

Spring 1983

## Newsletter, Florida Audubon Society - Florida Ornithological Society, Spring 1983

Florida Audubon Society

Florida Ornithological Society

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ORNITHOLOGICAL NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9, No. 2

Spring 1983

This newsletter is published jointly by the Florida Audubon Society and the Florida Ornithological Society as an information exchange among those interested in the conservation, research and enjoyment of birds in Florida. Notices and requests for assistance, and news about birds, birders, and ornithologists should be sent to the editor, Dr. Herbert W. Kale II, Florida Audubon Society, 1101 Audubon Way, Maitland, Fl. 32751 (305-647-2615 or 843-5796). Membership information for F.A.S. can be obtained at this address, and for the F.O.S. from the treasurer, listed on Page 4.

BLACK RAIL EXPEDITION

Several years ago about 35 birders from throughout the state converged on Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge to hear and see the elusive Black Rail. Several rails responded to tape playbacks and we set up a mist net in the territory of one of them and "herded" it into the net. After everyone observed and/or photographed the bird, it was banded and released, none the worse for the experience. By popular demand we have scheduled another Black Rail netting expedition for Friday evening, June 10, 1983. Birders interested in hearing and seeing this secretive species are invited to join Herb Kale of the Florida Audubon, and Bill Leenhouts of the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service at the new gate entrance to the Refuge located on S.R. 406 just east of the Indian River Bridge at 6:00 pm. This gate is closed at 6:30 pm., so don't be late. Birders can park here and carpool to the Dusky Seaside Sparrow cell (T10K) on Black Point Drive. Be sure to bring mosquito repellent (wear long sleeves and trousers) and be prepared to get your feet damp and muddy.

THE FLORIDA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT

A first meeting of the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas Advisory Committee was held in Gainesville on April 26. Attending were H. Kale, Chrm., (representing Florida Audubon), Tom Logan, Tom Goodwin, Steve Nesbit, and Jim Rodgers (Fla. Game & Fresh Water Fish Comm.), Bill Courser (FOS), Bill Hardy (Fla. State Museum), Henry Stevenson (Tall Timbers). Because of a last minute change in meeting date, representatives from Florida Defenders of the Environment, Todd Engstrom and Susan Mashburn, and Everglades National Park, Sonny Bass, were unable to be present.

A complete set of 7½ min topo maps for the state has been purchased by Florida Audubon (each topo contains six census blocks). Expenses for the project would include a paid state coordinator, computer time and data processing, several regional training workshops, miscellaneous postage and travel expenses for volunteer regional coordinators, and publications. Dr. Logan stated that the Game Commission had a definite interest in the Atlas project and requested a formal description or proposal be submitted to him for consideration by the Commission this summer. Nongame funding would be required, and this could not be considered by the legislature until the 1984 session, at the earliest.

DUSKY SEASIDE SPARROW BREEDING PROJECT PROGRESS

In late April the three Dusky-Scott intergrades were placed with three Dusky males. By mid-May results were mixed. One female laid an egg in a nest and began incubating it. One "female" turned out to be a male, and the third "female" is acting suspiciously like a male (or unlike a female). The wild Scott's females captured near Pepperfish Key are scheduled to be placed with the unmated males by the end of May.

NOTICES AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Color-marked bird projects -- Often in this section we list various projects involving color-marked birds with a request to send sightings to the Bird Banding Laboratory and a copy to the investigator. We cannot repeat these in every issue, and if you do not save your back issues it is difficult to remember who is doing what. All you need to remember about all of these projects is that the information should go to the Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD 20708. The banding lab will forward your sighting to the researcher. When you send a sighting be sure to record the proper sequence of colors of leg bands, color, letters, and numbers on wing tags (left or right), species of bird, activity of birds, numbers, date and locality, and your name and address.

American Oystercatchers -- Ted Below [redacted] [redacted] repeats his earlier request for information on occurrences of Am. Oystercatchers in Florida (Date, numbers, location) currently, and in the past. He is also looking for any references published or otherwise of the killing of oystercatchers for feathers, food, or other purposes in the past.

