

APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY



Speaker Series

Free and open to the public.

Social begins at 7 pm & meeting at 7:30 pm (unless otherwise noted).

Speaker Series programs are held at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2810 N. Meridian Rd., Tallahassee.

Directions and more information:

www.apalachee.org.

2015-2016 Program Dates

2015	2016
September 24	January 28
October 22	February 25
November 19*	March 24
*3 rd Thursday	April 28
None in December	May 26

Inside This Issue

President's Message	3
Officers & Directors	2
Birdsong Plant Sale	5
Wakulla Wildlife Festival	6
Saving Wakulla Springs Tour	9
Swallow-tailed Kites	10
Birdathon	11
Chipola Feather Fest II	12
Yards Tour Thank You!	13
In the Yard	16
Landscape for Life	17
AAS Field Trips	21
Book Reviews	22
Go Green for God Article	23
Camp TALON Essay Contest	25
Shorebird Stewards	26
Events & Activities	27

Apalachee Audubon Society Mission Statement:
Protection of the environment through education, appreciation, and conservation.

NEWSLETTER OF THE APALACHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. MARCH-APRIL 2016

Old-Timey Plant Sale
Saturday, March 19, 2016
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Birdsong Nature Center Thomasville, GA 31792
www.birdsongnaturecenter.org
2106 Meridian Road
Thomasville, GA 31792

March Speaker Series Program ~ Thursday, March 24, 2016

“The Voice of Wakulla Springs”

Don Gavin, Wakulla Springs Tour Boat Operator

Social from 7 – 7:30 pm with program following

Birdathon

Apalachee Audubon Chapter Fundraiser in April

Great Birding and Wildlife Trail's
Chipola Feather Fest II
Jackson County, Florida
April 15-18, 2016

<http://floridabirdingtrail.com/events/>

Wakulla Wildlife Festival

“GO NATIVE!”

Saturday, April 16, 2016

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Wakulla Springs State Park

465 Wakulla Park Drive
Wakulla Springs, FL 32327

April Speaker Series Program ~ Thursday, April 28, 2016

“Swallow-tailed Kites”

Dr. Ken Meyer, Avian Research and Conservation Institute

www.arcinst.org

Social from 7 – 7:30 pm with program following

Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.
2015 – 2016
Officers & Directors

President: Seán McGlynn
Vice-President: Budd Titlow
Secretary: Donna Legare
Treasurer: Harvey Goldman

Directors:

Lilly Anderson-Messec	John Outland
Nick Baldwin	Adrienne Ruhl,
Kathleen Carr	<i>Past-President</i>
Jim Cox	Karen Willes
Ben Fusaro	Rob Williams

Parliamentarian: Ben Fusaro

AAS Logo Design: Charlotte Forehand

Newsletter Editor: Karen Willes
Editor e-mail: EditorApAudubon@aol.com

Web Administrator: Kathleen Carr
850 322-7910

Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 1237
Tallahassee, FL. 32302-1237

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

This newsletter is published by the Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc. ©2016 Apalachee Audubon Society, Inc.

2015-2016 Committee Chairs

Audubon Adventures
Judy Goldman

Awards Committee
Nick Baldwin

Birdathon
Harvey Goldman

Bylaws Committee
Ben Fusaro

Coastal Cleanup
Harvey Goldman

Conservation Committee
Rob Williams

Education Committee Chairs
Carol Franchi & Pat Press

Field Trips
Helen King

History Committee
Suzanna MacIntosh & Karen Wensing

Hospitality
TBA

Membership
Kathleen Carr & Karen Willes

Nominating Committee
John Outland

Program Committee
Suzanna MacIntosh

Publications and Publicity Committee (2 sections)
Newsletter & Publications: Karen Willes & Suzanna MacIntosh
Media Liaisons: Kathleen Carr & Karen Willes

St. Marks NWR AAS Monarch Pollinator Garden
Ann Bruce

Webmaster
Kathleen Carr

Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour Committee
Tammy Brown & Ann Bruce

The Apalachee Audubon Society is established as a nonprofit corporation for the purposes of environmental education, the appreciation of wildlife and natural history, and the conservation of the environment and resources.

You can sign up to receive free the Apalachee Audubon Society newsletter and announcements of coming field trips, activities and events by joining our Google Groups email notification list at: <http://www.apalachee.org/aas/about/aas-mailing-list/>. For more, see www.apalachee.org.

Editorial Note from Karen Willes ~ This March/April 2016 edition contains articles which focus on the upcoming programs for Apalachee Audubon Society & Wakulla Springs State Park. The newsletter articles include Birdsong Old-Timey Plant Sale, March Speaker Series ~ Wakulla Springs with Legendary Tour Guide Don Gavin, Saving Wakulla Springs Overland Tour, Wakulla Wildlife Festival, AAS Birdathon, Chipola Feather Fest II, & April Special Series Speaker on Swallow-tailed Kites, Dr. Ken Meyer. In addition, there are landscape articles, book reviews, birding opportunities, and information about many other activities in our area. Thanks to all who provided copy — those who wrote articles and provided photographs. I hope you will find the newsletter interesting, informative, and worthy of sharing with others.

President's Message

Seán E. McGlynn, Ph.D.



Dr. Seán E. McGlynn

Photo by Nick Baldwin



Velvet Ant Wasp

Photo Credit ~ Karen Willes

It is my pleasure to be your Apalachee Audubon president during this tumultuous El Nino winter. The unpredictable storms have unleashed bountiful rainfall for the benefit of our wings and springs. In order to help promote a more Bird Friendly Community we bring you the best programs, the most engaging newsletters, intriguing birding trips and outreaches all tailored to the Florida Panhandle replete with local flavors and tastes. We had wonderful programs in January with Joe Duff of Operation Migration and in February with Dr. Josh Campbell from the University of Florida Department of Entomology. We have two more wonderful programs this year plus our Annual Banquet in May. The banquet on May 26 at Lafayette Presbyterian Church will be all about Wildflower Corridors, with Eleanor

Dietrich and Jeff Castor who have promoted and established wildflowers throughout Florida, which are not lonely scenic, but provide prime bird habitat. In addition, awards for recognition of environmental achievements will be presented at the banquet.

Our March Program, The Voice of Wakulla Springs, will be all about one of the the most significant wildlife features of our area. The area has been inhabited by humans for the past 10,000 years, and yet it continues to contain some of the best wildlife habitat on Earth. Wakulla Springs has remained remarkably unchanged over the millennia. Yet it is now experiencing its greatest threat. Nutrient enrichment has imbalanced its biological integrity. Tannic surface water clouds it in dark water days. Aquatic algae tint it green on clear water days. The excessive pump-out of water in the springshed has started a water war between our two biggest springs, Wakulla Spring and Spring Creek. When Spring Creek wins the Wakulla is clear and slightly greenish. When Spring Creek loses the Wakulla turns dark brown. The cleanup has already cost 300 million dollars. It has reduced the pollutant load by almost 50% and the goal is an additional 10% reduction. However, all this restoration work has had little effect on the water clarity.



West Indian Manatees in Wakulla Spring

Photo Credit ~ Nick Baldwin

For our March program meeting, we are bringing to you the 'Voice of Wakulla Springs.' Don Gavin, a legendary tour boat captain who embodies the living history, is retiring. This might be one of your last chances to hear the legend in person. Don and other members of his family have led tours on the Wakulla for almost a century. Over the last 40 years they have



Limpkin

Photo Credit ~ Betsy Kellenberger

witnessed the visibility in the water getting worse until it became impossible to see the springs from the glass bottom in the boats. The iconic glass bottom boats have sat idle for decades, rusting and rotting, but now one has been restored. That glass bottom boat is called the Henry, named after a pole vaulting fish, no longer visible. Jim Dunbar, a distinguished archaeologist, an expert on Wakulla Springs, is leading the Glass Bottom tours in this new cruise, called 'Walking with Mastodons.' It will be inaugurated at the Wakulla Wildlife Festival. It stays to the shallows, where the bottom is still visible, and where once the mighty mastodon walked.

