



The Avocet

Hillsborough County UF Extension Conference Center, 5339 CR 579, Seffner
Photo Club 6 PM 7:00 Potluck dinner ~ Bring dish to pass (optional)
7:30 Meeting and Program

Tampa Audubon Society

March 2017 Newsletter

www.tampaaudubon.org

Meeting - Thursday, March 2, 2017

General Meeting

Michael Brothers

Director, Marine Science Center, Ponce Inlet

One of the great mysteries surrounding the birdlife of the United States is where all of the Lesser Black-backed Gulls breed. The closest known breeding area is in Greenland. Some days in fall see as many as 300 birds occur at Ponce de Leon Inlet in Volusia County and 300-500 birds winter at the Brevard landfill near Cocoa Beach. It is possible that these birds are flying all the way from Greenland, but there may be other unknown breeding areas. To try to solve this problem, the Marine Science Center launched a long-term project to begin banding Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Volusia County in 2015.

The program will touch on our efforts to solve this mystery as well as provide an overview of gull identification.



UPCOMING TRIPS

RAPTOR MIGRATION IN TEXAS!

SEPT. 24-30, 2017



Trip with WINGS, Inc. to Corpus Christi and the **great hawk migration**, then Lower Rio Grande Valley for south Texas specialties such as the beautiful green jay. Registration required by March 12. Cost \$1576 to \$1770, depending on the number, MAX 10 people. For details see the [flyer](#) on webpage or contact Mary Keith. mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org

DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 11. DO NOT WAIT!

FIELD TRIPS

On most trips we have binoculars to loan, so don't hesitate to come! Unless otherwise indicated field trips do not require advance registration. Most are free. Anyone is welcome!



March 4—Eagles! Come visit some of our local eagle nests with the coordinator of our Eagle Watch effort, Nancy Murrah. Meet in the Target parking lot on the corner of Bloomingdale and Gornto Lake Rd at 8 am. You'll carpool or caravan to visit several of the nests in the area. There are youngsters hatched already, and more on the way. Contact Nancy if you have questions. End by 12. nancy.murrah@tampaaudubon.org

March 11—Lettuce Lake Bird Walk. Meet at 9 am in the parking lot by the Visitor's Center at the park to walk the boardwalk with us. Both Night Herons have been plentiful recently, and orange-crowned have joined the usual winter warblers on the scene. Come see what else we can find. Leader Mary Keith for more info. Mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org

March 19—Perico Preserve. This is a new preserve in Manatee County. It's a restored tidal area with some freshwater wetlands on the edges, so has a great variety of birds. Easy, flat walking around the ponds and inlet. It's open so wear hat, sunscreen and bring water. Meet there at 9 am, *or meet at the Sweet Tomato parking lot in Brandon, Rt 60 just west of I-75 to carpool at 8 am.* Address is 11700 Manatee Ave West, Bradenton. Take I-75 south to Rt. 64 exit just south of the Manatee River. Go west 11.7 miles. After the

bridge and beach along the causeway the Preserve parking lot will be on your right (just before Anna Maria Island). Contact leader with questions. mary.keith@tampaadubon.org Note: dogs are not allowed. No entrance fee. Done by 12.

April 6 General Meeting

Dr. Paul Gray, Science Coordinator for Audubon Florida's Everglades Restoration Project

What's the status of Grasshopper Sparrows in the state? Did you know that Florida Grasshopper Sparrows are not the same migratory birds as in the rest of the country? Come learn about one of our special birds, from one of our leading experts.



COMMITTEE UPDATES

Nominating Committee

GENERAL ELECTIONS ARE COMING! WE NEED 2 DIRECTORS FOR A 2 YEAR TERM, AND A TREASURER. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER, OR NOMINATE SOMEONE FOR, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PLEASE CONTACT CHERYL OR CONNIE!

Cheryl.merz@tampaadubon.org or
Connie.anderson@tampaadubon.org

Events Committee

GET INVOLVED! HELP SPREAD OUR GOOD WORD!

We need you to help talk to people at our booth, give out information, or get them interested in our events and activities. If you can help *even one hour* for either of these, please contact the person listed.

