

Wing Beat

Conservation Through Education
The Newsletter of the Clearwater Audubon Society
May- June 2021 Vol. 100

And the nominees for the Florida state bird are...



<https://newfloridastatebird.com/>

In a "bird-rich" state like Florida, does the commonplace Northern mockingbird deserve to reign as the official state bird? There has been recent controversy over the songbird and mimic. Its own song has a pleasant lilting sound and is, at times, both varied and repetitive. "The bird was put in place in 1927 under Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3. Insofar as the site can be trusted, a respondent on [WikiAnswers](#) claims the bird won over the Legislature in part because "the melody of its music has delighted the heart of residents and visitors to Florida from the days of the rugged pioneer to the present comer." -WLRN 91.3 FM

You can nominate your new State bird by clicking the link below the picture.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

We are happy to announce two Great long distance trips for the second half of 2021! In August we will be headed to Maine for fall migration and in October we are headed to Kansas' Central Flyway. Please see the attached fliers and if you have ANY questions please let me know. GREAT Birding!

Contact Dale Goebel sheirah11@verizon.net to be a part of these adventures.

Winged Migration on the Coast of Maine

August 27th – September 1st

Clearwater Audubon's 2nd trip with Maine Birding Guide Seth Benz
Director of the Schoodic Institute Bird Ecology Lab



Clearwater Audubon Trip to Kansas Central Flyway

(Kansas wetlands and grasslands provide rest and refueling for birds in the Central Flyway.)

October 24th – 29th

Bird Guide William "Bill" Kaempfer



FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Aripika Sandhills Preserve

By Madeleine Bohrer

The alarm clock went off at 0545 but that's ok. It's a birding day! Binocs, field guide, water, snack? Check. Ready to go to Aripika Sandhills Preserve—200 acres—another proof of the importance of land purchase in Florida. The Southwest Florida Management District (SWFMD: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us>) purchased Aripika in 2007 as part of the 7000 acre Weeki Wachee Preserve. SWFMD manages 10,000 acres from Levy County up north by the Crystal River to Charlotte County down south near Ft. Meyers with the goal of protecting and preserving our water resources and natural systems to minimize flood risks and ensure our water needs are met. I'd say that was mighty important, wouldn't you? And even more critical, it preserves the habitat for all the beautiful spring life we saw on our walk.



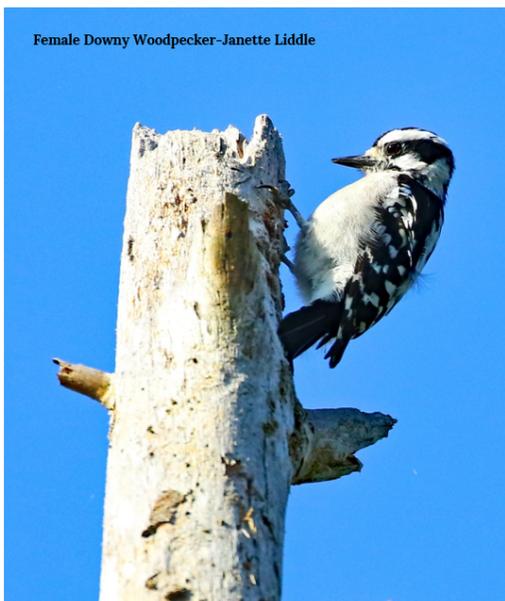
Paul Trunk led us on this much needed escape to a natural place to immerse ourselves in trees, ponds, birds, wildflowers, and dragonflies. Springtime is such a blessing, and to share this with friends holds immeasurable value.



Aripika is a hardwood hammock including magnolia, oak, maple, and bay trees. At this time of year, the trail is dotted with wildflowers—tickseed, hatpins, blue-eyed grass, wild petunia—I admire folks who can remember all those names. The dragon flies were just as varied with names to rival the flowers: Sandhill Clubtail, Prince Baskettail, Saddlebag, Ebony

Jewelwing—each one unique in shape and color.