Don Gavin will relate his lifetime at Wakulla Springs, the adventure, achievements and changes he has seen, and he will relate it in the style of a story teller and frame it in his famous and indigenous, endangered African American Vernacular English (AAVE) dialect (also called Gullah or Geechee), a creole dialect spoken only by African-American populations living in parts of the Caribbean and scattered along the coast in South Carolina, Georgia and northeast Florida. This program will take place on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2810 North Meridian Road in Tallahassee.

Our AAS April program will discuss the trials and tribulations of migratory birds. They face great obstacles from climate change and the associated shifting of habitat and food sources. Dr. Ken Meyer, our speaker, is founder and Director of the Avian Research and Conservation Institute. The institute uses satellite telemetry to chart the 10,000-mile round-trip migration of U.S Swallow-tailed Kites and to identify impacts on survival and reproduction. Join us on Thursday, April 28, 2016 at the Unitarian Universalist Church as we learn about and discuss experiences, management, and conservation of Swallow-tailed Kites and other rare birds.

Don Gavin will relate his lifetime at Wakulla Springs, the adventure, achievements and



Prothonotary Warbler

Photo Credit ~ Betsy Kellenberger



Anhinga

Photo Credit ~ Betsy Kellenberger

It's Time to Get Ready for Spring!
Birdsong Nature Center's Old-Timey Plant Sale
Saturday, March 19, 2016
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM



Native Azaleas

Photo Credit ~ Fran Rutkovsky

Old roses, shrubs, and trees especially suited to our area will be available with profits going to benefit the nature center. Many of the plants are donated pass-along plants that have been shared by friends and families for generations. Many more are native plants, beautiful to look at and of enormous benefit to wildlife. Herbs and heirloom tomatoes will also be for sale. Knowledgeable and friendly gardeners and horticulturists will be volunteering to help you make a selection for your garden. Lunch will be for sale, or bring your own picnic to enjoy. Please bring a wagon for carrying plants. If you don't have one, come anyway. We will have some for you to use.

For more information and directions, see www.birdsongnaturecenter.org and Facebook or call 229-377-4408 or 800-953-BIRD(2473).

Birdsong Nature Center
2106 Meridian Road
Thomasville, Georgia
229-377-4408 or 800-953-BIRD (2473)
www.birdsonnaturecenter.org



Birdsong Nature Center's Old-Timey Plant Sale

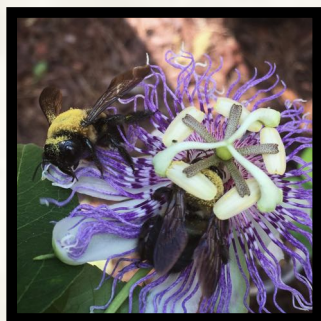
Photo Credit ~ Fran Rutkovsky

2016 Wakulla Wildlife Festival

“GO NATIVE!”

By Jeff Hugo

The annual Wakulla Wildlife Festival will be held Saturday, April 16, 2016 at Wakulla Springs State Park. The festival is a celebration of the area’s wildlife and is intended to be especially inviting for children and the child in everyone. Local music, a Student Art Show (Aspiring Artists), children's activities, outdoor and wildlife exhibitors, and wildlife tours in a neighborhood family atmosphere make the festival an area favorite.



Bumblebee on Passionvine

Photo Credit ~ Lilly Anderson-Messec

The 2016 Wakulla Wildlife Festival theme is “GO NATIVE!” Pollinators across the country are under duress. Honey bee colony winter losses have been averaging almost 30% over the last 8 years. Monarch butterfly populations have decreased by as much as 90% over historic levels. One out of every 3 mouthfuls of food we eat is thanks to pollinators. We all have an interest in securing the well-being of pollinators.



Monarch Butterfly

Photo Credit ~ Karen Willes

It is amazing how little it takes and how significant even the smallest effort can be.

With the help of the Magnolia and Sarracenia Chapters of the Florida Native Plant Society and the Hairstreak Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, the 2016 Wakulla Wildlife Festival is hoping to enlist and empower festival goers to be positive forces toward improving pollinator populations. We hope that you will enjoy the presentations, activities, art, food, and music arranged to inspire and engage your participation. Together, let’s GO NATIVE!

Every festival guest will want to be certain to visit the three sites within the park (the Lodge at Wakulla Springs, the Dogwood Pavilion, and the Green) which will host entertainment and presentations. There will also be tours available for additional fees.

The Lodge at Wakulla Springs is complete with 27 guest rooms, a fine dining restaurant, soda fountain and gift shop. It is the centerpiece of the Wakulla Springs Historic District. Its Mediterranean Revival Architecture combined with its remaining Art Deco appointments make it a monument to the art and craftsmanship of the mid-1930's. It is fitting that it will serve as the site where visitors can examine award-winning art by Wakulla County students and Sammy Tedder's mesmerizing journey *Local Waters through the Seasons*.

A small beige building, the Dogwood Pavilion, is nestled behind the restrooms and just up the hill from the Waterfront Visitors Center. It will host photo-naturalist Bill Boothe

as he motivates guests to provide for pollinators. Award-winning author Craig Huegel's dynamic presentation will inspire participants with native landscaping ideas after which educator and honey bee enthusiast Sherri Kraeft will unravel the magic of honey bees.

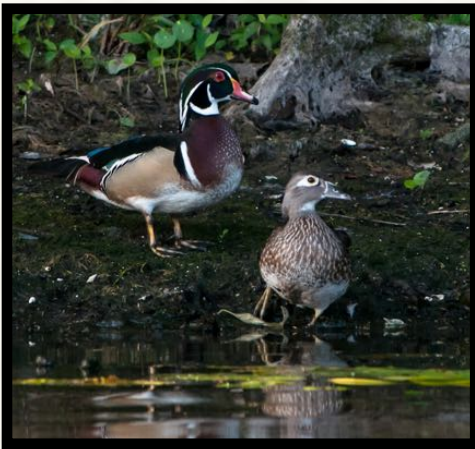
The heart of the festival, the Green, is the site for friendly and knowledgeable exhibitors, children's activities, bluegrass music, and bird of prey presentations courtesy of St. Francis Wildlife Association. Bird Banding can be witnessed behind the Concession Building (Restroom location).

The festival has premium guided tours available for an extra fee. Interested parties can go to www.wakullawildlifefestival.com to register for any of the seven special tours offered on Saturday, April 16.



Wakulla Springs Boat Tour

Photo Credit ~ Nick Baldwin



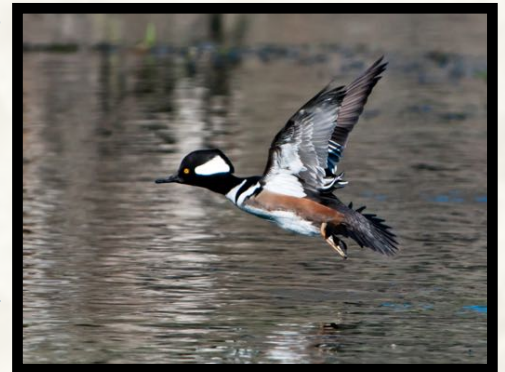
Male & Female Wood Ducks

Photo Credit ~ Nick Baldwin

Two of the tours, the *Sunrise Serenity Cruise* and the *Nature Photography Boat Tour* are designed with the photographer in mind to take advantage of the skills and abilities of the festival's special tour hosts, the river's cooperative wildlife, and a dedicated leisurely pace.