Common Loon Dieoff -- This past winter and early spring many Common Loons in the upper Gulf of Mexico became ill and died and washed ashore, or came ashore ill, and then died. Dead and dying loons were found as far south as Boca Grande. If you observed any dead or sick loons along the beaches please report these (date, location, numbers) to Malcolm Simons, Atlantic & Gulf Coast Beached Bird Survey, 1701 E. Harbor View Rd., Box 52, Charlotte Harbor, Fl. 33950. Cause of the mortality has not yet been determined, but pathologists at the Southeastern Co-Op Wildlife Disease Unit in Athens, Georgia and at the National Wildlife Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin are investigating. Mortality along the Atlantic coast should also be sent to Malcolm.

Study of fall migration routes - Dry Tortugas & Marquesas -- Counts or estimates of birds migrating through these islands during the periods of 11-20 July, 21-31 August, and 11-20 September are needed by Dr. Henry Stevenson to fill out data he has gathered for all Florida regions. Data taken in past years can be used as well as new data. Counts or estimates should be made of all species encountered and the time spent in the field recorded. Send to H. M. Stevenson, [redacted] [redacted]

Winter Range of Ruby Throated Hummingbird -- No known museum specimens or photographs of this species in winter (15 November - 31 January) in Florida occur, except in the extreme southern parts. For certain identification only sight records of adult males can be accepted. Please send definite records of adult male Ruby-throats from central Florida northward to Dr. H. M. Stevenson, [redacted] [redacted]

American Birds Reminder -- Spring migration observations should be sent to area editors by June 5. Area Editors should send their reports to Dr. Herbert W. Kale o/a June 15. If you don't know who your area editor is, send reports directly to H. Kale, please note that the Spring & Summer Reports will use the old bird names. New names become effective with the Fall Migration Report.

Florida Audubon's 1983 Dry Tortugas Tours -- FAS conducted two trips to the Dry Tortugas May 6-8 and May 10-12 on Capt. Ed Davidson's Reef Rover II. Stops at Rebecca Shoals en route gave birders good views of Brown Boobies (an immature Masked was present on the first trip). Numerous migrants were on Garden and Loggerhead Keys, including Western Kingbirds, Philadelphia Vireo, Peregrine, Merlin, Lesser Golden-Plover, numerous warblers, thrushes, grosbeaks, etc., but the highlight birds had to

be the White-tailed Tropicbirds seen each morning flying into and over Ft. Jefferson. Leaders of the trips were Maggy Bowman and Herb Kale, Wendy Hale and Dave Maehr.

1983 Kirtland's Warbler Guided Tours -- For birders who may be in the Michigan area between 14 May - 4 July, the Michigan DNR's field office in Grayling [redacted] and the U. S. Forest Service's office in Mio [redacted] provide free guided tours to Kirtland's Warbler habitat. In Grayling, tours are daily at 7:00 and 11:00 AM. The Mio tours are at 7:30 AM Wed., Thrus., and Fri., and 7:30 and 11:00 AM Sat. and Sun.

The guide Birding in the Florida Keys by the Florida Keys Audubon Society and National Audubon's Research Dept. has been revised (1982) and is available from NAS Res. Dept, 115 Indian Mound Trail, Tavernier, Fl 33070. This is on Plantation Key at Mile Marker 89, one block off of U. S. 1.

Where to Find Birds in Florida to be revised. This popular guide, now out of print, will be revised in 1983. Although Jim Lane's "A Birder's Guide to Florida" is more complete and is the recommended guide for serious birders, there is still a demand for the smaller and less expensive Audubon guide.

Tropical Audubon's Dry Tortugas Water Pumps need priming.--F.O.S member Flora O'Brien was (is) the prime mover behind construction of the bird watering fountains on Garden and Loggerhead Keys in the Dry Tortugas. The pumps for these fountains need replacement every few years. Birders who want to help should send a check to "Pump Fund , Tropical Audubon Society, 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, Fl 33143.

Environmental Laws Violations Hotline Set.--Citizens are being asked to report violations of environmental laws and regulations under a new program of the Dept. of Natural Resources: A 24-hour toll-free Resources Alert Watch Line--1-800-342-1821. Examples of violations are taking fish or sheelfish out of season, using illegal fish traps, selling or buying gamefish, using firearms, explosives, or chemicals to kill food fish, destroying sea oats or other protected plants, damaging dunes, or building seaward of the coastal construction setback line withput a permit.

