



www.santafeaudubon.org

and



Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

Santa Fe Audubon Society

Melrose, FL



**MARCH 2023
NEWSLETTER**

COMING IN APRIL

SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAM

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

6:45 PM at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall
204 SR 26, downtown Melrose

Masters of Migration: Amazing Shorebird Journeys

Speaker

DR. ABBY POWELL

Dr. Powell will discuss some of these amazing journeys using examples from her own research as well as from other recent studies.



American Avocet



Willet



Marbled Godwitt & Yellowlegs

You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs.

All are welcome!

THE SAFETY OF OUR MEMBERSHIP IS OF UPMOST IMPORTANCE, AND WE ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO PLEASE WEAR A MASK.

A complete listing of our May Program and Field Trips is on page 4

FIELD TRIPS

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT EMAIL
santafeaudubonfl@aol.com

When you make your reservation, please include your email and phone numbers(s) and please specify if you will meet at Heritage Park or the Field Trip location.

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

GTM RESEARCH RESERVE

Teeming with life, the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM Research Reserve) is a dynamic, ever changing place with many interconnected habitats from the ocean to the forests which provides for a great diversity of plants and animals. Approx. 2 - 3 hours

DIFFICULTY LEVEL 2

May involve uneven terrain; yellow trail is 2.2 miles round trip
PARKING FEE: \$3.00 per vehicle up to 8 people

TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT

Contact Celina Rohman santafeaudubonfl@aol.com

To caravan from Melrose meet on the west side of Heritage Park at **7:15 AM OR**

GTM Reserve - 505 Guana River Rd, Ponte Vedra Bch at **9:00 AM** at the trailhead parking lot which is straight back as far as you can drive once you turn off A1A (over a fourth of a mile beyond the visitor center turnoff). Restrooms are near the entrance and the parking lot, where we will meet.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 22

BOLEN BLUFF

at Paynes Prairie for Spring migration

Halfway along the 2.6-mile loop trail is an open, grassy knoll, Bolen Bluff, which affords the visitor a scenic vista of the low-lying freshwater marsh, wet prairie and open water of Alachua Lake. Approx. 2 - 3 hours

DIFFICULTY LEVEL 3

May involve elevation change & uneven terrain; 2.6 mile loop

PARKING FEE: \$2 PER VEHICLE

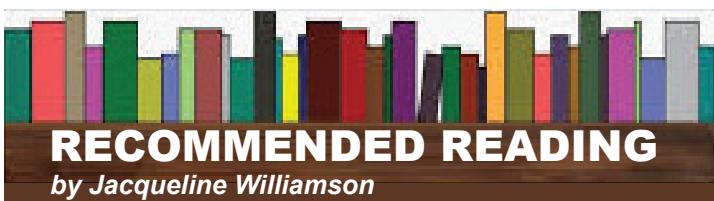
TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT

contact Joy Segall santafeaudubonfl@aol.com

To caravan from Melrose meet on the west side of Heritage Park at **7:30 AM OR**

Bolen Bluff Trail Parking Area at 8:15 AM

Look for the Bolen Bluff Trail (brown) sign on the east side of 441, 4.6 miles north of CR234 (the Marathon Gas station and Pearl's Country Store & Barbecue, at the Micanopy caution light). **NO RESTROOMS AT THIS LOCATION**



FIELD GUIDES



GOOD NEWS

by Jacqueline Williamson



LAND ALONG THE RAINBOW RIVER NOW IN CONSERVATION!

On January 17 the Florida Cabinet approved funding for an easement along the Rainbow River on riverfront property known as the Gissy Rainbow River Ranch. Owner Jim Gissy had proposed a large timeshare resort on the property. There was tremendous public pressure against the harm this would do to the river from the Florida Springs Council, the public and concerned stakeholders. Mr. Gissy subsequently withdrew his plans.

He worked with Conservation Florida to put the land into conservation through the State's Forever Florida program.



All the boxes have been cleaned and are ready for Kestrels looking to nest. We saw more Kestrels than we normally do for this time of year.



One box had an Eastern Screech-Owl and left her alone.



Box 22 had a Southern Fox Squirrel. It did not want to leave and entertained us by barking at us when we lowered the box. Left him (or her) alone and raised the box back.



Also found a Gray Squirrel that exited a box without any prompting at all, once we lowered it. Its jump from the box was quite impressive.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE

(*Elanoides forficatus*)

band code "STKI"

photos courtesy of Dr Jeff Smith



WELCOME BACK

The lilting Swallow-tailed Kite has been called "the coolest bird on the planet." With its deeply forked tail and bold black-and-white plumage, it is unmistakable in the summer skies above swamps of the Southeast. Flying with barely a wingbeat and maneuvering with twists of its incredible tail, it chases dragonflies or plucks frogs, lizards, snakes, and nestling birds from tree branches. After rearing its young in a treetop nest, the kite migrates to wintering grounds in South America.

Befitting their aerial nature, scattered individuals also rarely but regularly turn up far to the north of their normal range. To find Swallow-tailed Kites, keep your eyes on the skies, as these light and graceful birds spend most of the day aloft, either skimming the treetops or soaring up high. Remember that these birds leave the U.S. after the breeding season, so summer is the time to look for them.



COOL FACTS:

The kite's aerial acrobatics while on the hunt are something to see. It continually flicks and rotates its tail, switching from a straight course to a tight turn in an instant as it scans for prey. Sometimes it rolls and dives backward to catch an insect behind it. Adults consume their food while flying, rarely perching during the day.

For more information about Swallow-tailed Kites visit:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Swallow-tailed_Kite/overview

Fun Fact: A group of kites has many collective nouns, including a "brood", "kettle", "roost", "stooping", and "string" of kites.

Sweetwater Wetlands Park Field Trip February 25, 2023



Participants



Greater Scaup hen



Swamp Sparrow



Great Blue Heron



Savannah Sparrow



Limpkin

MAY 2023

SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAM

MAY 9, 2023

Speaker

CYNTHIA BARNETT

"The Sound of the Sea:
Seashells and the Fate of the Oceans"

The safety and well-being of our participants is our top priority; therefore, our in-person Speaker Series may be postponed or canceled on short notice due to health related concerns. Field Trips may be postponed or canceled on short notice due to weather concerns. Postponement or cancellation notifications will be sent out via email and posted on our website and Facebook page.



BIRDING ETHICS (including photography)

Practical guidelines that aim to mitigate the stress birds and their habitats face when humans intrude.

- Leave pets home
- Bring binoculars
- Mute cell phones
- Gently close vehicle doors
- Talk softly/whisper
- Keep bird call playback and pishing to a minimum.
- Walk quietly in woods (pick up feet)
- Avoid using a flash when taking photographs
- Keep your distance
- DO NOT flush or disturb birds (especially during spring nesting season)
- Stay on established trails
- Be alert for bird sounds/movements
- Coughing/sneezing? Stay away from group or, if possible, in vehicle
- Respect other birders
- Wear earth tone color clothing, when possible
- Stay hydrated and safe

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, MAY 6

SWEETWATER WETLANDS PARK
for Bobolinks & more

SATURDAY, MAY 27

ANASTASIA STATE PARK
for Shore Birds



FLORIDA WILDLIFE EXTENSION Wildlife Happenings

Click on the link below to check out the "Wildlife Happenings" in our area.

https://wec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/

ONLINE JIGSAW PUZZLES



<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/SantaFeAudubonFL/santa-fe-audubon>