Two other tours, *Walking with Mastodons* and *Walking with Mastodons Revisited*, invite participants aboard the *Henry* to float over the spring with Dr. James S. Dunbar as he explains what life might have been like at Wakulla Springs ten to twenty thousand years ago. The combination of Dr. Dunbar's expertise, the signature location of the presentation, and his unique props, make these tours a not-to-miss opportunity.

The three remaining tours offer a rare birding trek within the park and demonstrate how easy it is to beautifully landscape your own home to encourage the presence of birds, butterflies and other pollinators. The *River Road Neo-Tropical Birding Tour* penetrates the normally off-limits park sanctuary to search for some of our more colorful migratory songbirds. *Butterfly Gardening 101* shows how easy it is to use flowering and larval food plants to color and liven up your yard or patio. Finally, Master Gardener and Park Ranger Charlie Baisden demonstrates firsthand how he has transformed areas of the park that were barren wasteland into green oases. His program is titled *Native Landscaping at Wakulla Springs*.



Male Hooded Merganser

Photo Credit ~ Nick Baldwin

Space on each of the above tours is limited. If interested, please go online

(www.wakullawildlifefestival.com) to register to avoid disappointment or the call the park at 850-561-7286 for assistance.

Tickets for the world-class wildlife viewing River Boat Tours may be purchased at the Waterfront Visitors Center. The Waterfront Visitors Center is the embarkation point for tens of thousands of park visitors each year as they enjoy the park's abundant and accommodating wildlife along the Wakulla River. The boat tours will begin at 9:40am and conclude with the last boat departing at 5:00pm.

Festival Headquarters is located in the middle of the Green under a tent. Answers to questions, directions, and first aid can be found there. Any remaining seats on a premium guided tour may be purchased there as well.

A \$6.00 per vehicle (2-8 people per vehicle) park entrance fee provides access to the Wakulla Wildlife Festival as well as the many park features. Picnic, swim, hike, visit the historic lodge, take a river boat tour, and of course...enjoy the festival!



Least Bittern

Photo Credit ~ Karen Willes

Great Egrets

Photo Credit ~ Nick Baldwin

Common Gallinule

Photo Credit ~ Tara Tanaka

Little Blue Heron

Photo Credit ~ Tara Tanaka

White Ibis

Photo Credit ~ Karen Willes

Wood Ducks

Photo Credit ~ Nick Baldwin

Saving Wakulla Springs Overland Tour

March 19, April 16, May 21

By Jim Stevenson

Wakulla Spring, the “Capital” spring, is one of Florida’s largest springs and one of the largest in the world. It also has one of the longest and deepest underwater cave systems in the world. The property was developed and managed as a private park for 50 years by Florida king-maker Ed Ball. The state of Florida purchased the spring in 1986 and established the state park that has attracted 5 million visitors since then.

The spring and river have been one of Florida’s outstanding wildlife observation areas for decades with the limpkin, alligator, otter and manatee being featured species. Unfortunately human activities in the 1300 square mile springshed have altered the ecology of the spring and river causing an ecological collapse. The freshwater fish are gone. Manatee, moorhen and wood duck have declined and the limpkin and its food the apple snail have disappeared. The water is too dark for glass bottom boat tours and algae and hydrilla have smothered the native eelgrass.



Overlooking Wakulla Spring

Photo Credit ~ Cynthia Paulson

The Wakulla Spring Basin Working Group was active for 18 years striving to stop the degradation and restore the spring to its former health. There have been many accomplishments during that period. When DEP eliminated the working group in 2011 there were 20 scientific projects being conducted by six agencies to further our understanding of this remarkable spring system. The world’s foremost team of cave divers (WKPP) have explored and mapped 32 miles of this immense cave system which extends into Leon County.



Emerald Sink

Photo Credit ~ Cynthia Paulson

There is hope. The progress made to date would not have been possible without the support of the Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park (www.wakullasprings.org), the Wakulla Springs Alliance (www.wakullaspringsalliance.org), the Florida Wildlife Federation (www.fwfonline.org), 1000 Friends of Florida (www.1000fof.org) and former Attorney General Charlie Crist. The Tallahassee Democrat has been very supportive and enabled many citizens to give their voice to this important undertaking.

The overland tour begins in Tallahassee at an elevation of 200 feet and follows the water on its journey across and under the landscape to five feet above sea level at Wakulla Spring. We make 9 stops along the 15 miles to observe lakes, sinkholes, swallets and springs. We discuss the action that is needed to restore the spring and the steps that each of us can take to make a difference. During this four hour tour, you will learn the values of this magnificent spring, the threats to those values and the solutions to overcome the threats.

Although our purpose is to educate local residents about the spring, we have been pleased to have guests from Sweden, Finland, Indonesia and the states of Georgia, Wisconsin and Ohio join us. We look forward to taking you on this journey.

See www.palmettoexpeditions.com for additional information and registration.

Swallow-tailed Kites

By Jim Cox

The early migrants will soon be with us. Step outside one morning over the next few weeks and you'll be greeted by the sound of a Purple Martin, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush, or Great Crested Flycatcher as these birds return to our area from their winter sojourns.

I note these early migrants with a brief pause in my step – a quick, simple mental tick acknowledging the progression of Spring. However, there's one early migrant that invariably causes me to stop dead in my tracks and linger as long as possible in the passing moment.

The gorgeous American Swallow-tailed Kite also arrives in early March in our area and continues to spill across north Florida throughout April. It's one early migrant that you're more likely to see than hear—and it makes a Spring encounter much more captivating as a result. The sight of that large, graceful, thin-winged, black-and-white body moving above like no other bird -- gliding not flapping, ascending rapidly on the wind with a slight tilt of its wings only to turn and freeze as if suspended by string.



Swallow-tailed Kite with Wasp's Nest

Photo Credit ~ Tara Tanaka

Florida supports the largest population of these elegant birds in North America, but that may not be a cause for celebration. The kite faces numerous challenges, and Dr. Ken Meyer, our program speaker in April, has a firm finger on the pulse of this bird's declining health. It would be inappropriate to delve too much into all the great information Ken has generated over the years; instead we hope you will come and enjoy Ken's presentation. Here are some true/false statements that you'll be able to answer after attending our program on April 28 on one of our most notable early migrants, the Swallow-tailed Kite.

The dark, black color of Swallow-tailed Kites provides protection from night-time predators.

Kites live primarily by feeding on squirrels, mice, and other small mammals.

Most of our kites funnel through a single pass high in the Andes to reach their wintering grounds in South America.

Our kites also fly around the Gulf of Mexico during migration to avoid a long, potentially treacherous flight over open water.

Kites fly with strong wing beats that enable them to move quickly into on-coming winds.

Fall migration is a huge social affair for kites where they aggregate in the thousands in some areas.

Kites like to nest in ancient live oaks because the dense branching provides better cover.

Kites are a declining, endangered species formally recognized by state and federal governments.

Kites mate while flying.

Kites rarely eat their prey on the wing.

BIRDATHON IS COMING!

This winter's warmth and early azalea blooms remind us that spring is around the corner. The advent of spring migration means BIRDATHON time. PLAN AHEAD, line up your Birdathon team and pick a date during April to see as many bird species as the team can see in a 24-hour period, in our annual fund-raising contest. You don't have to be a talented birder; just get one on your team! It's a great birding experience and way to make birding friends.

This important fun and fund raiser helps AAS provide Audubon Adventures to local schools and also helps raise the funds needed to sponsor a local middle school student in a fantastic summer birding program known as Camp Talon. These are just two of the many important goals of Birdathon which helps us fulfill Apalachee Audubon's mission. We need your help to make this another successful year! If you'd like to help with a team, please contact Judy Goldman at (850) 385-5222.



