrogen (*Final Nutrient TMDL for the Upper Wakulla River, Douglas Gilbert, FDEP, 2012*). The cleanup, costing hundreds of millions of dollars, is underway at the City of Tallahassee Wastewater Sprayfield. These nutrient reductions will help clean Wakulla Springs, but pollution from karst features, like cleaning up the stormwater entering the sinkhole in Lake Lafayette, needs to be addressed to achieve the final nitrogen reduction goals mandated by the TMDL, 0.35 mg/L nitrate at Wakulla Springs.

Unfortunately, the manmade system of ditches, berm and dams separate Lake Lafayette into something reminiscent of a Dutch Polder. Lake Lafayette is an extremely segmented and engineered lake. These manmade impoundments hold the water back, preventing surface flows to the St Marks and enhancing seepage and sinkhole drainage to the Aquifer and Wakulla Springs. No wonder they are having so many dark water days at Wakulla Springs and the fabled glass bottom boats can only run twice a year. Lake Lafayette, with its dark brown tannic stained water (from the cypress trees) is crisscrossed with a multitude of dikes and dams making it resemble the stick pile nests of one of its most endangered inhabitants, the Wood Stork.

Lake Lafayette is fed by streams and ditches that drain a highly urbanized and hydrologically altered watershed. It is fair to say that the lake and its incoming streams and ditches are impaired due to excessive nutrients, sediment and bacteria inputs. Most of the waters are listed on FDEP's list of Impaired Waters, however only one TMDL has been completed, by EPA, the *Final Total Maximum Daily Load For Nutrients in Upper Lake Lafayette, EPA, 03/20/2012*.

Throughout the TMDL process our local and state governments were reluctant to recognize Upper Lake Lafayette as a "lake" or even depict it on a map.

Continued on page 10



Wood Stork

Photo by Nick Baldwin



John Outland with Scarlet Buckeye
Photo by Seán E. McGlynn

Continued from page 9 – Lake Lafayette by Seán E. McGlynn and John Outland

During the Total Maximum Daily Load negotiations, the City claimed the lake was a “wetland,” presumably to avoid having to meet water quality standards for lakes. Fortunately, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ruled that Lafayette is a Class III Recreational Waterbody that must have fishable and swimmable water quality for all people to enjoy.

As a result of the EPA TMDL, the City of Tallahassee is currently constructing a \$6 million alum injection facility with annual maintenance cost estimated at \$60,000 in Weems Pond. While the alum system absorbs pollutants like phosphorus and metals, it does not address the water quality problems of the aquifer and Wakulla Springs which are suffering from excess nitrogen. Alum does not remove the nitrogen, but let’s nitrate pass freely, unmolested into the sinkhole to Wakulla Springs.

Alum treatments are an attempt to improve the water quality in Lake Lafayette, before the water flows directly into its large open sinkhole. This is one of the largest sinkholes in the state. Manmade berms prevent this water from ever reaching the St Marks, except possibly during extreme flood events. Several times this year, the Weems Project has been completely overwhelmed and inundated. The flow overtopped the un-vegetated berms which were washed away. These large flows will flush the used contaminated flocculent alum, with its absorbed pollutants, into the upper lake and down the sinkhole. In addition, alum does not clean up nitrogen or nitrate, the primary pollutant of concern for Wakulla Springs.

Furthermore, the alum floc is particularly toxic to benthic invertebrates, the forage food for our wading birds and fish, and the basis of the aquatic food chain. Alum floc eliminates the biota in aquatic systems where it is allowed to accumulate. Apalachee Audubon has been working with the Pew Charitable Trust on needs of predator populations such as wading birds that are not considered explicitly in managing forage in Florida’s waters. A food supply that the wading birds depend upon is not being protected. The alum treatment seems to be a threat to this already endangered, but necessary, food supply for our wildlife.

Lake Lafayette is home to the Chaires Wood Stork colony. It is the largest colony in north Florida and ranks among the top 5 in Florida. A portion of Lake Lafayette, is designated the L. Kirk Edwards WEA. It was established to protect this endangered wading bird. The colony is located in a forested cypress/tupelo swamp that encircles the quiet, still water of an old sinkhole or karst depression. In addition to Wood Storks, Anhingas, Great Egrets, and Great Blue Herons nest in the colony. The colony is spread over an area of about 4-7 acres. The nests are 35-55 feet up in the trees and the average number of nests per tree is about 4.5. Water depth under the nests averages 16 inches. The karst depression tends to hold water year round and the number of breeding storks ranges from 261 to 341 nests (average 304 nests). The FWC also maintains that the site contains some of the highest number of large wasp nests in any swamp monitored for wading birds in Florida.

