

The JAY

www.seminoleaudubon.org



The mission of the Seminole Audubon Society, Inc. is to promote awareness and protection of the plants and animals of the St Johns River basin in order to sustain the beneficial coexistence of nature and humans.

March - April - May 2024

Purple Martin Gourds Installed on Lake Monroe

By Phyllis Hall

Purple Martins hunt for their food near bodies of water. They eat flying insects and especially seem to like dragonflies. They nest in tree cavities, but because of habitat decline, they are almost entirely dependent on human nest sites. They are migratory, flying from the Amazon Basin in the summer to breed. In January, scouts, typically older males, begin to arrive on the shore of Lake Monroe (and other areas) to find a foraging area and nesting boxes. They then call to attract other Purple Martins to the site. Each pair builds a nest of twigs, pine needles, mud, and leaves. The female will lay 3 to 5 eggs and incubate them for 15 to 18 days. The offspring will stay in the nest for about a month before fledging. At the end of summer, Purple Martins gather in large flocks before they migrate back to South America.



SAS Purple Martin Team L to R:
Richard Hagen, John Carey, Phyllis Hall,
Cecilia Carey, Jan Peters and Jim Peters
Photo by: Jim Peters

nest watchers have also noticed a lot of harassment by crows in the area. Eight of the gourds were upgraded to a type with crow guards and these were installed on January 20, 2024 by the SAS Purple Martin team: Jim Peters, Jan Peters, Cecilia Carey, John Carey, Richard Hagen and Phyllis Hall. Monitoring of the nests will continue and, as she has done at the end of each nesting season, Cecilia will submit the nest data to the Purple Martin Conservation Organization.

In 2016, Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) members noticed that Purple Martins were nesting in streetlight poles near the Sanford marina on Lake Monroe. SAS worked with the City of Sanford to erect sixteen gourds on two poles along the waterfront adjacent to a boat launch and picnic area. The Purple Martins established a successful colony nesting site in the gourds. Each year, the gourds are put up in January and taken down in August. This is a busy marina area with a boat launch and picnic tables with over 7,300 visitors to the park each year. Since most people are not familiar with Purple Martins, SAS received a grant from National Audubon in 2020 to create an educational kiosk that was placed in the area near the Purple Martin gourds.

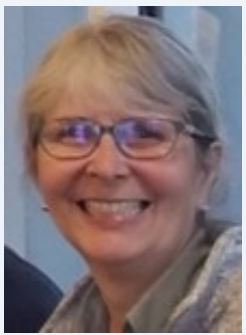
Over time, the gourds have deteriorated, and



New Purple Martin Gourds with Crow-Guards
Photo by Phyllis Hall

Kudos to Cecilia Carey for her Volunteer Work on Media

By Phyllis Hall



Cecilia Carey
Photo by Leslie Martin

We want to recognize Cecilia for all her work behind the scenes for communications on MailChimp, Facebook and Meetup. Her posts are always well done with added photos to get reader attention. Her work has significantly expanded SAS outreach.

Here are the numbers as of this printing:

Mailchimp: 581 recipients

Facebook: 846 followers

Meetup: 900 members

We thank you for your extraordinary contributions to Seminole Audubon Society, Cecilia.

Methane Rising

By Sam Kendall

Methane gas is many times more powerful than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. Scientists say reducing and eliminating this greenhouse gas (GHG) would be the fastest way to slow climate change. Methane has a number of sources. Until recently, efforts to reduce the number of human-caused sources have not received much enthusiasm nor support.

Abandoned and unplugged oil and gas wells are major methane-producing offenders. Insolvent owners often simply walk away from them. Estimates range from several hundreds of thousands to more than a million across the U.S.—another shameful legacy of the fossil fuel industries. In 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, allocating \$4.7 billion to affected States to identify and cap these wells. Each one can cost up to \$75,000 to fix. Participating States have begun dispatching work crews to find and plug the wells.

Live wells, of course, without proper equipment, can leak dangerous amounts of methane as well. The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) is launching MethaneSat this year. The satellite will track methane emissions all over the world and allow governments and the public to identify the offending wells (and owners). In 2021, the EPA updated regulations for methane emissions under the Clean Air Act.¹

Another man-made methane source is emitted by landfills.