Team Mellow Yellowlegs

Photo Credits ~ Top left — Fran Rutkovsky

Top right — Rob Williams

Bottom — Paul Rutkovsky

Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail's Chipola Feather Fest II

By Andy Wraithmell



Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Photo Credit ~ Karen Willes

Join us from April 15 thru April 18, 2016. Based in Jackson County, Florida, this event features great looks at Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and Bachman's Sparrows at Post Office Bay in the Apalachicola National Forest. Got hummers on the brain? Come hear hummingbird expert Fred Bassett speak about his experiences banding hummingbirds in Florida and beyond. Venture out to Apalachee Wildlife Management Area on a night drive listening for Chuck-will's-widows and bellowing alligators! We tallied 73 species on our Lake Seminole Hotspots field trip last year including nesting Cliff Swallows. DON'T MISS THAT TRIP! Workshops will be held at Chipola College and will feature butterfly id, birder's guide to birding, herps of Florida, and wintering warblers of Miami. Our final field trip is an all-day affair to St. George Island in search of colorful songbirds fresh in from their overnight gulf crossing.

Join Andy & Julie Wraithmell, Whitney Gray, Paul Wharton, Dean and Sally Jue, Morgan and Matt Keel, Carlos Sanchez, Jason Guerard, Michelle Cousin, Marianne Korosy, Brad and Brook Rohman, John Valenta, Donna Legare, Billy Bailey, and Tom Ostertag.

Chipola Feather Fest is brought to you by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Jackson County Tourist Development Council, Chipola College and the Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida. In cooperation with the Jim Woodruff Powerhouse & Dam, Florida Park Service, Jackson County Parks and Recreation, and the National Forest Service.

Visit our website for more information or call festival coordinator Andy Wraithmell at 850-488-9453.

<http://floridabirdingtrail.com/events/>

Registration website: <http://www.cvent.com/events/chipola-feather-fest-2016/event-summary-9e79c9d9cc834fc3aba68e804fdb90a6.aspx>

Thank You for a Great 2016 Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour!

By Tammy Brown

The cool and windy but beautiful day made for another picture-perfect setting for the tour this year. Every yard had a constant stream of visitors throughout the day, having sold more tickets than ever (210 total), making a very successful tour. We have had so many wonderful people working behind the scenes for months to bring it all together. Everyone's contributions and outstanding efforts are very much appreciated.

Special thanks to the Tallahassee Democrat for publishing our article and pictures on the front page of the Chronicle. Also to John Paul Bailey for featuring the event in the *Killearn Cloverleaf* neighborhood magazine. There is no doubt this helped increase awareness as well as our ticket sales this year. Another special thanks to Native Nurseries and Wild Birds Unlimited. For the ninth year, they have graciously acted as our ticket outlets as well as promoted the event, and we couldn't pull this off without them!

Our deep appreciation goes to our five outstanding yard hosts this year, who shared their homes and knowledge with friends and strangers. They truly went above and beyond!

Sunny Phillips' beautiful townhouse haven showed that one doesn't have to have a large yard in order for wildlife to thrive. Sunny has completely transformed her yard from previously neglected overgrowth to young native plants. The back yard focal point is a beautiful pond with waterfall hosting Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Barred Owls nesting nearby that visit regularly to bathe. Afternoon visitors on Saturday were treated to 2 Bald Eagles soaring overhead. One of Sunny's supportive neighbors even donated Audubon print cards to hand out to visitors.



Sunny Phillips' Wildlife-Friendly Yard

Photo Credit ~ Tammy Brown

On the other end of the size spectrum, Pat and Mike Meredith graciously shared their large yard space with us. Near the house, there were many songbirds, including a pair of Eastern Bluebirds trying to figure out who the other mysterious bluebirds were they kept seeing in the window reflection! There was also a spotting scope set up for viewing the lake. A stroll down to the lake yielded more spotting scopes and up-close views of water birds, including a Great Blue Heron, Limpkins, and a very special and rare appearance by a Snail Kite!



Pat & Mike Meredith's Wildlife-Friendly Yard

Photo Credit ~ Fran Rutkovsky



John Paul Bailey & Donna Harper's Wildlife-Friendly Yard

Photo Credit ~ Tammy Brown

John Paul Bailey and Donna Harper's National Wildlife Federation certified yard offers the perfect suburban retreat for wildlife. Their yard transformation has rewarded them with not only a beautiful entertaining space, but also many different kinds of wildlife. Their feeders and water features supplement the haven and lured in even more birds. They even very generously extended the experience with their offering of wine at the end of the tour day!

While enjoying the tranquility of Karen Kebart's hidden garden and bird feeding station, one would never guess that they were only a few feet away from a very busy street. The yard features several host plants for caterpillars, and many other natives strategically placed to enhance and show off a rock wall. Karen even shared the success of her gardens by giving out Moonflower seeds to all her guests!



Karen Kebart's Wildlife-Friendly Yard

Photo Credit ~ Fran Rutkovsky



Kate Torning's Wildlife-Friendly Yard

Photo Credit ~ Tammy Brown

Kate Torning's natural and whimsical back yard was the epitome of a songbird haven. The many birdhouses and charming décor combined with a variety of feeders were the perfect back-drop for the numerous birds that showed up. The species seen on just a short visit included Baltimore Orioles, Eastern Bluebirds, Pine Warblers, Pine Siskins, and Yellow-rumped Warblers! This very active yard filled with colorful birds and décor was a must-see! Kate even gave out some very good homemade Valentine's cookies to her guests.

Heartfelt thanks go to all our wonderful yard volunteers, too! They certainly helped the visitors have a friendly and informative visit, and we couldn't do it without you! Our yard volunteers this year were Fran Rutkovsky, Judy Goldman, Sean McGlynn, Jan Bordelon, Diane Quigg, Pat Press, Carol Franchise, Pat Teaf, Elizabeth Platt, Kathleen Carr, Pam Flory, Kathy Mason, and Dee Wilder. Special thanks to Kathleen Carr, Karen Willes, Jim Cavanagh, Dean & Sally Jue, and Ed Woodruff for bringing their spotting scopes for an extra special experience for all of us!

With all the fun and success, we are already thinking about next year's tour, so please keep it in mind if you know anyone who would be a good yard host or volunteer to be a part of this wonderful experience.

Again, my deepest thanks to all for your contributions, each one of you was a vital part to the enjoyment and success of this year's tour!



Native Nurseries

- WILD BIRD SHOP
- WILDLIFE GARDENING
- LANDSCAPE DESIGN

1661 Centerville Rd., Tallahassee, FL
850-386-8882 NativeNurseries.com



www.NativeNurseries.com

Wild Birds Unlimited



Everything for the birds and the serious birder!

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

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

In the Yard

By Fran Rutkovsky



Two of my favorite signs of spring in the yard are the Northern Parula and the Red Buckeye tree. I usually hear the first trill of the Northern Parula toward the end of February. This small colorful bird nests in our area and can be heard singing loudly, especially in spring. They like to bathe at birdbaths and will sometimes sip nectar from a hummingbird feeder.

The Red Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia* L.; Scarlet Buckeye, Firecracker plant) is a small understory tree that is native in north Florida.

The timing of the bright red blooms coincides with the return of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird to our area in mid-March. In the fall it is covered with buckeyes that are prized by various animals. Walk the trail at Florida Caverns in Marianna to see an amazing display of these trees and the Columbine flowers in spring. Now is the time to consider adding native plants for your yard for the benefits of wildlife. The annual Old-Timey Plant Sale at Birdsong Nature Center on March 19 (see related article on page 4) is a perfect place to pick out some new treasures for your yard.