Lake Lafayette also has extensive hiking and paddling trail systems. Within the Lafayette Heritage Park is the Cadillac Mountain Bike Trail, 3.79 miles long; the Shared Use Trail is 2.95 miles long; and the Paddling Trail which meanders through the Lake Lafayette basin for about 8 miles and circumnavigates portages over the berms dividing the lake. Another park on the northern section of Lake Lafayette, the Alford Arm, is the Alford Greenway and includes 17.5 miles of additional trails. The Alford Greenway is also part of the 2,000-mile Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail that connects and unifies 515 birding and wildlife viewing sites throughout Florida. These trails connect to the Miccosukee Canopy Road Greenway, another 17 miles of excellent hiking.

So go ahead and pick a sunny day, walk across the new foot bridge on the Lafayette Heritage Trail or visit the Alford Arm Greenway and appreciate the wetlands, lake and its adjacent upland hardwood slope forest.

John Outland is a longtime Leon County resident who lives near and is a "Friend of Lake Lafayette". John is retired after 34 years with FDEP in the Office of Ecosystem Projects working on Everglades restoration projects. Dr. Seán E. McGlynn serves as President of Apalachee Audubon. He is Technical Director, McGlynn Laboratories Inc., and serves as Director Florida Lake Management Society and Board Member of Friends of Wakulla Springs.

Notes from the Audubon Academy 2014

by Carol Franchi, Aubrey Heupel, Pat Press & Adrienne Ruhl



Felts Audubon Preserve

Photo by Adrienne Ruhl

The Audubon Academy 2014 was held at the Dayspring Episcopal Conference Center in Parrish, Florida, near Bradenton from April 11-13th. Among the gorgeous live oaks, floral gardens, and many small marshy ponds the Dayspring Center was a natural place for reflection and learning. Many field trips and nature walks were held during the three days of learning opportunities of “Walking the Walk – Making Conservation Real,” the theme of this Academy.

We stayed at the Retreat House and we enjoyed the camaraderie and sharing of experiences with fellow birders on Friday night at our cabin which was the “hospitality” spot for the conference goers. After dinner there was a presentation by Joan Epstein, a professor at Eckerd College, on bringing the arts and music into our nature programs. Afterwards there was music, a campfire, and s’mores as the evening darkness closed in.

On Saturday we attended an inspirational welcome from Eric Draper, Executive Director of Audubon Florida. One aspect of conservation Draper stressed was the importance of the acquisition of water and land areas to protect bird habitats, especially for our threatened and endangered species. He also highly encouraged the chapters to support Amendment 1 – the Water and Land Conservation Amendment on the November state ballot (*see page 12*).

Saturday’s workshops included learning about apps – applications for iPhones and android devices that will help Audubon members as citizen scientists. Jonathan Webber, from Audubon Florida, explained many apps for finding and identifying, as well as documenting birds and plants. He especially showed us how to use these apps to identify and report invasive species of plants and animals in our areas. This workshop was very informational and useful.

At the same time, Aubrey Heupel learned about the value of repetitive bird walks. This talk emphasized the importance of holding regular trips at one park on a given day to create a sense of routine community.

Meanwhile, Adrienne Ruhl attended a walking workshop on considerations for accepting gifts of land. Leaders from Manatee County Audubon led a tour of Felts Audubon Preserve and explained the local partnerships required to accept such a donation. The work they have done in over ten years shows in the land management, walking trails, butterfly garden, and stunning bird viewing blind with custom cut outs to allow photographers an unobstructed view of birds at the feeders. Painted Buntings, Indigo Buntings, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Palm Warblers were all active at the feeders. The lake area featured a solitary Pied-billed Grebe and there were flyovers of both calling Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and Monk Parakeets. Overall it was a very productive morning for all of the workshops.

We then heard from Ken LaRoe, CEO & President of First Green Bank based in Mount Dora, FL which gives low interest loans and supports “energy star” and “green” projects and acquisitions. They are a value-based business that emphasizes doing the right thing for the environment, people, community and stakeholders. Since they opened in 2009, the bank has not only been successful financially, but has also shown people the best way to do business is by being financially, environmentally, and socially responsible.

