

# Tampa Audubon Society

## April 2017 Newsletter

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

Meeting - Thursday, April 6, 2017

### 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

## General Meeting

### Dr. Paul Gray

Science Coordinator for Audubon Florida's  
Everglades Restoration Program.

### Florida Grasshopper Sparrows and Snail Kites

Dr. Gray has been with Audubon for 21 years and working in and around Lake Okeechobee since 1988.

He will be giving us an update on the status of Florida Grasshopper Sparrows and Snail Kites. Florida Grasshopper sparrows are not the same as the migratory sparrows who share their territory each winter. He's been studying our birds and working on conservation methods for them for years.



## UPCOMING 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!

**April 2—Ft DeSoto** Spring migration at Ft DeSoto is always good! Meet leaders Doug DeNeve and Susan Fears at the flagpole just after the entrance booth at 8 am. Where you go will depend on where the birds are, but there should be a good variety of passerines and shorebirds. Bring water, sunscreen, snacks, and lunch if you want to eat after the walk. Wear a hat!

Entrance fee to park is \$5, plus some road tolls.

[Doug.deneve@tampaaudubon.org](mailto:Doug.deneve@tampaaudubon.org)

**April 8—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. The parula warblers are in full song, and swallow tailed kites are on the scene. Come see what else we can find. Leader Roger Sheets for more info. [Roger.sheets@tampaaudubon.org](mailto:Roger.sheets@tampaaudubon.org)

**April 23—Honeymoon Island State Park** is a coastal gem, and this month should be picking up lots of migrants. Meet at the McDonald's at the corner of Curlew Rd and Rt 19 in Dunedin at 8 am (before the causeway fills up with people) to bird the causeway on the way out to the park, then walk part of Osprey trail, check the waters behind the Visitor Center, and see if there's anything interesting on the beach. It will be flat walking, some shade, some sandy trails. Entrance fee to state park is \$8 for up to 8 people in a vehicle, or \$4 for single occupant vehicle. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, hat, and lunch if you want to picnic in the park when we're done. Leaders Mary Keith and Mic McCarty. [mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org](mailto:mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org)

**April 29, 30—Cedar Key** The beaches, back waters and marshes around these little islands are always full of great birds. Last year the highlight was a clapper rail on a nest and another pair feeding day-old chicks! Migrating warblers should be coming through, and all the shore and water birds from avocets to oystercatchers will be moving with the tides. You'll make your own motel reservations. Local restaurants have great seafood. The trip will start Saturday morning 8 am at the first bridge on the way into town, but where we go will depend on the tides, since low tide's mudflats are the place to be. It's a 2.5 hr drive from Tam-

pa, so you may want to go up Friday. Contact the leader if you want a list of hotel options, or to arrange carpools. Leaders Mary Keith and Mic McCarty [Mary.keith@tampaudubon.org](mailto:Mary.keith@tampaudubon.org)

## May 4 General Meeting

### PHOTO CLUB EXPO



We'll see the best of the year, and you'll be able to purchase select photos by our members. Come with your list of who will need special birthday presents this year!

Painted bunting, Lynn M

### COMMITTEE UPDATES

#### Nominating Committee

**GENERAL ELECTIONS ARE COMING! WE NEED 2 DIRECTORS FOR A 2 YEAR TERM, AND A TREASURER. ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE MAY MEETING. ALL PRESENT WILL BE THE VOTING BODY.**

The current slate of nominees is:

**Directors: Mic McCarty and Rob Yoho**

**Treasurer: Michelle Hoffman**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER, OR NOMINATE SOMEONE FOR, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PLEASE CONTACT CHERYL OR CONNIE.

[Cheryl.merz@tampaudubon.org](mailto:Cheryl.merz@tampaudubon.org) or [Connie.anderson@tampaudubon.org](mailto:Connie.anderson@tampaudubon.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@tampaudubon.org](mailto:krista.kutash@tampaudubon.org)

**April 8—Little Manatee River State Park Spring Fling** Contact Krista to help.

**April 20—MetLife Environmental Awareness Day 11 am to 1 pm.** (indoors) New Tampa area. Contact Mary at [Mary.keith@tampaudubon.org](mailto:Mary.keith@tampaudubon.org)

**April 22—Univ Tampa Earth Day—** 5:00 to 6:00 pm. Contact Mary Keith to help. Contact Alana Boyles to register for the free dinner and program afterwards. [alana.boyles@spartans.ut.edu](mailto:alana.boyles@spartans.ut.edu) See the next page for details.

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

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](mailto:doug.deneve@gmail.com) or sign up at the next chapter meeting.

Please read the next page for Doug's report and current suggestions.

### Don't Cut the Line

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@tampaudubon.org](mailto:Sandy.reed@tampaudubon.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 meeting, please contact Alana Boyles, President of the UT Roots and Shoots group, at [alana.boyles@spartans.ut.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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 on the web.

**May 7—Bluebirds at Flatwoods, Mary Miller**

**May 13 —Lettuce Lake Park, 9 am, ARC**

**May 20—Celery Fields and Felts Preserve**

"It doesn't have to be Christmas to use Amazon Smile and choose TAS. Here's a link to a help: [How to donate to a charity on amazon?](#) Personally, I have an AmazonSmile on my browser's navigation bar that points to "[smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)". Now I don't even think about it - it's free money for TAS! "

## Other Events

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:kyled@hillsboroughcounty.org)  
April 1, 2—Caves and Chert in Florida

## CONSERVATION UPDATE

Given our current political climate, it is important that our elected officials understand that preservation and conservation of Florida's birds, other wildlife, and ecosystems are issues of great importance to Florida voters.