Northern Parula & Red Buckeye
Photo Credits ~ Fran Rutkovsky

LANDSCAPE FOR LIFE

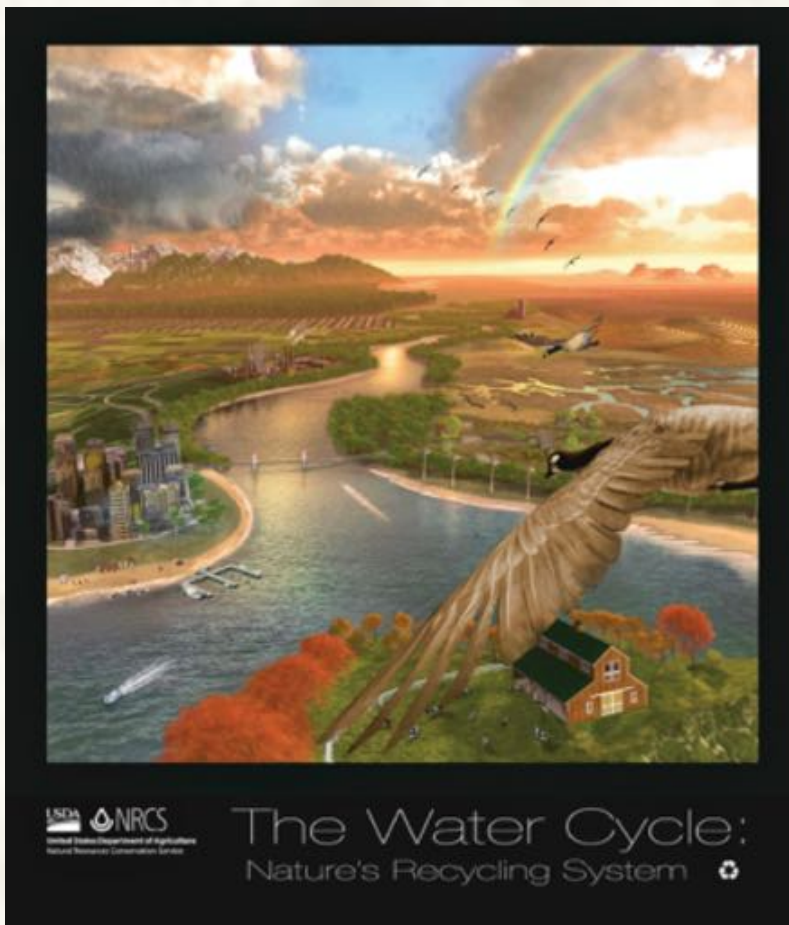
Based on the principles of the Sustainable Sites Initiative™

Developed by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the United States Botanic Garden

Shared by Suzanna MacIntosh

Landscape For Life™ was developed by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the United States Botanic Garden. It is based on the principles of the Sustainable Sites Initiative, SITES™, which is the nation's first rating system for sustainable landscapes. SITES, (www.sustainablesites.org), is an interdisciplinary collaborative effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and the United States Botanic Garden along with a diverse group of stakeholder organizations. The Landscape For Life (LFL) program defines sustainability "as the process of attempting to meet the needs of today without compromising the needs of tomorrow" and it provides common sense ways we can add beautiful as well as functional sustainable landscape and garden elements to our own yards. We are indebted to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, www.wildflower.org, the United States Botanic Garden, www.usbg.gov, and Landscape For Life, www.landscapeforlife.org, for sharing this material. This is fourth in a five part series.

The Role of Water in Sustainable Gardening



Courtesy of USDA - NRCS

(<https://youtu.be/9qtuvsuaCoc>)

Water plays an important role in garden sustainability. Water scarcity has been cited as one of the most pressing issues of the 21st century and clean water shortages are quickly becoming one of the most pressing environmental challenges facing humanity.

In the US, the inefficient use of water resources is a major contributor to the threat of freshwater shortages. Landscape irrigation alone consumes more than 7 billion gallons of freshwater each day. The resulting runoff can contaminate local waterways with fertilizers, pesticides, and other pollutants. Other unsustainable garden practices further degrade our limited supply of this valuable resource. For example, we often use potable water or drinking water in our gardens without realizing the costs of treating and pumping this water source. Also instead of capturing and using stormwater in our gardens, we've created an entire infrastructure of gutters, downspouts, and sewers to rapidly transport it offsite that also require costly annual maintenance.

Continued on next page

In healthy gardens soil and vegetation store and clean water. In developed areas, however, much of the land has been paved over, and the soil itself is often too compacted to absorb precipitation or stormwater. Rainfall flows from our roofs to gutters and downspouts, over compacted lawns and driveways into roads, and down storm drains, picking up pollutants along the way. Researchers have found runoff from developed land to be the leading cause of water pollution in urban areas. In many older cities, stormwater can overwhelm sanitary sewers, sending raw sewage as well as runoff into nearby waterways. However, residential properties can be part of the solution.

Garden Practices that Contribute to Water Conservation

Select plants adapted to local site conditions: *Growing plants adapted to the site conditions is one of the basic principles of sustainable gardening. The following are important tips for plant selection and maintenance:*

Preserve Established Vegetation: *Established plants generally require less water than newly-planted vegetation that has not yet developed deep root systems. When purchasing new plants, select regional natives that are adapted to the local climate and well-suited to the growing conditions of the site.*

Plant at the Recommended Time: *To speed establishment and minimize water use, plant at the recommended time of the year for a particular species.*

Minimize Lawn Size and/or Select Grass Species that Require Less Water: *Lawn size and type can have a huge impact on the amount of irrigation a garden requires. To minimize water use, choose grass species that require minimal irrigation and look for ways to reduce unnecessary lawn.*

Use water-thrifty irrigation practices: *Conventional irrigation practices waste significant amounts of water. Irrigating with traditional rotor-spray sprinklers, or when it is hot or windy, leads to water loss. Watering too quickly or in excess can lead to runoff and water waste. You can estimate the amount of water used on the landscape by looking at your municipal water bills, which typically indicate all potable water usage of a property, and compare municipal water bills between months of heavy irrigation and months where irrigation was not needed or was minimal.*

The following are strategies for creating water-thrifty gardens:

Irrigate Only When Plants Need Water: *How often to water depends on a number of factors, including soil characteristics, vegetation type and stage of establishment, season, climate, and weather conditions. Avoid irrigating on a fixed schedule that does not reflect the needs of the vegetation. Frequent, shallow watering tends to lead to weak, shallow-rooted plants. Less frequent, deep watering encourages roots to grow deep, where the soil stays moist longer. Applying water slowly will encourage infiltration and reduce runoff.*

Choose the Best Time of Day to Irrigate: *The most favorable time for irrigation is typically in the early morning hours. Sunny or windy conditions increase evaporation and water loss.*

Use a Rain Gauge and/or Soil Moisture Probe: *A variety of relatively simple tools can help gardeners determine when to water. The simplest and most inexpensive tool is a rain gauge. Soil moisture probes employing different technologies are also commercially available at varying prices; these measure the moisture level of soil, giving a more precise indication of how much water plants require.*

Hand Water and/or Use Drip Irrigation: *Watering with a hand-held hose has been shown to conserve more water than other irrigation methods. If in-ground systems are required, consider installing a drip irrigation system, as it uses the least amount of water of any automatic system.*

Use “Smart” Irrigation Technology: *To maximize efficiency, so-called “smart” or weather-based irrigation controllers take into account a range of factors, including temperature, rainfall, humidity, solar radiation, and soil moisture levels to determine when supplemental water is necessary.*