Florida's Wildlife Alert Program.--This successful program is still dependent upon contributions from individuals and organizations for the funds that are used as rewards for persons providing information that leads to the arrest of a wildlife law violator. (In the case of endangered species the reward is provided by the legislature upon conviction of the violator.) Many Audubon chapters helped get the fund started by contributing to the fund, and it is hoped that this year chapters will again consider making donations. Checks should be sent to the Wildlife Alert Reward Association, % The Sun First National Bank of Lake County, Leesburg, Fl 32748. The toll-free numbers listed below are the Wildlife Alert numbers to be called when a violation is detected:

Northwest Region: 1-800-342-1676  
Central Region: 1-800-342-9620  
Everglades Region: 1-800-432-2046

Northeast Region: 1-800-342 8105  
Southern Region: 1-800-282 8002

#### WILDLIFE REHABILITATION NEWS

An article in a recent Wildlife Society Bulletin describes two cases of chlamydiosis (=psittacosis or ornithosis) in wildlife biologists working with wild waterfowl. Characters of the disease are persistent fevers, persistent influenzal disease, unresolved pneumonia that might follow an influenzal disease, or typhoid-like conditions that have a negative routine tests. Persons who develop these types of illness after working with wild birds should discuss the possibility of chlamydiosis with their physicians, who may not consider the disease without some prompting. (From the AOU Newsletter.)

Beware the "Pilchard Rig" -- Harry Kelton of the Pelican Harbor Seabird Sanctuary has for the past several years been responsible for saving hundreds of hooked and injured pelicans in Dade County. His research has shown that at least 30% of the hooked birds picked up at the Haulover Pier on Miami Beach were caught with the multiple hooked "pilchard rig". With the help of Harvey Abrams of Tropical Audubon, Harry worked with Dade Co. Park and Recreation staffers Bud Daniels and Lon Metz, and the result was a total ban on possession and sale of this type fish hook at the pier. The Department also printed warning and instructional leaflets for fishermen. Tropical Audubon paid for Spanish translations and a large sign on the pier. (From the TAS Newsletter.) Perhaps similar action can be taken in other areas of Florida where this hook may be doing considerable damage to the Brown Pelican?

#### FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Pres: Barbara C. Kittleson - [REDACTED]  
V.P.: Fred E. Lohrer, Archbold Biol. Sta., Rt 2, Box 180, Lake Placid, Fl 33852  
Sec.: Marsha S. Winegarner, Rt. 2, Box 180, Lake Placid, Fl 33852  
Treas.: Caroline H. Coleman, [REDACTED]

The Spring 1983 Meeting - April 15-17 - Gulf Breeze, Fl.--As promised by local chair men Bob and Lucy Duncan, the spring meeting was accompanied by a cold front that passed through the panhandle the night preceding the meeting, and much to the delight of the more than 85 birders and ornithologists attending from all over the state, a major fallout of migrants occurred. The woods, lawns, and barrier island were full of colorful Indigo Buntings, Grosbeaks, tanagers, orioles, and warblers. Field trip leaders Owen Fang, Mary Lou Mattis, Curtis Kingsbery, and Bob and Lucy Duncan heard no complaints about dull birding from the visiting birders. Total species for the weekend, including the Ft Morgan trip on Monday morning was 157. Rarities included a Groove-billed Ani, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, White-breasted Nuthatch, Warbling Vireo, Dickcissel, Lark Sparrow, and Mourning Warbler. 27 species of warblers were sighted. Major birding areas were Ft. Pickens and the Gulf Islands National Seashore on Santa Rosa Island, the Gulf Breeze peninsula, and the Naval Forest.

During the afternoon business meeting officers and directors for the next two years were elected. Officers are listed above. New directors are Helen Dowling, Dr. Sheila Mahoney, and Annette Stedman. Continuing directors are Brooks Atherton, Dr. Mary Clench, and Malcolm Simons. Ted Below remains on the Board as immediate past president, replacing Bill Courser. Directors whose terms expired at this meeting were Oron Bass, Helen Cruickshank, and Marian Henrquez. A unanimous vote of appreciation was extended to the retiring officers and directors. President Below thanked all FOS members for their cooperation and support during his term. He noted that unlike other organizations where he has served as president the officers and members of FOS shared the work load and made the president's job a pleasure. He reminded us that an organization like FOS is what its membership wants it to be, and that members should not be shy about speaking up and letting the officers know what they want.