March 25—Nature's Classroom Woods, Water and Wildlife Open House 9 am to 4 pm Contact Krista, 813-995-4195, or krista.kutash@tampaadubon.org

April 20—MetLife Environmental Awareness Day 11 am to 1 pm. (indoors) Contact Mary at Mary.keith@tampaadubon.org

These are great ways to reach people who don't

know what the environmental issues of our area are, who don't recognize our birds, who don't know about our field trips. Please help us reach them!

Conservation Committee

The battle in the Legislature over Lake O/Everglades projects is shaping up as a big one. Audubon Florida and other conservation organizations support the plan to acquire land in the Everglades Agricultural Area to build a reservoir to hold water discharged from Lake O, then release it into the Everglades instead of flushing it to the coastal estuaries. US Sugar opposes the plan, and favors focusing on surface water storage north of the lake. That way, they wouldn't have to give up land they previously agreed to sell to the state. The commissioner of the South Florida WMD, a Rick Scott appointee, parrots the objections of US Sugar.

If you would like to receive periodic email updates on conservation issues, along with occasional "Action Alerts", please contact our Conservation Chair, Doug DeNeve, at doug.deneve@gmail.com or sign up at the next chapter meeting.

Don't Cut the Line receives Grant!

The Don't Cut the Line project, spearheaded by Sandy Reed, has been awarded a \$1000 grant by Audubon of Florida. The funds will help purchase carcass chutes and signs to educate fishermen about the dangers of feeding pelicans. The chutes will help deter the birds from gathering where they can be caught by fishing lures and lines.

If you are aware of a fishing pier, boat ramp or other location where birds are being fed by fishermen, please contact Sandy so she can add it to the list of locations where the birds need protection!

Sandy.reed@tampaadubon.org

Roots And Shoots UT News Students Need Rides!

Our Roots and Shoots members from Univ. of Tampa have been having car problems. (Any former students here who don't remember balky cars?) So they're looking for someone who could pick them up and get them back to the UT area, so that they can participate in meetings. If anyone lives in that area

or is able to swing by the UT campus for them before the next couple of meetings, please contact Alana Boyles, President of the UT Roots and Shoots group, at alana.boyles@spartans.ut.edu

Earth Day Gala Fundraiser April 22

The annual **UT Earth Day Gala will be April 22nd** at 6:00 pm, doors open at 5:30 pm. Entrance is free, but registration will be required. Dinner is catered, there will be two guest speakers. The Gala Auction and Sales serve as their main fundraiser throughout the semester. All the money raised from auction and sale items goes towards their service project, which currently is establishing a learning garden at St. Peter Claver Catholic School in downtown Tampa. It will be hosted at UT in Plant Hall. Details will be coming. For more info now, please contact Alana at alana.boyles@spartans.ut.edu.

Save your Pill Bottles

Roots and Shoots collects used pill bottles and recycles them to help a local clinic. Bring clean used pill bottles to the meetings and we'll get them to the Roots! If you can peel the labels off, please do.

Upcoming Field Trips

Add these to your calendar to save the dates! More details in the next newsletter and on the web.

April 2—Ft DeSoto 9 am, Flagpole, Doug DeNeve

April 8, May 13 —Lettuce Lake, 9 am, ARC

April 23—Honeymoon Island, 8 am, McDonald's on

Remember to use Smile when you shop on Amazon. For more details on how it works, check out www.smile.amazon.com/about. Register with Smile, shop, and we get 0.5% from each purchase.

Curlew and Rt 19, Mary Keith

April 28, 29, 30—Cedar Key, Mary Keith

We had to cancel the trip to Wakulla due to lack of rooms in the lodge. So we'll go chase migrants in Cedar Key instead. Starting there Saturday morning. Last year we watched the rails feed day-old young!



May 20—Celery Fields and Felts Preserve, Mary Keith

Learning Gate BioBlitz April 9, 8 to noon

Event to identify as many species as possible. To participate on a team for plants, animals, fungi or more contact LGbioblitz@gmail.com

Children's Programs at Lettuce Lake

10 am, Visitor Center, \$5 per child accompanied by adult, or adult \$5 without child. Register at

kyled@hillsboroughcounty.org

March 4, 5—Fossilized Shells and Shark's Teeth

March 11, 12—Armadillos and Opossums

March 18, 19—How to help the Monarch Butterflies

March 25, 26—Survival Skills



Asa Wright Nature Centre Announces its 50th Anniversary with Celebrity Birders!