Decomposing waste under anaerobic conditions is ideal for generating methane. The Seminole County landfill has a gas collection system which captures 75% of all the methane and sends it to three turbines which generate electricity. The other 25% penetrates the surface into the atmosphere. They call these 'fugitive emissions'. In 2019, the fugitive methane emissions amounted to more than 283 million tons of CO₂ equivalent (the equivalent amount of CO₂ forcing from methane).²



Photo by REUTERS/Lindsay DeDario

Abandoned oil well



Photo by REUTERS/Bryan Woolston

Abandoned natural gas well

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-drilling-abandoned-specialreport/special-report-millions-of-abandoned-oil-wells-are-leaking-methane-a-climate-menace-idUSKBN23N1NL>

Continued on next page

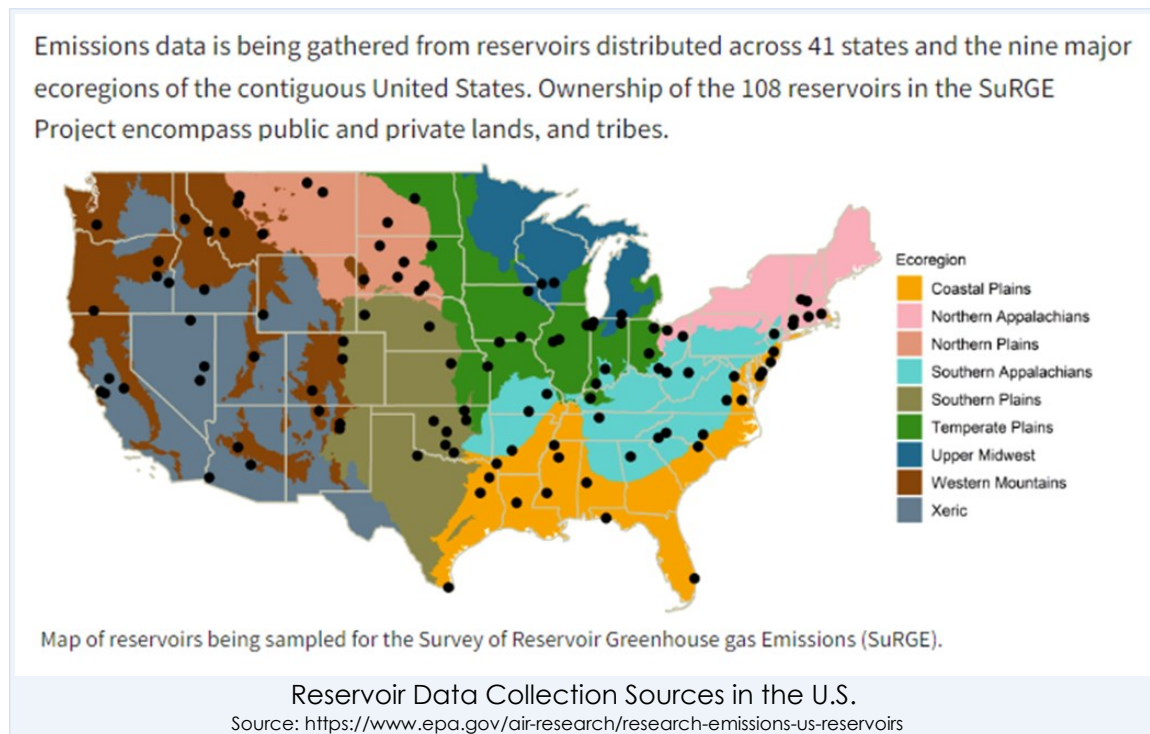
Methane Rising *Continued from page 2*

I called Seminole County and was informed they have applied for Federal grant money to address the GHG emissions from all County operations. A 2019 study of emissions, sponsored in part by Audubon, found that more than 92% of County GHG emissions come from the landfill. The County advised that a response to the grant request is expected in April 2024.

The County need not wait, though. It can take action right now by asking homeowners to compost their food scraps and food waste and provide seminars to teach people how to compost. The U.S. Dept of Agriculture estimates that between 30% and 40% of all food produced in the US never reaches anyone's table. The agricultural production components of energy and water are wasted and much of this uneaten food ends up as methane emitted from landfills. Numerous reasons are given for the waste: the public will not buy unusually shaped produce; supply chain problems; price fluctuations affecting farmers; etc.

A surprising source of methane is one few of us will have considered. Last year, Lisa Rinaman, who is the St. Johns Riverkeeper, spoke to our chapter about the benefits breaching the Rodman Dam would mean for the Ocklawaha and St Johns Rivers. Apart from having no public purpose, the dam and reservoir have, among other ecosystem violations, drowned a cypress forest, reduced fish diversity, and blocked manatees from seeking warmer water. This dam creates a problem about which I have only recently learned. Methane is emitted from the reservoir! Lakes differ from reservoirs in that lake bottoms are generally free of vegetation. Reservoirs generally flood trees and other vegetation. This existing vegetation, combined with more organic material transported downriver, accumulates behind the dam, and all decompose and release methane.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began surveying 108 dam reservoirs in 2020 to determine the amount of methane and CO₂ emissions.³ These results have been included in reports by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); and they can be reviewed using the "Research on Emissions from U.S. Reservoirs | US EPA" link below.



1. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/US-Methane-Emissions-Reduction-Action-Plan-1.pdf>
2. Seminole County Energy and Sustainability Roadmap, Hanson, September 12, 2022.
3. [Research on Emissions from U.S. Reservoirs | US EPA](https://www.epa.gov/air-research/research-emissions-us-reservoirs)

Birds About Town:

Common Ground Dove (*Columbina passerina*) versus Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)

By Lynne Smith, SAS Member

This article is not about a competition, but, embarrassing as it is to admit, I used to think the Common Ground Dove was a juvenile Mourning Dove! These doves have many similarities, but size is not one of them. Mourning Doves are almost twice as big as Common Ground Doves in every way: size, weight and sound.



Common Ground Dove



Mourning Dove

Photos provided by Lynne Smith

They are both members of the *Columbidae* family of pigeons and doves. Common Ground Doves are 6 to 7 inches long, and weigh only 1 to 1.5 ounces. Mourning Doves are 9 to 13 inches long and weigh 3 to 6 ounces.

Common Ground Doves are quieter. Their call is a soft "Oooo-oop oooo-oop oooo-oop". Their wings make a rattling noise upon take off. The Mourning Dove's call is a louder "Whooo-are-yooo-ooo-ooo" and their wings make a louder, high-pitched, squeaking noise when they take off. Ornithologists say this noise is caused by the way air flows through their wing feathers. (A sidenote: in early December, 2023, I noted a flock of fourteen Mourning Doves feeding in my backyard. They were startled by a gang of squirrels and the flock took off, but I did not hear the usual squeaking sound from their wings.)

The feathers are another distinguishing physical characteristic: the Common Ground Dove's head and breast have a scaly appearance; Mourning Doves' feathers do not have a scaly appearance except for when they are juveniles. (This is probably where my mistaken-identity problem started.)

The underside of Common Ground Doves' wings is rusty, reddish-orange. The underside of Mourning Doves' wings is light gray. Common Ground Doves have short, rounded tails, Mourning Doves have long, pointed tails. Common Ground Doves have pink and red bills, Mourning Doves' bills are dark gray.

Continued on next page

Birds About Town:

Common Ground Dove versus Mourning Dove Continued from page 4

Common Ground Doves live in warm climates: southern USA, Mexico, Central America and South America. Mourning Doves, on the other hand, have adapted to a variety of climates. They live as far north as Canada and as far south as Central America. Those that reside in northern climates head south for the winter and then return in the spring.

Both species feed on the ground or at bird feeders. They eat seeds, berries and the occasional insect. A Common Ground Dove has been observed to peck up to 2,500 seeds per day. That is a lot of pecking! After the doves have their fill, they stop to digest. The food moves from their crop to their first stomach, then on to the gizzard. I recently observed a Mourning Dove standing motionless on my platform birdfeeder and a Common Ground Dove perched like a statue on the edge of my bird bath. They stayed motionless like this for ten minutes. After doing research for this article, I decided they must have been "digesting". Doves drink a lot of water, which I can attest to, by how often they drink and bathe in my birdbath. Doves, unlike most birds, are able to use their bills like a straw to suck water. Most birds have to scoop water into their bills, then throw their heads back to drink it down.

Doves do most of their "cooing" vocalizations during breeding season. Males strut around the females with their iridescent neck and breast feathers puffed out. Common Ground Doves build flimsy nests on the ground, which make them very susceptible to predation by animals such as raccoons, foxes, snakes, bobcats, cats, dogs, hawks, blackbirds, etc. Mourning Doves build their nests in trees, on the ground, or even on abandoned construction equipment. Doves are monogamous during breeding season and may have several broods. They use their wings like clubs to defend their nests, and also, as I have observed, their



Common Ground Dove Nest



Mourning Dove Nest

feeding spots on the birdfeeder. They usually lay one or two eggs which hatch after about two weeks. The parents feed their young partially digested food from their crops which is called "crop milk". The chick places its head in the parent's beak to obtain the rich milk. After a few days the chicks are fed regurgitated seeds and fruit. They fledge after two weeks

but the parents continue feeding them for another two to three weeks. Then they're off to fend for themselves with Mourning Doves living in flocks and Common Ground Doves usually living in pairs.

According to population numbers, Mourning Doves are thriving in this rough and tumble world, but Common Ground Doves' numbers are declining.

I have been observing these two species of doves at my backyard feeders for decades. I have come to the conclusion that they may not look like the smartest bird on the wire, but they are every bit as feisty and clever as the more popular bluejays, cardinals and buntings.