The afternoon paper session was shared by Todd Engstrom who stressed the importance of using the proper censusing techniques for birds and vegetation in his talk on "Seasonal patterns of habitat use by bird populations in northern Florida", and by Dr. Frances James, who managed to make a complicated story lucid and fascinating as she told of the amazing results in her egg exchange experiments with nesting Red-winged Blackbirds "The environmental component of geographic variation in size and shape."

Friday nights initial flocking of FOS members was a photographers' roundup with slides of interesting birds, including Key Biscayne's La Sagra's Flycatcher, Miami's House Finch,

and St. George Island's Rock Wren.

The Bird Skin Quiz, prepared by Mary Clench, Bill Hardy, and Rich Paul with birds from the Florida State Museum collection, was won by Wes Biggs, followed closely by Peggy Powell and Dave Goodwin. A unique feature about this quiz was that answers had to list the new AOU Checklist names for each specimen. Tanner Girard won a prize for having travelled the greatest distance (from Illinois), and Scott Duncan won a prize for being the youngest birder present. The banquet speaker, Ted Parker, research associate with the LSU Museum of Zoology, presented an excellent talk on the work of LSU ornithologists on the eastern slopes of the Andes of Peru. It was accompanied by slides of breathtaking scenery and gorgeous bird species new to science. The Duncans and the Francis M. Weston Audubon Society received a well-deserved round of applause for hosting a very successful meeting.

#### UPCOMING MEETINGS

Fall 1983 F.O.S. Meeting - October 14-16 - Jacksonville Beach, Fl.

Hosts: Duval Audubon Society. Local Chrm: Dr. Robert W. Loftin [REDACTED]  
Hqs: Turtle Inn, Jacksonville Beach. / 8039 Hillsdale Rd, Jacksonville 32217

Spring 1984 F.O.S. Meeting - April 20-22 - St. Petersburg, Fl.

Hosts: St. Petersburg Audubon Society. Local Chrm: David Goodwin [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Southeastern and Caribbean Osprey Symposium - June 3-6, 1983 - Sanibel Island, Fl.

Hosts: The International Osprey Foundation, Raptor Research Foundation Florida  
Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

For information, write TIOF, P.O. Box 250, Sanibel, Fl 33957

#### MISCELLANEOUS NEWS AND NOTES

F.O.S. Shoulder Patches are still available from Fred Lohrer (address above) for \$4.00 each (50 cents goes into FOS Research Fund). This colorful patch features the FOS logo, the Everglade (Snail) Kite.

Back issues of the Florida Field Naturalist are still on 50%-off sale from Fred Lohrer.

Although the F.O.S. Research Fund is growing, it is still too small to enable us to make grants to fund research on Florida birds. Members are urged to keep this fund in mind and make contributions whenever possible so that we may begin to assist and encourage avian research projects in the near future.

F.O.S. Membership now numbers around 435 (330 regular members, including 37 family, 34 institutional memberships, and 31 exchanges). New membership brochures are now available from Membership chairman, Dr. Lenore McCullagh (2735 Holly Pt. Rd. E, Orange Park, Fl 32789)

Dr. John W. Hardy, F.O.S. Archivist, announced at the FOS meeting the donation of a large collection of bird slides (700) made by the late J. C. Colehour, and donated to FOS by his widow. These have been cataloged and may be viewed by FOS members at the Bird Range in the Florida State Museum, where the FOS archives are housed.

Congratulations to FOS Honorary Member Dr. Oliver L. Austin, Emeritous Curator of Birds, Florida State Museum, who just celebrated his 80th Birthday on May 24.