Closely Monitor the Irrigation System: *Regularly check irrigation equipment for leaks or breaks. Adjust irrigation equipment and schedules to address changes in the garden and seasons.*

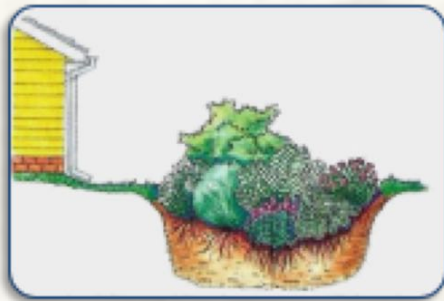
Continued on next page

Water Reuse and Conservation Strategies: With a little ingenuity, gardeners can utilize non-potable water from a variety of indoor and outdoor sources to irrigate their garden. Non-potable water is not safe for drinking, but can be a great resource for watering vegetation (though use caution when watering vegetable gardens and edible plants). On-site alternative water resources, such as rainwater runoff, air-conditioner condensate, and greywater, are typically considered waste products in unsustainable gardens and quickly removed from the site. Sustainable gardens capture this water. Doing so protects nearby ecosystems from pollutants commonly carried in stormwater. In addition, the volume of water going to storm sewer systems is reduced, lessening the likelihood of flooding and combined sewer overflows.

Rainwater collection has been used for centuries to support households and grow beautiful, productive gardens. The practice typically falls into two categories, passive and active.

Passive Rainwater Harvesting diverts water overland to vegetated areas for immediate use. Roads, driveways, and sidewalks are designed to direct water to vegetated areas instead of storm drains. Design features such as shallow bioswales (vegetated channels used to redirect, absorb and filter stormwater runoff) or terracing can be integrated into the garden and used to slowly convey and disperse the water throughout the garden. Rain gardens also help collect water and prevent runoff.

Active Rainwater Harvesting captures water in a barrel or cistern where it is held for reuse. The containers are manufactured in a variety of shapes and sizes and can be connected to the downspouts of the roof gutter system. Rain barrels generally hold about 50 gallons of water and come with a screened cover and an overflow spout. Cisterns are used to store larger volumes of water and may be buried below ground or integrated into the garden as a freestanding structure.



Rain Garden & Bioswale Courtesy of LFL

Rain Gardens and Bioswales: One of the most effective ways to conserve water and prevent runoff of polluted stormwater from a home garden is to create biofiltration gardens. Also known as rain gardens or bioswales, the gardens use plants, soils, mulch, and microbes to slow and treat stormwater runoff. The management practice is modeled after natural ecosystems and has been shown to effectively reduce heavy metals, bacteria, other pollutants, and water temperatures. Like the rest of your garden, biofiltration areas can be easily integrated into the garden and composed of a variety of beautiful plants. The gardens hold standing water temporarily and typically drain within 24 to 48 hours. Because water is held only for

short periods of time, these areas are typically not habitat for mosquitoes. Besides reducing the transfer of polluted stormwater, rain gardens and bioswales provide a variety of additional benefits. They reduce the likelihood of downstream flooding, increase the amount of water a garden receives, and replenish groundwater supplies.

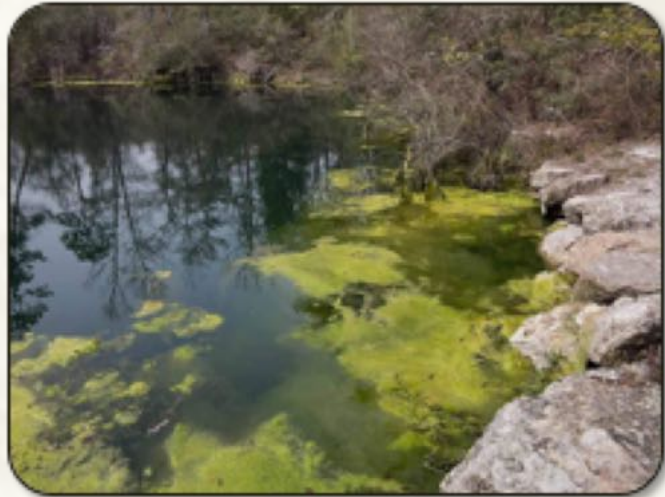
Protect and Restore Vegetated Buffers along Waterways, Wetlands and Roads: In undisturbed natural areas, waterways and wetlands are protected by adjacent vegetation. Grassland, woodland, and wetland plant communities naturally absorb and cleanse stormwater. Buffers along waterways, wetlands and roads can also improve wildlife and fish habitat by providing food, shelter, and shade. When vegetation is replaced by impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff volumes increase. Stormwater often carries pollutants including nutrients from fertilizers, pet waste, and sediment into natural water bodies. Pollutants reduce the water quality and negatively affect wildlife habitat. In residential areas, turf grass often extends down to the water, polluting it with fertilizers and pesticides routinely used in lawn care. In developed areas, vegetated buffers can fulfill the same important ecological functions as undisturbed waterside vegetation. As the name suggests, these are thickly vegetated strips of land that protect waterways and wetlands from polluted runoff and erosion. They also provide year-round habitat for a variety of wildlife, including “stopover habitat” for migrating birds in spring and fall. Research shows that ecological benefits are positively correlated with the width of a vegetated buffer. Buffers less than 50 feet wide offer minimal benefits while those 200 to 300 feet in width offer a wide range, including soil stabilization, stream shading, water quality protection, flood prevention, and wildlife habitat. Vegetated buffers more than 300 feet wide can function as wildlife corridors and even harbor imperiled and sensitive species.

Continued on next page

Limit impervious surfaces: Impervious surfaces are typically constructed surfaces such as rooftops, sidewalks, roads, and driveways which are covered by impenetrable materials such as concrete, blacktop, and mortared brick or stone. Urban and suburban soils, which are often compacted by intense foot traffic or construction equipment, can also be highly impermeable. As urbanization increases, so does the amount of impervious surface. Studies have shown that the quality of many urban watersheds is negatively correlated with the amount of impervious cover in the watershed. Impervious surfaces are a primary cause of elevated stormwater runoff because they prevent precipitation from being absorbed into the soil. During heavy rainfall events, large areas of impervious surfaces allow runoff to gather volume, speed, and pollutants leading to excessive flooding and the damage of nearby ecosystems.

Common sources of stormwater pollution are fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides; fluids and particles from automobiles such as oil and gas, brake linings, and tire and engine wear; sediment from improperly managed landscapes; building materials such as treated lumber, galvanized materials, copper and zinc roofs or gutters; coal tar sealants used on paved roads; and road salt (in colder areas).

Excess nutrients from overuse and runoff of fertilizer can cause algal blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms have difficulty surviving in water with low dissolved-oxygen levels. Insecticides and herbicides present in stormwater can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick from eating contaminated fish or drinking pesticide-contaminated water. Homeowners can reduce the risk of these pollutants by minimizing the use of fertilizers and pesticides and by properly disposing of them before they have an opportunity to pollute stormwater.



Algal Bloom

Photo by Dr. Seán McGlynn

To assess your landscape, locate any existing water features such as wetlands, ponds, streams, or other waterways on or adjacent to your property. Note the direction water flows across the garden and areas where water pools during storm events and where stormwater runoff is concentrated and eventually leaves the site (such as driveways, drainage pipes, storm gutters, etc.). Here is a link to more information about the role of water in sustainable gardening from Landscape For Life: <http://landscapeforlife.org/water/>.

Landscape For Life material and logo used and reprinted with permission. This is the 4th of a 5-part LFL series.