After dinner we were all entranced by the presentation of Steve Traxler, Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He gave astonishing documentation on his PowerPoint of the evidence

Continued on page 12

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Audubon Academy 2014

Photo courtesy of the Audubon Academy

On Sunday, before packing up and heading home, Audubon Florida intern Cole Zelznak, based out of the Tallahassee office, gave an insightful presentation of the survey results from his project over the previous year. Cole surveyed 175 Audubon volunteers to collect information on volunteer attitudes, experiences, demographics, and communication preferences. The results found that 78% of volunteers were 56 years old or older and about the same percentage had received an advanced education (bachelor's degrees or higher). Over half had 10 or more years' experience as a conservation volunteer. As for communication preferences, over 75% preferred to be contacted by email versus telephone, newsletters or social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

The 2014 Audubon Academy was a great chance to meet fellow Audubon members and leaders and learn about various projects, discuss successes and lessons learned. Each chapter has a different strength and it was especially good to be exposed to new ideas to ignite chapters as a conservation force to protect wildlife and habitat. Staying united gives us all.

*Continued from page 11 – Audubon Academy 2014
by Carol Franchi, Aubrey Heupel, Pat Press &
Adrienne Ruhl*

concerning climate change in Florida and the Southeastern US. Traxler spoke about the loss of species and coastlines disappearing in the near future (2050). He informed us that the scientific projections of loss of coastlines have advanced far faster than scientists had earlier predicted. Traxler gave a dismal outlook for how these changes could affect humans, animals (Florida panthers), and birds on the lands on which we all live. He underscored the need for habitat conservation now to stop the devastation of climate change.

Florida's Water and Land Conservation Amendment

**VOTE
YES ON 1**

NOVEMBER 4, 2014

www.VoteYesOn1FL.org

FL ballot only. Funded for and sponsored by Florida's Water and Land Legacy, Inc., 1750 N. Monroe St., Ste. 111-096, Tallahassee, FL 32309

Florida's Water & Land Conservation Amendment Continues Momentum

The Water and Land Conservation Amendment will protect our drinking water and preserve the water quality of our rivers, lakes, springs, and coastal waters for future generations — with no tax increase. You made it happen by signing petitions to get this important amendment on the November ballot.

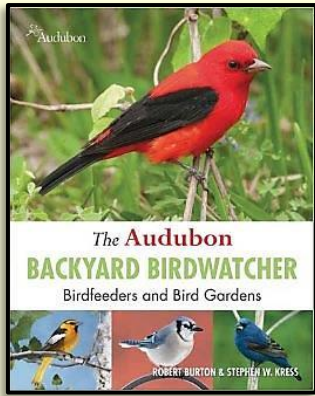
- **Clean water:** Our clean drinking water depends on healthy rivers, springs, and wetlands. By voting "yes" on Amendment 1, we can keep pollution out of our waters and protect our drinking water sources as well as waters where we swim, paddle, fish, surf and play in.
- **Future generations:** Our environment is fundamental to the future of Florida. We must protect Florida's water quality, natural areas, beaches, and wildlife so that future generations can enjoy them the same way we do.
- **No new tax, No tax increase:** Amendment 1 will not increase taxes now or in the future. The Amendment allocates funds from an existing source that historically has been used to protect water, natural areas and wildlife.

How can you help?

- Show your support – [endorse the campaign](#), [like them on Facebook](#) and [follow them on Twitter!](#)
- Talk about the campaign - share Facebook posts, retweet tweets, talk about the campaign to friends and family, in addition to person-to-person contact at events and meetings.
- [Sign up to volunteer!](#)



**FLORIDA'S
Water & Land Legacy**



Sharing Books for Fun and Pleasure A Book to Delight All Bird Lovers

By Pat Press, Audubon Educator



I recently picked up *The Audubon Backyard Birdwatchers: Birdfeeders and Bird Gardens* (2000) written by Robert Burton and Stephen W. Kress published by Thunder Bay Press in California. I was immediately drawn in and spent several readings finding my way through the beautifully presented photos, diagrams and informational text. This hand-book is one of the most valuable resources for bird lovers I have found.

Stephen Kress gives a wonderful invitation in his forward to all gardeners to investigate this guide “to the identification, feeding, and observation of backyard birds.” It also shows “how birds fly, communicate, nest and migrate.” Kress suggests that our gardening is a way of sharing “an irreplaceable treasure whose songs, colors, and vibrant energy enrich our human experience.”

This gorgeous guide is divided into chapters on birds in our yards, how to attract birds, bird profiles and behaviors, bird migration, and bird survival. The second half of the guide discusses “bird gardens” and is introduced by Roger Tory Peterson, who encourages gardeners to use this book “to find the secrets of creating backyard habitats that meet all needs of wild birds – food, water supply, cover and nesting places.