I was admiring the early morning spider webs, heavy and sparkling with dew, when five Sandhill Cranes flew overhead! We wondered during our walk if the birds were looking at us too. I'm certain that they do. The woods were full of Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers busy with the business of spring. One female Downy in particular was thrumming the top of a snag not for food but to attract a mate. Sure enough, another Downy answered in the distance. Above us, a Black-bellied Whistling Duck rushed by. The Mourning Doves were pink in the morning light. Occasionally, we found a knot of warblers feeding in the oaks: several female Pines, a gorgeous male Prairie, Yellow-rumped, Palms, and Parulas too. We talked about which warblers nest in Florida and I learned an interesting factoid: the Yellow-throated warblers have an east/west migratory habit in Florida as they live on the coasts and move inland to breed. There is so much to see and learn as you travel outdoors.



As hoped for, several Swallow-tailed Kites dipped and swerved overhead, one of them eating on the wing from its talon. They still take my breath away! We spotted a Ruby-throated Hummingbird glinting in the sunlight at the top of a sparsely-leafed tree.

To think that these creatures migrate countless miles boggles the mind and delineates the importance of undisturbed habitat to accommodate them.

The White-eyed Vireos called throughout the morning. We heard the chatter of a House Wren then it hopped out of its cover, pint-sized and distinctive. Carolina Chickadees were feeding upside-down—I love seeing them! By the end of the day, we tallied 35 species of birds and so enjoyed each other's company. Our minds are filled with the color and wonder of flowers and creatures and friendship.



If you would like to learn more about the field trips that we offer, visit our [webpage](#), join our [Facebook group](#), or follow us on [Instagram](#).

Just Want to Say...

By Madeleine Bohrer

Birding this year has been an uplifting and refreshing adventure. Seeing my Clearwater Audubon “peeps” again after so many months of isolation! Sharing what we love in person, out in the woods with leaves rustling and sprinkles of spring flowers dotting the paths. We are together again looking for birds, butterflies, dragonflies—anything that lives freely outdoors. What a joy.

One of the best parts is meeting new birders—it happens every year, but this year it just seemed special. Every bird we shared was seen anew and brought fullness back to our hearts. We saw a Tricolored Heron in full breeding color on our Key Vista walk: iridescent blue bill, deep red legs, that wonderful jet of white nuptial plume—it rivalled Photoshop! Imagine sharing a breath-taking Swallow-tailed Kite on our walk at Aripeka with someone who has never seen one? Or introducing folks from Oregon to groups of Gray Kingbirds mixed with Great-crested Flycatchers out at Honeymoon Island? This is a joy that the word “pandemic” cannot touch.



I am so grateful for our group. I love being a part of it. Join us if you haven't already! There is so much to be done to preserve our precious county: volunteer at the Raptor Sanctuary at Moccasin Lake, make a difference by joining the board, advocate for the things you love. How about taking pictures and writing articles for the Wingbeat?

Our birding season is coming to a close until next fall, but we all know it never ends! There is so much to learn and experience! See you soon...and happy birding!

Membership in National Audubon also includes membership in Audubon of Florida and the Clearwater Audubon Society.

In addition, you will receive the award-winning National Audubon magazine.

[Membership Application](#)

AUDUBON FL HIGHLIGHTS

Click a story below to learn more



News

Vanessa Miot Turns to South Florida Parks in Pursuit of Bird Photography

While zooming in on South Florida's bird diversity, Miot connects her children with the natural world.



Coastal Conservation

Invasive Plant Removal at Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries Improves Habitat

A diverse habitat will be more resilient in the face of rising sea levels and temperatures.



Coastal Conservation

Water Quality Woes Continue to Plague Nesting Efforts in the Southwest

The sepsis summer of 2020 caps off a series of mortality events in the region.



News

Reflecting on the 2020 Nesting Season as the 2021 Chicks and Fledglings Appear

By Audubon Staff

The 2020 season gave us both reason to hope and concerning developments for Florida's sea and shorebirds.

Thank you for your continued support.