References:

"Common Ground Dove Identification." *All About Birds*, The Cornell Lab, 8 August 2023, allaboutbirds.org.

"Bio Bits – Unique Feeding Habits of Doves." *Menunkatuck Audubon Society*, 7 October 2023, menunkatuck.org.

"Mourning Dove – Wildlife Note." *Pennsylvania Game Commission*, 7 October 2023, pgc.pa.gov.

Vuilleumier, Francois, editor. *Birds of North America*. D. K. Pub., 2016 p. 310.

Sibley, David Allen, et. al. *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*. Alfred E. Knoph, 2009.

Amstutz, Lisa. *Mourning Doves*, Capstone Press, 2016.

UCF Knighthawks

By Alex Barath

Knighthawk Audubon is a college campus chapter representing the National Audubon Society at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Our primary goal is to foster interest in ornithology while creating opportunities for students to see and learn about birds. We want to create an inclusive and diverse environment for all students to work with the community as well as local Audubon chapters to inspire, promote, and facilitate the conservation of local and national avifauna and their ecosystems. We want to connect students with avian-related activities such as bird-watching hikes along with professional conservation opportunities provided by the National Audubon Society.

Many of the activities in which we participate as a club include hiking or reaching out to parks to both volunteer and educate our members on the conservation efforts that go into maintaining the environment. This can include places such as the Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, Mead Botanical Garden, Orlando Wetlands, Lake Apopka, Lake Lotus Bird Banding Station, and most definitely the UCF Arboretum. A few semesters ago, we created our own Plants for Birds Garden at the Arboretum, and regularly collaborate with the other Eco-clubs at UCF (Entomology Club, Herpetology Club, Knights for Wildlife, Botanical Society) and the Arboretum staff.

All of our bird hikes to other parks are open to anyone to join! We regularly post our meeting dates and other information on our Instagram@knighthawkucf.



Birds of Prey Center Visit



UCF Knighthawks Field Trip
Photos by Alex Barath



Planting in the Plants for Birds Garden

All-Terrain Tracked Chair (ATC) in Blue Spring State Park

By Phyllis Hall



Photo provided by Chuck Honaker

All-Terrain Tracked Chair

An All-terrain Tracked Chair (ATC) is now available for mobility-challenged guests to use on the trails in Blue Spring State Park. A person who is mobility-challenged can now explore the trails within the park using the ATC. A park volunteer will guide the hike and point out Florida's unique nature along the way. Mobility-challenged guests can experience areas in the park previously not available to them. The all-terrain tracked chair is fun, easy to use, and best of all it is free, but reservations are required.

Chuck Honaker is a volunteer at the park. He will be leading some tracked chair excursions. He also does Florida Scrub-Jay walks there. Blue Spring State Park is a popular place to see manatees on the cooler days of winter when they congregate in the springs.

To find out more about the ATC use the following link:
<https://friendsofbluespringstatepark.org/pages/tracked-chair>.

Chuluota Wilderness Area Monthly Bird Survey

By Chuck Honaker, Florida Master Naturalist



Photo by Cecilia Carey

On February 12, 2024, the SAS survey team completed its second bird survey of 2024 at the 625-acre Chuluota Wilderness Area Natural Lands property on Curryville Road near Chuluota in eastern Seminole County. The survey was joined by Ron Chicone, Natural Lands biologist. The community of Curryville was situated on the site in the early 1900s and, originally, was engaged in turpentine production, but by the 1920s, a sawmill operated in the area. According to the Land Management plan from Seminole County, published in 2020, the property was purchased in 1994 from the Fore family which had used the land for raising livestock and hunting. The land is a vital part of a contiguous wildlife corridor in our county and connects to the Little Big Econ State Forest and the Charles Bronson Memorial State Forest.



Ron Chicone
Photo by Cecilia Carey

This property has a variety of habitats that support a biodiverse population of birds, plants and animals. There is an old pasture that occupies part of the area, which may be restored to a more natural state in the future. There are 4 primary habitats: **wet pine flatwoods** with pond pines and bay trees, **mesic (moist) flatwoods** with slash and pond pines, **scrubby flatwoods** with slash and long leaf pines and, lastly, **sand pine scrub** with Sand Pines, Sand Live and Chapman Oak, Rusty Lyonia, Saw Palmetto and native rosemary plants. There are ephemeral ponds, one with an observation blind, and some swampy areas on the property as well.