The second half of the guide is further divided into four geographic areas of the country and gives specific details and suggestions for landscaping and designing habitats for your specific region. Detailed pictures, and descriptions of plants right for each geographical area are delightfully depicted. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves birding, gardening, and wildlife habitat construction and preservation.

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.



We Need Your Help

Tracking Down the History of Apalachee Audubon By Harvey Goldman, Karen Wensing and Suzanna MacIntosh



Next year we will celebrate the 35th anniversary of the incorporation of the Apalachee Audubon Society! With this event in mind we are trying to track down some of the early history of our great chapter to compile for our current records and for posterity. We have many of our recent newsletters archived on the AAS website, but we are missing all of the issues before 1995 and a few of the newer issues too. Can you help out? If you have any copies of these early newsletters, we would like to scan them to add to the archived list. We are also looking for any memories or memorabilia you can share. Please let one of us know if you can help with any of this by giving one of us a call or emailing Aasnewsletter2011-audubon@yahoo.com. Thank you for your help!

Winter Hummingbirds By Fred Dietrich



Well, another winter hummingbird season has come to an end and for the third year in a row we have had a great year.

You can see all of our season updates at our [Hummingbirdresearch.net](http://www.hummingbirdresearch.net) web site:
<http://www.hummingbirdresearch.net/p54.html>

Enjoy your summer and I hope to hear from you in the fall.

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You Can Help Beach Nesting Birds!

By Bonnie Samuelsen



Wilson's Plover Photo by Nick Baldwin

During the spring and summer, Gulf Coast beaches come alive with nesting seabirds and shorebirds. Snowy Plovers, Wilson's Plovers, Black Skimmers, American Oystercatchers and Least Terns lay their eggs on top of the sand and raise their young on our local beaches.

These birds lay their eggs in slight depressions in the sand (called "scrapes") and the well-camouflaged eggs and chicks are very difficult to see. When beachgoers flush parents off their nests, eggs and chicks are left vulnerable to careless footsteps or tires, predation, and the elements. Florida's summer sun can kill unprotected eggs in minutes.

To help Florida's beach-nesting birds nest safely and successfully, Audubon and their partners place symbolic fencing around nesting areas and place volunteer bird stewards at nesting areas. Volunteers chaperon these posted areas on busy warm-weather weekends to educate beachgoers about the birds and the reason for the posted areas. Research has found beachgoers are nine times more likely to respect posted areas when stewards are present. Learn more about state-wide efforts at www.flshorebirdalliance.org or Coastal Conservation at <http://fl.audubon.org>.

Bonnie first discovered beach nesting birds over 15 years ago and became actively involved in 2005 with statewide efforts. She was an early member of the Suncoast Shorebird Partnership that ultimately grew into FWC's Florida Shorebird Alliance. Bonnie is the Project Manager for Audubon Florida's Coastal Bird Stewardship Program in the Panhandle.



Wilson's Plover & Nest Photos by Nick Baldwin



Foraging in a wetland system, an adult Sandhill Crane prepares to feed its chick. Photo by Budd Titlow

Please consider a donation of \$25, \$50, \$100 or the amount of your choice to this important fundraiser. Make your check payable to *Apalachee Audubon Society* and mail to: Apalachee Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1237, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1237.

Thank You for Sponsoring Birdathon!

Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc. is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization; all contributions are tax-deductible as allowable by law.

Birdathon 2014

Each year teams hit the road 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 help Apalachee Audubon throughout the year fulfill Audubon's mission. Every dollar you give stays in the community to support environmental education and wildlife habitat.

~ Activities and Events ~



Apalachee Audubon May Birding Field Trips By Helen King

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! Happy Birding!

Saturday, May 10: Lake Lafayette Heritage Park: Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 a.m. We will walk to the newly erected canopy bridge that crosses the railroad tracks to the Alford Greenway, hoping to get some tree action. There is no need to notify me if you plan to attend. Be there.

Thursday, May 22: Bear Creek Environmental Center*: We will visit Bear Creek Environmental Center on foot on Thursday, May 22. Meet at the Pilot gas station at the intersection of I-10 and West US 90 at 7 a.m. There are approximately 2 miles of walking a ravine. Please email me at thekingsom@gmail.com if you plan to attend. Please indicate if you are a willing driver. The riding fee will be \$5. We will return by lunch time.
(*Updated)



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

Below are a few of the great activities coming up at Birdsong Nature Center in May and June.

May 17 - Birdsong History: The Dickey Plantation Era

May 31 - Learning Birdsong's Trails

June 14 - Take a Child Outdoors and Get Wet and Muddy!