Click a card below to learn more

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UPCOMING EVENTS >>> Programs

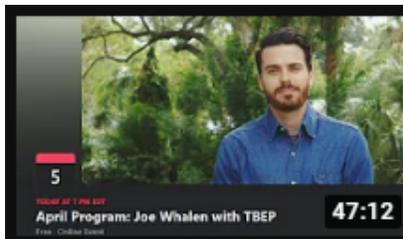
Monthly Meetings **will be held on Zoom** 7pm on the first Monday of the month October-May

Recent Program



MAY: George L. Heinrich: Survey of Florida Rivers to Determine the Southern Distribution of the Suwannee Cooter.

Previous Programs are available on our [YouTube Channel](#)



APRIL: Joe Whalen, Communication & Outreach Coordinator with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP) discussed the future vision of TBEP, exciting new projects, partnerships and opportunities for individuals.



March Program Short-tailed Hawks, Swallow-tailed Kites, and Snail Kites

Gina Kent is a Senior Conservation Scientist with the Avian Research and Conservation Institute. She shared details on tracking and migration and updated us on the latest research for Short-tailed Hawks, Swallow-tailed Kites, and Snail Kites.

Report Sightings on the ARCI website: <https://www.arcinst.org/report-sightings/>

Native Plant Partners

You may have noticed on some of our birding trips that there is a native plant expert. Plants and birds have been partners since their time began. We are excited to continue this partnership with our local **Pinellas chapter of the Native Plant Society**. <http://www.fnps.org/>

Tuesday, May 4th and Saturday, Apr 15th, 8:00 am - 10:00 am

Butterfly Garden Maintenance

Landscape designer Nicole Jones will be leading a team of volunteers in maintaining the Butterfly Garden at [Moccasin Lake](#). This is a great opportunity to learn more about which plants attract and host our local butterflies, what conditions they prefer and how to prune them.

Please bring hand tools, work gloves and drinking water. The chapter will provide trash bags.

To join, please contact us at volunteer@pinellasnativeplants.org. Please also provide us with your cell phone number to be notified of last minute changes.



New Native Plant Nursery at Honeymoon Island



Honeymoon Island State Park, with assistance from Pinellas Chapter FNPS, is establishing a native plant nursery on the island for the purpose of replacing plants damaged or destroyed by the planned beach renourishment of the Pet Beach. The project involves identifying native plants, gathering seeds, growing plants at the nursery then transplanting

on Pet Beach after the renourishment is completed.

Park Ranger Russell Anderson is seeking volunteers to help with the setup and operation of the nursery. If you have an interest in volunteering or learning more about the project, call Ranger Anderson at russell.j.anderson@floridadep.gov.

Do you bird or explore on Florida's Wildlife Management Areas? Join WildQuest!

<https://floridanaturetrackers.com/wildquest/>

From May 1 – 9, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will host a series of scavenger hunts on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) throughout the state. With the free and easy-to-use GooseChase app, you can go on a wild adventure at your local WMA and discover some of Florida's best spots to see wildlife and enjoy the outdoors.



Pinellas Bird Steward Training

May 10, 7pm: Pinellas County Beaches. [Register here](#). June 24, 7pm: July 4th Special Training (Pinellas and Sarasota counties). [Register here](#).

Your Clearwater Audubon Society Board

Executive Committee:

John Hood
Lynn Sumerson
Dale Goebel
Meichelle Long
Cuneyt Yilmaz

Committee Chairs:

Conservation Projects: Dana Kerstein
Field Trips: Dale Goebel
Media: Position Available
Membership: Cuneyt Yilmaz
Newsletter/Webmaster: Meichelle Long
Programs: Position Available
Wild Bird Sanctuary: Stephanie Anderson

Officers:

VP Conservation: Kim Begay
Treasurer: Madeleine Bohrer
Secretary: Stephanie Hall

Board Member at Large:

Mardy Hornsby
IP President: John Hood

Special Committees:

CBC: Paul Trunk
Eagle Watch: Louise Roy

Join the Board or a Committee

Becoming a member of a nonprofit organization's board can be a meaningful way to explore how your experience and expertise can be applied in the nonprofit sector at the governance level, and ultimately, how your experience and expertise can help advance a nonprofit organization's social impact. Please take a few moments to read Audubon's statement of [Equity, Diversity & Inclusion](#) and the [Board Member Expectations](#). Board members meet on the last Monday of each month. Monthly general membership meetings (open to the public) are the first Monday of the month unless otherwise noted.