Chuluota Wilderness Area Survey Group
Photo by Cecilia Carey

This month's survey team, in addition to Ron and me, consisted of Kate Dolamore, Lorri Lillja, John and Cecilia Carey, Brenda Felliciano and Connie Dolan. Thanks to Cecilia for posting pictures to the SAS Facebook page along with a brief report on our survey. Our revised bird species total for this survey is 32. It was good to see familiar species and seasonal ones like American Robins and Tree Swallows in flight, and numerous warblers in the trees and shrubs along the 2.5 miles of trail that we walked. American Kestrels, a declining species, were noted along with four woodpecker species. Eastern Bluebirds were seen in the pasture area. Always colorful to see, they were more numerous on our surveys in 2023 at the Econ River

Wilderness Area. In addition to birds, several of our team members have a keen interest in plants of which our current property has a diverse number of species.

Those persons who would like to participate in these surveys can reach me at cwh.jr@hotmail.com.

Flowering Native Plants found at Chuluota Wilderness Area

Left to Right:

Skyblue Lupine (*Lupinus diffusus*)

Netted Chain Fern (*Polypodiophytina*)

Crome Sphagnum/Spreading Spiky-Bog Moss
(*Sphagnum squarrosum*)

Photos by Chuck Honaker



Program and Field Trip Notes

2023 Wekiva River Christmas Bird Count

Friday, December 29, 2023

By Leslie Martin

Seminole Audubon Society joined other birders in the annual Wekiva Circle Christmas Bird Count. The count area is a 17-square mile circle divided into zones. We submitted our count for zones 10 and 11 of the circle, which includes areas of Sanford and Lake Mary. The event was rescheduled due to inclement weather, which saw a reduced number of participants this year. Our zones still reported a total number of 68 species, only 16 species fewer than last year, but far fewer total birds with 1,124 this year and 2,226 last year. This was the trend in each zone. The results are used to help determine the long-term health and status of bird populations.

Some species counts in our combined zones included 148 White Ibis, 37 Sandhill Cranes, 5 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, 39 Tufted Titmouses, and 59 each Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers.



Other species observed included L to R: Pileated Woodpeckers, Savannah Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk
Photos by Leslie Martin

Sandhill Crane Research

Sunday, January 14, 2024

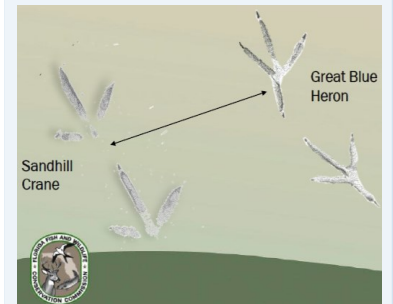
By Phyllis Hall

Tim Dellinger from Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI), the research arm of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, provided many interesting facts about Sandhill Cranes. There are 15 species of cranes worldwide; 11 face extinction. In North America, there are Whooping Cranes and Sandhill Cranes. There are currently about 5 Whooping Cranes in Lake Wales/Kissimmee area left from a release in the 1990's. There are about 827,000 Sandhill Cranes; about 805,000 are migratory. The Florida Sandhill Crane is a non-migrating subspecies numbering 5,000-25,000, and listed as threatened. Habitat loss is their greatest threat. Sandhill cranes are about 4 feet tall with a wingspan of about 6.5 feet. They weigh about 10 pounds. They often stain their feathers using iron rich soil. They cannot perch in trees because their hind toe is elevated. They have one or two chicks that reach adult size by 15 weeks, and their crown has turned red by 10-12 months.

They frequent a range of habitats, including open urban areas, prairies, and pasture land. Their floating nests take a couple of days to build. Not much is known about Sandhill Cranes using developed areas. A study, using banding and/or transmitters, began in 2017 to examine the movements, productivity and survival of some of the Cranes in these areas. The ones with transmitters showed that they move between preserved areas, where they usually spend the night, and suburban areas. The greatest cause of mortality is vehicle collisions. Plastic or debris on the beak can damage the beak or cause the bird to starve. Fishing line is another source of injury, especially on the legs. You can help cranes by not feeding them. It is acceptable for them to eat bird feeder spillage where they are using their natural foraging behavior. Pick up trash so they do not ingest it.



Left: Whooping Crane
Right: Sandhill Crane



Sandhill Cranes leave distinct footprints due to elevated hind toes.

Photos courtesy of Tim Dellinger,

If you see an injured banded Sandhill Crane, report it to FWC at

<https://myfwc.com/get-involved/volunteer/citizen-science/sightings/sandhill-crane/>.

Program and Field Trip Notes

Yankee Lake Treatment Facility: Florida Scrub-Jays

Friday, January 19, 2024

By Phyllis Hall

The Florida Scrub-Jay is listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. It is in danger of extinction unless habitat is preserved. Each habitat for these birds is important and needed to maintain a healthy gene pool. Yankee Lake Treatment Facility is the only habitat in Seminole County suitable for Florida Scrub-Jays. In 1993, along with *Audubon Florida*, SAS was instrumental in preserving this habitat when the treatment facility was being planned. Seminole County Commissioners named the Florida Scrub-Jay the official bird of Seminole County in March, 2023, after advocacy by Seminole High School students. The students have also made appeals to Florida legislators for this State designation.