The Florida Legislature is now in session, and is scheduled to run through May 5. There are several bills of special interest to Audubon now pending in the Senate and in the House. Among the bills we are monitoring with great interest are:

**Senate Bill 442 (SB442)**, introduced by Senator Dana Young, representing Tampa's District 18, and its companion bill in the House (HB451) would **ban "fracking"**, the controversial technique for extracting natural gas from underground rock formations, in the state of Florida. **We support the fracking ban.**

**SB10 and its companion bill (HB451)** would implement the plan proposed by Senate President Joe Negron to reduce polluted water discharges, linked to toxic algae blooms, from Lake Okeechobee into our coastal estuaries. It would also help restore a more natural flow of fresh water through **the Everglades. We support Sen. Negron's plan.**

**HB17** would "preempt" local regulations that are in conflict with state laws. This would effectively give the state the authority to override, among other regulations, local environmental protections that are more stringent than state standards. **We oppose this bill.**

There are powerful and well-funded entities in the state which are lobbying for legislation supporting their own interests, which are in many cases in opposition to the protection of our natural resources. The voices of large numbers of individual voters may be the most effective counter to this lobbying. We really need to speak up for the natural Florida that we all treasure!

Fortunately, it is now easier than ever to call our legislators' offices and voice our opinions. When you dial the phone numbers below, you will be prompted to enter your zip code. Your call will then be routed to your local representative.

**To contact your State Senator, call: 844-899-8866**  
**To contact your State Representative, call: 844-899-9394**

If you would like to contact your legislators through other means, and/or if you are not sure which Senate and House Districts you live in or who your representatives are, you can get that information at this website: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/myrepresentative.aspx> Simply enter your address, and the site will return a complete list of the legislators representing you at the state and national level.

Remember that our opinions, not to mention our votes, matter to our elected representatives. Please speak up and let them know how you feel on the matters that you think are important.

Thank you for your help, and for your passion for the environment! Doug DeNeve

We will be happy to keep you informed on the latest developments on environment/conservation issues. Please contact our Conservation Chair, Doug DeNeve ( [doug.deneve@gmail.com](mailto:doug.deneve@gmail.com) ), and let him know that you would like to receive occasional conservation-related email updates. He will add you to the Conservation email list.

#### Another Conservation Concern:

There was recently a meeting regarding future plans for **Myakka River State Park**, including logging, harvesting palmettos, hunting, building a conference center and other commercial operations. As your President, I wrote a letter, and Doug and Cheryl attended and spoke against the plans. I have attached the letter as the final page in this newsletter. **Any, many, additional letters, from as many of you as possible, would help protect this park!** The same plans may well be promoted for other parks as well. The letter is addressed and sent to the Governor since there is currently no Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, under whom the State Park system operates. It will be forwarded to the right people, and they will know that the Governor's office has seen it. **Letters to protect Myakka River SP need to be received by March 15 in Tallahassee. Please write!** You are welcome to copy any parts or all of my letter, or compose your own! But please let our government know that we want parks for birds, wildlife, water, air and space, not for commercial operations.

Mary Keith



## 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 813-390-4696 or [mikemullins7@gmail.com](mailto:mikemullins7@gmail.com) .

## 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](mailto:nancy.murrah@tampaudubon.org) .

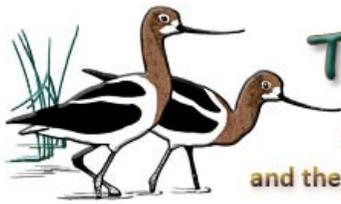
## For Other Locations

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](mailto: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](mailto: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!



# Tampa Audubon Society

*"To conserve and restore our ecosystems, focusing on birds, wildlife, and their habitats, through education, advocacy, and community involvement."*

Tampa Audubon Society  
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Office of Governor, Rick Scott  
State of Florida  
The Capital  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7146

Dear Sir,

On behalf of over six hundred members of Tampa Audubon Society, I am writing to you requesting protection of our state parks, in particular at this moment Myakka River State Park.

Our state parks are a wonderful treasure. Over thirty million visitors to the parks last year are an indication of their value! Three national awards speak volumes about how wonderful they are! Parks created 29,400 plus jobs. They returned at least 86% of their cost, not to mention all the water they protected and air they helped clean. We need clean water, clean air, jobs, and yes, wild spaces.

We do not need our parks being places for running someone else's cattle. We don't need them to be stripped by logging, palmetto berry or frond harvesting for someone's personal gain. We don't need more golf courses or RV parks on public land. We don't need people to be dumping landscaping waste on our public land. We don't need hunting in our parks! We don't need big fancy conference centers when people come to see the wild side of Florida.

We ask you to please protect our parks. Do not allow Myakka River State Park, or any of our State Parks, to be used for cattle, for logging or harvesting palmetto. Don't let them add more asphalt, wires, pipes and roads for big buildings. We love our parks wild, as they are!

The draft proposal to permit any or all of these activities in Myakka River State Park should be stopped. The little bit of gain to be realized from them is much less than the total of the damage that would be caused, damage that takes years or decades to repair.

Please, Protect our State Parks!

Sincerely,

Mary Keith, PhD  
Tampa Audubon Society, President

CC: Office of the Secretary, Dept of Environmental Protection  
Tampa Bay Times