June 21 - Dragonflies 101

For more information about these and many other great activities, please see www.birdsongnaturecenter.org, call 229 377-4408 or 800-953-BIRD (2473) or see [Birdsong's Facebook Page](#).



St. Francis Wildlife Association



Mr. Lucky
Photo by
Nick Baldwin

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

St. Francis Wildlife

5580 Salem Road, Quincy, FL 32352

850 627-4151

www.stfranciswildlife.org

Email: sandybeck@stfranciswildlife.org



Lost Creek Forest Walking Tours - *Lost Creek Forest is an old growth hardwood slope forest near Thomasville, GA. It features massive white oak, swamp chestnut oak, beech, and spruce pine with beautiful mature forest and wetland ecosystems. For more information, go to www.lostcreekforest.org. To sign up for walks, please go to www.lostcreekforest.eventbrite.com. There is no charge for the walks. If you would like to schedule a special trip for your group or club, please contact us at Lostcreekforest@gmail.com. In May walks are scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 4-5:30 pm; Friday, May 16, 4-5:30 pm; Sunday, May 18, 3-4:30 pm; Tuesday, May 20, 10-11:30 am; Saturday, May 24, 10-11:30 am and 1-2:30 pm.*



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Monday-Saturday, 8am-6pm, 850-386-8882

Please see www.nativenurseries.com for more great workshops and information!



Children's Garden Workshop: Hands-on Butterfly Gardening

Saturday, May 24th - 10am \$8.00 + tax per container

Call 386-8882 to register; class size limited

We will teach the children, with your help, to create a container garden in a 3-gallon nursery container with nectar and larval food plants that attract butterflies. Siblings can work together.

GROW YOUR OWN BOUQUET WITH LIZ MARSHALL

Thursday, June 26th - noon - Free

Create arrangements with flowers from your own back yard. Liz will teach you some easy techniques, demonstrate some cool vases and flower frogs and let you in on the secret of how to make your cut flowers stay beautiful longer. She'll also tell you which flowers are best for cutting.

Wakulla Springs State Park

www.WakullaSprings.org



Run for Wakulla Springs

Saturday, May 17

One Mile Fun Run at 8 am

5K Run at 8:30 am

Experience the primal beauty of the old growth southern forest as you run through the sanctuary at Wakulla Springs State Park. Special arrangements have been made to open this rarely accessed area for this event. For registration and fee information, visit www.WakullaSprings.org



Early Boat Tour

Saturday, June 7 at 8:00 am

Enjoy an early morning sights and sounds tour as you float along the peaceful Wakulla River. The journey can be full of surprises at this magical time of day. Don't forget to bring your camera!

\$10 per Adult, \$7 per Child

Please call 561-7286 for reservations.



Morning Nature Walk

Saturday, June 14, 2014

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Join this ranger-led trek through Wakulla Springs' varying forest communities. Enjoy the habitat before the heat of the day sets in. The habitat beckons. The perfume of the magnolia blossoms may still linger in the air. Let your guide make the most of your visit as he points out nature's nuances and tidbits of park history. 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.



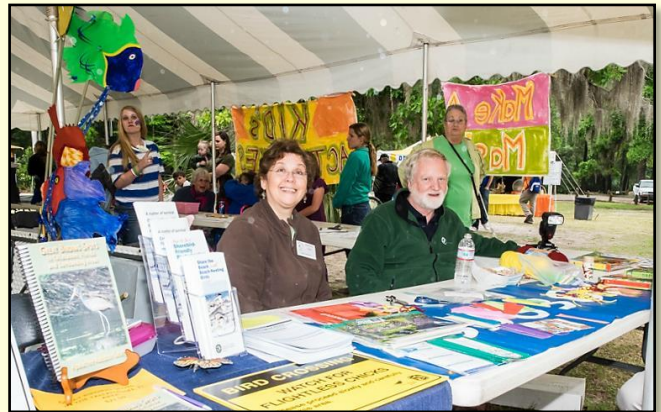
Wakulla Wildlife Festival

Apalachee Audubon members helped with the Wakulla Wildlife Festival on April 19th. Thanks to everyone for coming out and making this another great Wakulla Wildlife Festival!



Left to right: Apalachee Audubon Board Members Pat Press, Carol Franchi, and President-Elect, Adrienne Ruhl

Photo by Nick Baldwin



Left to right: Apalachee Audubon Board Past-President Kathleen Carr and Board Member Budd Titlow

Photo by Nick Baldwin