Staff from Environmental Science Associates (ESA), the management company for this habitat, and Senior Wildlife Ecologist, Alan Alshouse, consultant from Alshouse & Associates, used their trucks to provide a guided tour. They presented an overview of how the property is managed including photos of the various types of equipment used. There are currently seven birds in two family groups. One older female died last year. A young Scrub-Jay, which emigrated from Rock Springs, has since established a family. Staff from the treatment facility explained how the treatment system works with going into the filtration ponds after treatment. It eventually percolates down into the aquifer. We ended the trip with a ride through the property's beautiful hammock area.

The County Commissioners were invited to join us, but all had scheduling conflicts except for Commissioner Bob Dallari, who brought along with his Executive Assistant, Sheri Brown. We appreciate his continued support of this and other conservation initiatives by the County. Allegra Buyer, Program Manager for Seminole County Natural Lands, also joined us on this field trip.



Field Trip Attendees
Photo by Phyllis Hall



Alan Alshouse
Photo by Phyllis Hall



Florida Scrub-Jay
Photo by Javier Cruz (Attendee)

Migration Patterns of Six Florida Birds

Sunday, February 11, 2024

By Phyllis Hall

Gabriel Rey, Orlando Field Engineer and Project Manager with US Ecology, presented his Stetson University research findings on how ranges have shifted, and migration patterns have altered, for six birds found in Florida: Piping Plovers, Red Knot, Everglades Snail Kite, Wood Stork, Florida Scrub-Jay, and Red-cockaded Woodpecker. The study was done with a program called *Mavent* which combines mathematics and ecology to predict suitable habitat with the species. The distribution model included a data map correlating the species with mechanistic and correlative data. The data comes from various sources including citizen science data from Jay Watch, eBird, and other data from Cornell Ornithology. Climate change exacerbates existing threats to birds with habitat loss and degradation while adding new challenges including shifting ranges and altered migration patterns. Many birds are struggling to adapt.

Continued on next page

Program and Field Trip Notes *Continued from page 9*

Migration Patterns of Six Florida Birds *Continued*

As the weather gets warmer, the water in the wetlands gets warmer or disappears. This is a threat for Snail Kites and Wood Storks, especially. Development persists as the major threat for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and the Florida Scrub-Jay. Audubon Florida and SAS continue to "speak for the birds" by advocating with local and state policy-makers on various conservation issues including preserving lands through Florida Forever and Seminole Forever. Everything we do helps: planting natives in your yard to provide food and shelter, reducing water and fertilizer use, recycling, etc.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Ken Meyer, who was scheduled to present on Swallow-tailed Kites, was unable to attend the February 11, 2024 program. Thank you to Gabriel for stepping in on short notice.



Snail Kites' prey, apple snails, need water to exist.

Photo by Ron Bielefeld/
Audubon Photography Awards

Pond Hopping in Sanford

Saturday, February 17, 2024

By Cecilia Carey



L to R: Jim and Jan Peters, Susan Nager, Nancy Watkins, Jami Loree, Kathy Sessions, Cecilia, and John Carey. Connie Dolan and Boni Sivi are not pictured but also came on the field trip.

Photo by Leslie

A hardy group braved the cold and rain to go pond hopping in Sanford on February 17, 2024. The group met at Seminole Towne Center Pond in front of JOANN Fabric and Crafts. 15 species were spotted including Blue-winged Teals, Mottled Ducks, and Ring-necked Ducks. The group then drove to Primera Boulevard and birded at three ponds near Primera Towers. The highlights at this stop included a flock of 50 Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, and a female Bufflehead that was spotted by Leslie Martin on a fourth pond. The Bufflehead was listed as a rare bird for the area by eBird. As the drizzle continued, the group

decided to go for coffee along the Sanford Riverwalk. At Café Di Riverwalk we warmed up, dried off, and enjoyed each other's company.

It's Baby Bird Season – What to do if you find a baby bird?

We have comprehensive guidance on our website so look there first <https://seminoleaudubon.org/rehab/>.

Call the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland 407-644-0190. Volunteers who answer the phone can give you additional help. Birds of prey babies may be brought to the Center after your phone conversation.