Additional Resources

Audubon—How to Create a Bird-Friendly Yard:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/july-august-2013/how-create-bird-friendly-yard>

Guide to Florida-Friendly Landscaping

Handbook: <http://www.floridayards.org/landscape/FYN-Handbook.pdf>

Rain Gardens: <http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/design/types-of-gardens/rain-gardens.html>

Wakulla Springs Alliance: <http://wakullaspringsalliance.org/about/>

Protecting Our Water: http://www.protectingourwater.org/watersheds/map/ochlockonee_stmarks/st_marks_river/

Do you know?

What is the annual precipitation rate?

What is the local freshwater source?

How many people rely upon the resource?

What are the population projections for the area?

How will this impact the water supply?

Florida's Springs, Aquifer, and Water Economy

<https://youtu.be/esbBAfGHfHU>

Florida Springs Institute:

www.floridaspringsinstitute.org

March Birding Field Trips

By Helen King

We have some great field trips planned for you. We hope you will join us.
In March we will begin our first quests for those migrating birds, large and small.
Please send e-mail to Helen King at thekingsom@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

Saturday, March 12: J. R. Alford Greenway/Canopy Bridge/Lake Lafayette

Meet in the main parking lot at 8:00 am at the main parking lot of J. R. Alford Greenway on 2500 S. Pedrick Road.
We will scour skies and woods, requiring several miles of slow walking.
Please e-mail thekingsom@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

Friday, March 18: Bald Point State Park/Mashes Sands Road/Bottoms Road

Meet at 7:30 am at the Publix parking lot located at the intersection of Crawfordville Highway and Capital Circle SW.
Please indicate if you are a willing driver. We will return for a late lunch.
Meet directly at Bald Point State Park at 8:45 am if you live closer to that location.
Please e-mail thekingsom@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

April field trips will be announced later.

*For notification of coming field trips, subscribe to Apalachee Audubon's Google Groups email notification list available at www.apalachee.org.
Field Trip birding reports are recorded at ebird, NFB, and with Apalachee Audubon.*

Come bird with us!



Photos from January & February Birding Trips with Helen King

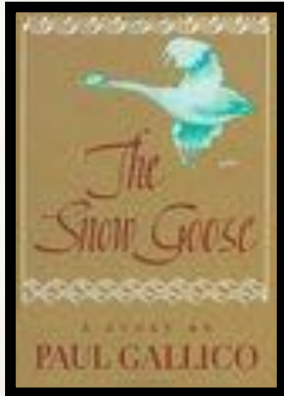
**Saturday, January 16
Tall Timbers
Research Station
Red-headed Woodpecker**
Photo Credit ~ Brian Lloyd

**Friday, January 29
Southwood & Environs
Whooping Crane at Sunrise**
Photo Credit ~ Karen Willes

**Friday, February 6
Lake Jackson
Savannah Sparrow**
Photo Credit ~ Brian Lloyd

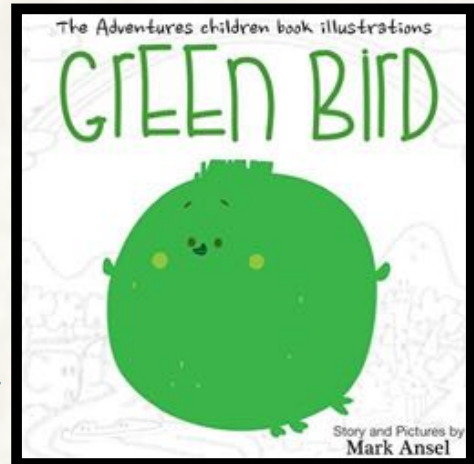
**Saturday, February 27
Ibis Rookery
White Ibises at Sunset**
Photo Credit ~ Karen Willes

Two Unique Books about Birds Reviews By Pat Press



The Snow Goose by Paul Gallico was written over seventy years ago, as some of you may recall, and still remains one of the most artfully crafted and evocative books ever written. This tale is about a hunchback artist called Rhadayer who lives in an abandoned lighthouse on the rugged English coast near The Great Marsh. This story tells of the remarkable friendship between the artist and a young girl, Fritha, who brings an injured Snow Goose to the man who cares for and protects the wildfowl of the marshlands. As the Snow Goose heals a special relationship grows among the three characters, the lonely artist, the shy girl, and the healing bird. Suddenly the world outside intrudes on them as the artist is called to assist in a rescue. The soldiers of England are trapped at Dunkirk and must be rescued by the watermen of the coast. Rhadayer sails his small craft off to help with the Snow Goose flying above him. Sadly he does not return, however Fritha is soothed by the return of the Snow Goose. During the following migrations of birds flying off to Greenland and back each spring the bird returns to its new home on The Great Marsh. The unique friendship that had developed between the goose and humans gives us a feeling of hope and prosperity for the future. If you have never read this book I highly recommend it.

Green Bird: The Adventures children book illustrations is a surprising little piece of literature for children I downloaded from the Kindle Store. I have read it over several times because it reminds me of the Dr. Seuss book *Are You My Mother?* The story is about a little round green bird who was raised by a pink squirrel family and who sets off on a journey in search of his real “bird family.” Along the way he meets lots of green animals and objects among them a worm, a mango, a bee, a frog, and a tennis ball. All of these animals and objects are shown as blank green shapes and the children must try to guess what they are. Green bird finds a clue along the way – a small green feather which gives him hope for finding a real green bird family. We hope his story will end happily. The author has included downloads of activities and materials to use with this small treasure of a book. Story and pictures are by Mark Ansel (five stars on Kindle reviews).



Go Green for God 4 and Counting by Elizabeth Platt

On Saturday, November 21, 2015 an intrepid group of children, teens, and parents from the Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, equipped with plastic gloves, trash tongs, and large black trash bags, sallied forth from the church toward Lake Elberta, picking up several bagsful of trash along both sides of Lake Bradford Road. Everyone was in high spirits, and many of the children and teens approached their work with great gusto. This event had been arranged by the JMBC youth leader and former AAS board member, Leann Watts-Williams, who also documented the event with excellent photos. Accompanied on that journey by Jan Bordelon, Laurie Jones, and Elizabeth Platt from Apalachee Audubon Society, the group met AAS Conservation Chair, Rob Williams, who had set up his telescope and enthusiastically pointed out a number of ducks and waders on and beside the lake, providing information about them as well.



Children Looking for Birds at Lake Elberta with Apalachee Audubon Members Rob Williams & Laurie Jones

Photo Credit ~ Leann Watts-Williams



Dad & Daughter Spotting a Hawk

Photo Credit ~ Jan Bordelon

The first comprehensive GGFG event was planned and carried out with JMBC children by Leann, Laurie, Elizabeth, and Sharon Stevens back in May of 2011. In addition to trash removal, birdwatching at the lake, and the erecting of bird boxes with Fred Dietrich, the children participated in a number of hands-on activities back at the church provided by the Junior Museum, FAMU students, and city and county agencies (making compost, answering questions

about alternative energy in a game format, and watching a demonstration of how pollutants get into the water supply). GGFG 2 took place at the Monarch Butterfly Festival at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in the fall of that year, again with children and families from the JMBC. GGFG 3 was organized by Martha Kutter,

Jan Bordelon, and Elizabeth Platt for children of the First Presbyterian Church in April 2015, which took place at the Wakulla Wildlife Festival. After a brief birding expedition with AAS birding guide, Helen King, the families opted for a boat ride on the river, a big hit with the young children.



Girls Consulting the Birding Guide

Photo Credit ~ Leann Watts-Williams

In addition to the work of the Education Committee co-chaired by Pat Press and Carol Franchi, who faithfully set up the Apalachee Audubon hands-on display at numerous festivals throughout the year, such events as GGFG aim to reach local church populations in support of their ministry to care for the earth. Rob, Leann, and Elizabeth met recently to explore further involvement of AAS with the JMB Church and other Southside residents at Lake Elberta and Lake Henrietta for more birding and other activities. They will also reach out to teachers at Pineview Elementary School, who have previously collaborated with AAS in environmental awareness events, such as bird feeder building with Fred Dietrich and a birding trip to Lake Elberta with AAS members.