Come and celebrate 50 years of incomparable non-profit conservation, education and habitat protection in Trinidad where you can see 40 life birds before breakfast! Enjoy top-rate birding and learning with a famous birder/artist/naturalist.

- **March 18 – 25, 2017** Scott Weidensaul, Author & Naturalist and Amy Weidensaul, Educator & Conservationist
- **June 24 – 30, 2017** Edward Rooks, Naturalist & Trinidadian Wildlife Artist, with Janice Edgerly-Rooks, Biology Professor
- **October 6 – 15, 2017** Keith Hansen, Artist & Field Guide Illustrator, with Patricia Briceño, Fiber Artist & Cultural Interpreter
- **October 26 – November 2, 2017** David Allen Sibley, Author, Illustrator & Ornithologist



Call 800-426-7781 to book your spot today. Mention your chapter's name and earn a \$100 chapter donation from Caligo Ventures!

Photo: Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Rich Wagner/WildNaturePhotos



Looking for some easy Travel in 2017?

Trinidad has some *fantastic birding!* If you're interested in traveling *and* helping Tampa Audubon, this is for you. Asa Wright Nature Centre is a remarkable lodge, with dozens of hummers, an oil-bird cave, bellbirds and more. Nearby is Caroni Swamp and the scarlet ibis. Just remember to **MENTION TAMPA AUDUBON** when you register for a visit or tour, and we'll get a \$100 donation.



Sponsor a Bluebird Box

Bluebird boxes are **still open for adoption!** Mary and John Miller and various helpers maintain a trail of over 40 bluebird boxes in Flatwoods Park. Nesting will be starting soon. The boxes will be checked and cleaned before the residents move in, and then checked weekly until all the youngsters are on their own. It will probably be a bluebird, but who knows! A Carolina chickadee or a tufted titmouse might take up residence too.

The Bluebird Fund allows boxes and snake shields to be repaired or replaced as needed. Donate \$10 to the Bluebird Fund and you'll be assigned your own box. These are great gifts for a favorite child or grandchild too. Don't worry, you don't have to do anything! Mary will send you weekly updates of who is nesting in your box as they check them.

To sponsor a box (or 2 or 3), complete the form and mail it with a check for \$10 per box to Mary Miller, 802 Congress Ct, Tampa FL 33613. Make the check to Tampa Audubon, but be sure to write BLUEBIRD FUND on the check. If you want the weekly reports to go to someone else, please add their email address.

Tampa Audubon Society Bluebird Boxes

Name _____

Address _____

Your Email _____

Recipient emails if other than yourself:

Number of boxes sponsored _____

Amount enclosed (\$10/box) _____

Volunteers Needed For Lettuce Lake Park

The Audubon Resource Center or ARC at Lettuce Lake Park has traditionally had volunteers to answer visitors' questions, direct them where they want to go, or lead walks along the boardwalk. Some volunteers have needed to resign, so Mike Mullins, the ARC Director, is looking for more help.

You will need to complete a County volunteer application. Mike will provide training. You will be able to set your hours within Mike's schedule. Mostly it is weekend hours.

If you're able to be a volunteer at LLP (and who wouldn't love some extra time in that jewel of a park!), please contact Mike at mike.mullins@tampaudubon.org or 813-390-4696.

For Bird Rescue

Nan Murrah's crew is always hoping for more volunteers to transport injured birds. If you'd have some time and a vehicle, contact her at nancy.murrah@tampaudubon.org.

For Other Locations

There's a possibility that we may be able to provide volunteers for some other County Environmental Lands. If you'd be willing to help pull weeds, post signs or other work to supplement the park rangers, Fish and Wildlife Commission rangers or others, please contact Mary.keith@tampaudubon.org

Or, if you are interested in volunteering directly with Hillsborough County on their Conservation and Environmental Lands (places such as Lower Green Swamp, etc), you can contact Chris Kiddy, Program Coordinator Conservation and Environmental Lands Management Department at kiddyc@hillsboroughcounty.org.



Remember to Renew

If you renew your Audubon membership through Tampa Audubon we get an extra \$5 to support our local programs, and we get it sooner. Please check your address label on your Audubon magazine. If it indicates that your membership is about to expire, please go to our website, download and print the membership form, and mail it back to us. We promise, we forward your renewal to National!

Save the Date: The American Birding Expo Occurs Sept. 29 - Oct. 1, 2017, in Philadelphia!