Volunteer Opportunity – Co-Chair for Outreach Activities

Phyllis Hall has been the coordinator for outreach activities. She would like someone to be co-chair during the next season 2024/2025 beginning in September, 2024. The events where SAS has a display table are: Seminole Garden Expo in February, 9:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. event, Yarborough Nature Center Open House in March, 9:00 a.m. - noon, Lawton Elementary School Earth Day in Oviedo, during or after school event. The role of the coordinator is to communicate with the event coordinator, communicate with volunteers, and ensure there are handouts or activities for the event.

If you are interested, contact Phyllis at phylliscath814@gmail.com.

Upcoming Programs and Field Trips

Program meetings are held on the second Sunday at 2 pm, September through March. There will be no program meetings, April through August, 2024.

Meeting **Location:** IFAS Extension Education Building
University of Florida/IFAS
Extension Seminole County
250 W. County Home Rd. (off 17/92)
Sanford, FL 32773

Seminole County Natural Lands Monthly Bird Surveys

Chuluota Wilderness Area has been selected as the site for the 2024 Seminole County Natural Lands bird surveys. If you would like to help with these surveys, contact Chuck Honaker at cwh.jr@hotmail.com. All levels of birding experience are welcome.

Program: March 10, Sunday. Good Snake, Better Snake



Natalie Swanson, Program Coordinator Seminole Natural Lands/Leisure Services, will provide interesting fun facts about several native species including their habits, habitats, and behaviors. She will introduce and dispel some of the myths about these often-misunderstood, cold-blooded residents. She will bring several live snakes so you can see them up close. Membership vote for the 2024/2026 terms for SAS Board members will be held at the March monthly meeting.

Field Trip: March 16, Saturday. Birding at Hontoon Island State Park

Hontoon Island is a 1,650-acre park located on the St. John's River, southwest of DeLand. We will take a ferry over to the island and then go on a 3-mile walk through mesic flatwoods, floodplain forest and hydric hammock. Meet at the ferry boat landing at 7:45 a.m. Hontoon Island State Park, 2309 River Ridge Road, DeLand, Florida. There is a fee for the ferry boat. Restrooms are available on the island. Note: some trails may be muddy. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, and insect repellent. **Limited to 15 people. Registrations are full.** Contact Cecilia Carey at cacarey@cfl.r.com to be put on the waiting list.



March 30, Saturday. Open House at Yarborough Nature Center, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



Come to this fun, family event. Cecilia Carey will provide a short backyard bird identification class. Families will go on a short, guided bird watching walk. SAS will have a display table and Eagle wingspan activity. The Center will provide other craft activities. Ed Yarborough Nature Center, 3485 North County Road 426, Geneva, FL 32732.

April 13, Saturday. Gemini Springs Park Bio-Bingo and End-of-the-Year Picnic

Play Bio-Bingo at Gemini Springs Park, DeBary, one of Florida's Special Places. Bio-Bingo is a biology treasure hunt using a Bingo card. Explore the park to find the birds and flora and fauna on your Bio-Bingo card. Play on your own or form a team of the best bird, butterfly, bug and plant people you know!

Continued on next page

Upcoming Programs and Field Trips Continued from page 11

April 13, Saturday. Gemini Springs Park Bio-Bingo and End-of-the-Year Picnic



Moderate walking over uneven terrain on the trails. Concrete sidewalk pathways. Restroom available. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. Meet at the park at 8:00 am. When you enter the park, turn left when you see the red building and meet in the first parking lot. Address: 37 Dirksen Dr., DeBary, FL 32713. Stay for picnic lunch. Bring your own drink and lunch plus something to share if you wish. Coordinators: Leslie Martin, Phyllis Hall.

Earth Day at Lawton Elementary School - **Volunteers Needed** Monday, April 22, 2024

SAS volunteers will have a display table at this event. Contact Phyllis Hall at phylliscath814@gmail.com if you can help for a shift: K- 2 grades 9-11:30 a.m. or 3rd-5th grades 12-3 p.m. School address: 151 Graham Ave., Oviedo, FL 32765. Learn more about their LESA Gardens at lesagardens.weebly.com.

2024/2025 Programs and Field Trip Planning Committee.

Membership vote for the 2024/2026 terms for SAS Board members will be held at the March monthly meeting. If you would like to nominate someone (or volunteer yourself) to serve on the board, contact Phyllis Hall at phylliscath814@gmail.com.

Mexico | Birding the Ruins of the Yucatán—An SAS Field Trip! November 8, 2024 - November 18, 2024

Pack your binoculars and embark on an intense birding adventure to the environmentally-diverse Yucatán Peninsula. Join Seminole Audubon Society to witness native birds soar above the stunning ruins of Oxtankah, Chicanná, Calakmul, Hochob, Uxmal, and other archaeological sites on this journey through the Mayan world. Heads will turn at every point of this expedition as you look for a rainbow array of birds including hummingbirds, parrots, tanagers, toucans, raptors, and many more. From trail hikes to boat rides, birders will have an opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoor activities while exploring the history of the Maya and the birds that inhabit the ruins of this ancient civilization.