GGFG 1 ~ <http://apalachee.org/Newsletters/2011-09-10.pdf>

GGFG 2 ~ <http://apalachee.org/Newsletters/2011-11-12.pdf>



Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church Clean-up Volunteers at Lake Elberta

Photo Credit ~ Leann Watts-Williams



Camp TALON 2016
(Teen Adventures Learning Ornithology and Nature)
Teen Essay Competition
By Jim Cox



Apalachee Audubon is pleased to announce another 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 6-day/5-night, dawn-to-dusk summer birding adventure organized by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Ornithological Society, and Atlanta Audubon Society. The camp is in its 14th year of operation and runs from June 4-9, 2016. The camp is based at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island, but field trips include Little St. Simons Island, Jekyll Island, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Altamaha Wildlife Management Area, Andrews Island, Sapelo Island, and Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge. The camp features a 3:1 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 \$200 travel stipend to parents to help cover travel to Macon, GA (departure point for camp). Parents must transport the winning student to Macon, GA to rendezvous with other students. The deadline for the submission of essays is Friday, April 1st and the winner will be announced at our monthly meeting on Thursday, April 28 and invited to attend Apalachee Audubon's annual year-end banquet on May 26, 2016 at Lafayette Presbyterian Church.

The theme for the essay is "What Birds Mean to This Teen!" The essay should be a maximum of 300 words and must be submitted by Friday, April 1, 2016, 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. 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 Saturday, June 4th through Thursday, June 9th. More information is available at <http://www.gos.org/2016CampTALON>.



Wilson's Plover and Chick

Photo Credit ~ Rick Greenspan

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

You Can Help Beach Birds Nest in Peace

By Bonnie Samuelsen

To help Florida's beach-nesting birds nest **safely and successfully**, Audubon and our partners post signs and twine around their nesting areas. For added protection, volunteers chaperon these posted areas on busy warm-weather weekends to educate beach-goers about the birds and the reason for the posted areas. Research has found beach-goers are **nine times more likely** to respect posted areas when stewards are present.

If you would be willing to hang out with cute chicks at the beach for an afternoon, *we need you!* To learn more about how you can help, contact Bonnie Samuelsen at 941-951-7704 or bsamuelsen@audubon.org. Kayakers and boaters are also needed for coastal island nesting areas.

Please contact Bonnie today. A few hours of your time spent relaxing at the beach can **make the difference** for these remarkable birds!

Sites will vary from weekend to weekend depending upon where active nesting is occurring. Opportunities exist at:

Franklin County

Lanark Reef

St. George Island State Park

Phipps Preserve, Alligator Point

St. George Island Causeway

Gulf County

St. Joseph Peninsula State Park

Florida Historic Capitol Museum
"The Best That Nature Has to Offer:
The History of Florida State Parks"

December 3, 2015 – May 1, 2016

Florida Historic Capitol Museum
400 South Monroe Street • Tallahassee, FL
Phone: (850) 487-1902 • www.flhistoriccapitol.gov

Established by the Florida Legislature in 1935, the Florida Park Service has played an instrumental role in preserving our state's natural environment and its cultural resources, while providing unique recreational activities for citizens and visitors. The park system encompasses the wide variety of environments which make Florida special. The Florida Park Service has developed into one of the finest state park systems in the nation. The Florida Historic Capitol Museum invites you to view a historically significant collection that showcases how Florida's state parks have preserved natural beauty and benefitted citizens for the past eighty years.

Free Admission (donations appreciated)

**Join National Audubon Society
& enjoy free membership in
Apalachee Audubon & Audubon Florida
for just \$20 a year!**

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 customer service number, 1(844)428-3826. *(Please mention our chapter ID, E19, for AAS to 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
225 Varick Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10014
Attn: Chance Mueleck

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

Audubon Memberships Make Great Gifts!

Wakulla Wildlife Festival
Saturday, April 16, 2016
Wakulla Springs State Park



www.WakullaWildlifeFestival.com



Remember Winter Hummingbirds!

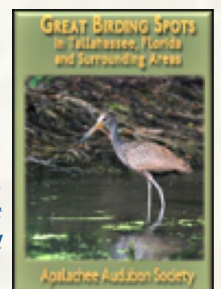
Just a reminder that winter means the return of winter hummingbirds. If you took your feeder down, hang it back up! Now is the time to watch your feeders closely, our winter guests will be arriving soon and will be looking for a good place to stay while they are in the area. If you see a hummingbird, contact master bird bander, Fred Dietrich at 850 591-7430 or fdietrich@gmail.com. Fred will do his best to band your bird. His work, along with other banders, is helping us to understand the migratory habits of these birds. For updates: <http://hummingbirdresearch.net/>.



**A Great Gift Idea
to enjoy all year long!**

*A great book for bird and
nature lovers!*

Please see www.apalachee.org for a list of locations where the Apalachee Audubon Society's *Great Birding Spots in Tallahassee, Florida and Surrounding Areas* is available.



Enjoy Outdoor Activities in Tallahassee and Surrounding Areas

Lost Creek Forest By Beth Grant



Many interesting activities are planned for you at **Lost Creek Forest**, an old-growth hardwood slope forest and wetlands in Thomas County near Thomasville. As events are scheduled for this very special place, they'll be posted on Facebook, at www.lostcreekforest.com, and at www.lostcreekforest.eventbrite.com.

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
Free to members*

*For a schedule of special activities, please see
www.birdsongnaturecenter.org & Facebook
or call 229 377-4408 or 800 953-BIRD (2473)*

*Birdsong Nature Center
Celebrating 30 years in April 2016!*

Mission San Luis

The Mission with its historic village is open Tuesday - Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$3 for seniors (65+); \$2 for children 6 to 17; and free for members, children under 6 and active duty military with ID. More information, www.missionsanluis.org.

Le Moyne
CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

125 North Gadsden Street Tallahassee, Florida 32301
850.222.8800 www.lemoyne.org

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge



1255 Lighthouse Road
St. Marks, Florida 32355
(850) 925-6121

www.fws.gov/refuge/st_marks/

Gulf Specimen Marine Lab



222 Clark Drive
Panacea, FL 32346
850 984-5297

www.gulfspecimen.org
Fun for the whole family!



Wakulla Springs State Park

465 Wakulla Park Drive
Wakulla Springs, Florida 32327 - (850) 561-7286

Morning Nature Walks

*Free with Park Admission (Meet in the Lodge Lobby)
Please call (850) 561-7286 to make your reservation.*

Saturdays, March 19 & April 9 ~ 9:00-10:30 AM
Saturday ~ March 26 ~ 8:00-9:30 AM

Wakulla Springs State Park will host a ranger-led early morning trek through its varying forest communities. Habitats alter with slight changes in elevation. Join a ranger-led trek through Wakulla Springs State Park's varying forest communities. Forest wildflowers are blooming. Migrating songbirds are passing through. 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 Wakulla Springs Lodge prior to the walk.

For more information and activities, please see:
<https://www.floridastateparks.org/park/Wakulla-Springs>

St. Francis Wildlife Association

St. Francis Wildlife, a non-profit organization founded in 1978, provides humane care and rehabilitation for thousands of wild birds and animals in our community each year as well as unique wildlife education programs.

To learn more: www.stfranciswildlife.org.

St. Francis Wildlife - 5580 Salem Road, Quincy, FL 32352

I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order. John Burroughs