To view a list of available positions on the board or on a committee, please view [this document](#). Complete the [Board Interest Survey here](#).

Clearwater Audubon Society

Clearwater Audubon Society, Inc. P.O. Box 97 Clearwater Florida 33757
EIN 59-6177460

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>

Supporting our community since 1959

Our Motto: Conservation through Education

We represent Audubon Society members in Northern Pinellas County and provide services to all who are interested: free local field trips with expert birders; inexpensive extended field trips within the US and to other locales, free monthly programs, volunteer & networking opportunities within the local conservation community; scholarships to local summer camps and speakers for a variety of classrooms and groups.

[Membership Application](#)



[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT >>> Christina Evans

All Photos by Christina Evans

Nature photographer Christina Evans focuses on native flora and fauna of Florida. Christina's photographs have received honors nationally and internationally — most recently with an image featured in [Bird Behaviors from the 2020 Audubon Photo Awards](#). Her publication credits include *National Wildlife* magazine, National Geographic Books, [Florida Audubon Naturalist](#) and the ABA magazine *Birding* — including the [June 2020 cover](#) featuring the endangered Florida Grasshopper Sparrow.

“I believe my very best images have a sense of spontaneity, have a sense of humor, show off a personality, or inspire wonder. If I’m lucky, a single image will have more than one of these aspects, and when I’m extremely lucky, it will have all of them.”



Carolina Wren feeding a hungry fledgling — how spontaneous!



What is more humorous than Wild Turkeys fan dancing together down the road?



(above) The wonder of a Reddish Egret, white morph at Ft. de Soto E. Jackpot!

(left) Can a bee have personality? This male Long-horned bee says yes.

(below) Crested Caracaras teaching the kids to sand bathe in the road at Kissimmee Prairie.



“Someone asked me recently if I always have an eye out for a shot. The answer is no, not “for a shot”. I always have an eye out for interesting things going on in nature. I’m not in it just for the photos. I started taking photos to help me identify birds while out birding. I love birds, I love bugs (well, *some* bugs!) and I love “real” native Florida. Amazing things can be found in a lot of places you might not expect. A number of my award-winning photos have been taken in my average-sized, suburban, mid-Pinellas County yard — starting with a tiny Eastern Amberwing dragonfly, and a Red-bellied Woodpecker eating berries, (also the cover of one of Craig Huegel’s native plant gardening books). It is incredibly rewarding to create and maintain an environment with native plants that attracts and sustains wildlife. The life happening in my

yard each day delights and sustains me when nothing else can — and has been especially important during this strange time of Covid-19. The photos I get from it are a wonderful bonus.”



This Eastern Amberwing was my first award winner, highly honored in Nature's Best magazine.



Black-and-white Warbler on a Snowberry branch



Yellow-billed Cuckoo — a dream come true photo opportunity



A Red-bellied Woodpecker on Marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*) won a place in the *Nature's Best Backyards* issue.



A Black-headed Grosbeak in January 2020 is the rarest bird seen in my yard, eating Wild Coffee berries!



Young Eastern Screech Owl, backyard class of June 2019



American Redstart male, ending this feature with a full moon.

I'd like to encourage anyone who enjoys my photos to join the Audubon Society, the Florida Native Plant Society, and/or any other conservation group you prefer that helps promote and save the wild, native, and natural. And if you enjoy and want to learn more about the amazing Florida prairie, please visit www.kissimmeeprairiefriends.org/ and join the Friends of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve. For more photos, please visit my [website](#).

Organizations We Support

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fl.audubon.org



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Important Bird Areas
Important Bird Areas

Important Bird Areas in Florida

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Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve

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Pinellas Chapter FNPS
Friends in Focus Photography Club
Safety Harbor Garden Club
Friends of Moccasin Lake



Moccasin Lake Nature Park