For full itinerary or to join the trip go to <https://holbrook.travel/seminole-mx24>.

To register, contact Leslie Martin at woodstork.martin@gmail.com.

Land Cost \$3,075 per person for 8-9 participants.

What's included:

- Activities and meals as mentioned in itinerary
- Airport transfers
- Full-time expert birding naturalist guide for duration of program
- Non-alcoholic beverage with meals
- Private transportation and driver for the duration of the program

Land cost only. Does not include round-trip airfare to and from destination.



Photo by PhilippN, CC BY-SA 3.0/ <https://holbrook.travel/seminole-mx24>



WELCOME

New Members or New to Our Chapter !

Rosemarie Cazeau Lake Mary
Javier Cruz Orlando
Wanda Currie Geneva
Kathleen Gibson Geneva
Jack Keefe Lake Mary
Dave Kellog Lake Mary

Randall & Deborah McCall Enterprise
Victor Moss Lake Mary
Karen Richards Lee, MA
Arianna Skipper Sanford
Harold Slauson Geneva

Photo by: Paul Comazzi

Keep Up With SAS



Visit our website at <https://seminoleaudubon.org/>



Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/seminoleaudubonsociety/>



Find us on Meetup at <https://www.meetup.com/seminoleaudubon-com/>

Audubon Membership

Your membership contribution supports our chapter and makes you a partner in our mission to promote the awareness and protection of wildlife and the environment that supports it. In addition, you receive membership in the National Audubon Society and Audubon Florida including the Audubon and Florida Naturalist magazines.

Join on our website: <https://seminoleaudubon.org/membership/>

Donations are always appreciated to support chapter activities. Consider honoring someone with a donation to Seminole Audubon Society. Just click on the Donation icon on our website. Payment is with credit card or PayPal at <https://seminoleaudubon.org/>.



Image by nadzeyashanchuk/freeoik.com

2023-2024

Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/23)

SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com

Board	Name	Term
President	Phyllis Hall	2022/2024
Vice President	Leslie Martin	2023/2026
Treasurer	Jan Peters	2023/2025
Secretary	Peggy Stickney	2022/2024
At-Large	Lewis Gray	2023/2025
At-Large	Tracey Comazzi	2023/2026
At-Large	Connie Dolan	2023/2025

Per 9/11/2022 board meeting, keep the board at 7 members. Add a year to a term as needed to keep the terms balanced.

Committees

Bird Surveys

- The Big Sit! Leslie Martin
- Christmas Bird Count. Leslie Martin
- EagleWatch: Sarah Donlan, Chuck Honaker, Phyllis Hall
- Seminole County Natural Lands. Chuck Honaker (Chair)
- Jane Isle Survey: Lewis Gray (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger, Leslie Martin
- Jay Watch: Chuck Honaker

Conservation: Phyllis Hall (Chair), Sam Kendall (Energy), Chuck Honaker, Sarah Donlan, Cecilia Carey, John Carey, Marguerite Terwilleger, Tracey Comazzi, Fred Milch

Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI). Phyllis Hall

Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP). Connie Dolan (Chair), Corrinne Wertz

Butterfly Survey co-chairs: Connie Dolan & Tracey Comazzi

Education. Garden clubs, libraries, schools and scouts, eco-camp, etc. Cecilia Carey (Chair), John Carey, Joy Rector

History Archives. Stored in Seminole County History Museum. Electronic files: Phyllis Hall

The JAY Newsletter. Tracey Comazzi (Chair), Corrinne Wertz

Lake Monroe Purple Martin Nests. Jim Peters (Chair), Jan Peters, John & Cecilia Carey

Lake Jesup Park Clean Up. Leslie Martin (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger

New Member Welcome Letter. Margaret Loring

Media:

- **Meetings PowerPoint, MailChimp, Meet Up, Facebook.** Cecilia Carey
- **Website.** Phyllis Hall

Membership. Marty Shepherd

Outreach/Festivals. Phyllis Hall (Chair), Marty Shepherd, Cecilia Carey, Leslie Martin, Joy Rector

PO Box Mail Pickup. Marty Shepherd (Backup: Marguerite Terwilleger)

SAS Gmail Inbox. Phyllis Hall (Backup: Cecilia Carey)

Programs & Field Trips. Phyllis Hall (Chair), Leslie Martin, Cecilia Carey. Release keeper: Peggy Stickney

Scholarships Eco-Camp. Marguerite Terwilleger (Chair), Corrinne Wertz, Joy Rector, Michelle Vaughn