Campaign for Migratory Birds -- The World Wildlife Fund has recently launched its Campaign for Migratory Birds which focuses on threats to our migratory birds in tropical countries. Most tropical countries are projected to lose from half to 90% of their remaining forests by the year 2000. A key to a successful program is to identify which species are being affected the most by this loss of tropical forest. Breeding bird surveys, especially continuation of old surveys conducted before 1970, and surveys in areas of continuous forest or other habitat (20,000 acres or larger) are needed. Censuses taken in migratory hot spots can also provide useful data. The hotspot should be surveyed frequently during the migration season and notes on weather conditions recorded. Here is an area where birders in Florida can be most helpful (Dry Tortugas, Ft. DeSoto, St. George Is., and Ft. Pickens). If you would like to be on the mailing list for the Migratory Birds Program write or call Byron Swift or Alex Brash at World Wildlife Fund--U.S., 1601 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202-387-0800).

The following article on this same subject appeared in The Maryland Yellowthroat (March/April 1983) and is reprinted here:

"Our" Songbirds Decline--They Need Our Help  
By Gerald Einem

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey, each spring at more than 1700 sites across the United States and Canada, has shown that many migratory bird populations are steadily declining. Eugene S. Morton, an evolutionary biologist with the National Zoological Park, who is co-editor of the book, "Migrant Birds in the Neotropics", noted that research shows a definite correlation between the rate of forest destruction in Central America and northern South America and the rate of decrease of migratory birds in North America. More than half of North America's bird species have their wintering grounds in tropical America.

In these regions, over the past 27 years more than 35% of the forest has been leveled for timber, cattle-ranching and coffee fincas and other forms of agriculture. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization the destruction of mature tropical forest is proceeding at the rate of 1% to 2% a year.

John Fitzpatrick, head of the Bird Division at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, reported that forest destruction will have its greatest impact on birds over wintering in Central America. This is because deforestation has been particularly severe there and because more species winter there where they coexist with considerably fewer resident species as compared to our migrants in tropical South America. Moreover because of the greater land area of continental South America the average population density of migratory birds is not as great as the population density in Central America. Two examples of birds that are potentially vulnerable are the Hooded and Kentucky Warblers, birds that winter in the fast disappearing rain forest of Central America. With these and other species we have discovered that protecting breeding habitats of migrant birds is only half of the story.

What can be done to protect our birds on their winter homes? One small country in Central America, Costa Rica, has taken up the challenge of protecting its forest and wildlife including migratory birds. Over the past twelve years, Costa Rica has succeeded in protecting a wide range of natural habitats in a system of National Parks, Biological Preserves, Wildlife Refuges, and Protected Zones.

In this brief period, over 8% of the area of Costa Rica has been protected. Some 25 separate units protect 1,050,000 acres of primary habitat. These areas are rain forest with jaguar, macaws and howler monkeys, cloud forests with quetzal and tapir, remote beaches where sea turtles nest, and shorebirds spend the winter, active volcanic craters, vast





Please make checks payable and mail the form on Page 7 to one of these organizations:

The Nature Conservancy  
International Program  
1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 200036

World Wildlife Fund U.S.  
1601 Connecticut Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

The Florida Field Naturalist is the journal of the Florida Ornithological Society, and is published quarterly and mailed to members of F.O.S. Members are encouraged to write up their field observations--especially rarities or unusual avian behavior, etc.--and submit these to the FFN Editor, Dr. James A. Kushlan, 19650 SW 264 Street, Homestead, FL 33031. Assistant Editors, Sonny Bass and Dr. William B. Robertson, Jr, have offered to assist members in writing up their notes for publication. The lack of a technical writing expertise should not deter anyone from publishing significant and worthwhile field observations and data. Don't hide your light under a bushel.

With this issue of the Newsletter, F.O.S. members whose 1983 dues have been paid have received Vol. 11, Issues No. 1 and 2 of the Florida Field Naturalist. We apologize for the delay in sending you Issue No. 1, which was ready back in March (the delay was not the Editor's fault), but for several reasons we decided to combine the first two issues in a single mailing. FFN is now back on schedule and both Issues No 3 and 4 are completed. Issue No 4 will be devoted entirely to the Snail Kite (speaking of which, 1983 has been a good breeding year for the Kite in south Florida, especially Conservation Area 3A. Over a dozen kites may be leisurely observed near the Miccosuki Restaurant and the entrance to the Shark Valley area of Everglades National Park on Tamiami Trail.)

The next issue of the FAS-FOS Ornithological Newsletter will be published in August. Please submit material for this issue to the Editor by August 1, 1983.

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