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Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

Santa Fe Audubon Society

Melrose, FL

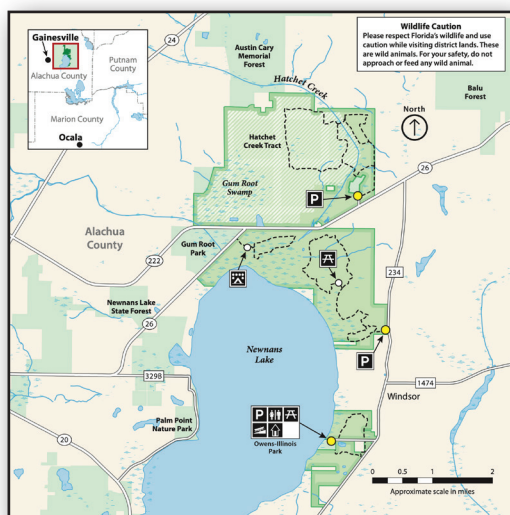
MAY 2021

NEWSLETTER

"OFF THE MAIN TRAIL"

Suggested places for creating your own field trip.

Newnan's Lake Conservation Areas Gainesville, FL



Hatchett Creek
Trail

North Trail

South Trail

This property is part of a large group of publicly owned conservation lands within the Orange Creek Basin. These conservation lands include Austin Cary Memorial State Forest, Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, Lochloosa Wildlife Conservation Area, Orange Creek Restoration Area and several natural areas owned by the city of Gainesville. All of these areas protect extensive, diverse upland and wetland natural communities and provide important wildlife corridors.

Conservation of these properties helps protect and improve water quality within the Orange Creek and Ocklawaha River basins and ultimately the St. Johns River. This area encompasses nearly 2 miles of Newnan's Lake shoreline and parts of its two major tributaries — Hatchett Creek and Little Hatchett Creek — protecting a large area of floodplain wetlands. The conservation area also includes numerous isolated wetlands such as depression marshes, dome swamps and a large basin swamp known locally as Gum Root Swamp.

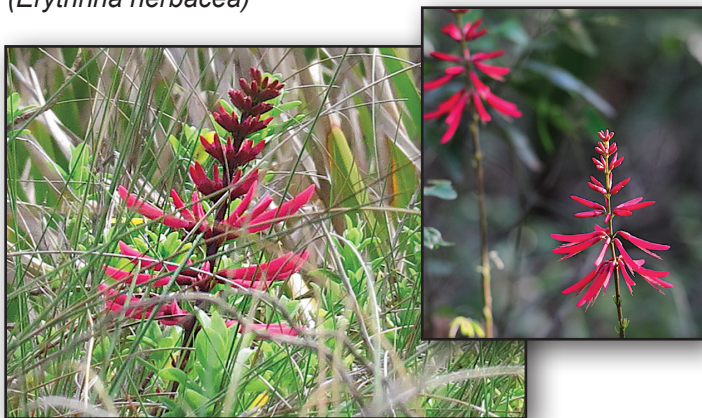
For more information about recreational activities, wildlife viewing and trail maps click on the link below:

<https://www.sjrwmd.com/lands/recreation/newnans-lake/>

THE NATIVE PLANT CONNECTION

CORAL BEAN or CHEROKEE BEAN

(*Erythrina herbacea*)



A native plant that can add interest to the landscape from spring until fall., Coral bean's red tubular flowers grow on tall stalks in the spring, drawing hummingbirds and butterflies. In the fall, as the rest of the summer garden starts to fade, coral bean's seed pods begin to mature and the show begins. What once looked a bit like English pea pods turn dark, almost black, and split open to reveal shiny, scarlet red seeds nestled inside. ***They're very pretty—and very poisonous, so be sure to keep them away from kids and pets.***

In North and Central Florida coral bean grows as a large perennial, reaching 6 feet tall before it freezes to the ground in winter. In South Florida it grows as a large deciduous shrub or small tree.

This Florida-Friendly plant is a great choice for the back of a mixed borders. While coral bean is a very attractive plant when in flower, it can appear somewhat sparse and ragged the rest of the year.

Excellent for a natural landscape, it grows in a wide range of soil, but does best in fertile, well-drained, sandy soil. It flowers best in full sun or light shade. Water it well when planting, but once established, coral bean actually does better with infrequent irrigation. It's very salt-tolerant, so it's a good choice for coastal landscapes as well.

source:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/coral-bean.html>

For additional information on native plants for birds:

<https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>



by Bill Chitty

We are off to a really good start with the Southeastern American Kestrels.



Out of our 26 boxes, 8 boxes have nesting Kestrels.

9 adults were seen in or around boxes with 14 eggs and 15 nestlings. Since we did not disturb a couple of individuals who appeared to be sitting on eggs, we are confident there are eggs we missed.



2 of the boxes are in locations new this year, and 2 other boxes have never had anything nest in them before.

Once again, no Flying Squirrels!



ONLINE JIGSAW PUZZLES

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



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/

BIRD OF THE MONTH

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

(*Archilochus colubris*)

band code "RTHU"



A flash of green and red, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is eastern North America's sole breeding hummingbird. These brilliant, tiny, precision-flying creatures glitter like jewels in the full sun, then vanish with a zip toward the next nectar source. Feeders and flower gardens are great ways to attract these birds, and some people turn their yards into buzzing clouds of hummingbirds each summer. Enjoy them while they're around; by early fall they're bound for Central America, with many crossing the Gulf of Mexico in a single flight.

FEEDING:

Please, make your own hummingbird food, it's simple...just table sugar and water. (**NOT honey, raw sugar or brown sugar**) to make hummingbird food—when honey is diluted with water, bacteria and fungus thrive in it. The normal mixture, especially ideal during hot or dry weather, is ¼ cup of sugar per cup of water.

If you mix up small quantities of sugar water every day or two, there's no need to boil the water. But if you mix up larger batches and refrigerate part for later use, then it's wise to make the mixture with boiling water.

Please do not add red food color to sugar water, or to use red-colored commercial mixes. Nectar in flowers is clear, after all, and red food coloring may be harmful for hummingbirds. It's the flowers themselves that are brightly colored, not the nectar—and that's why hummingbird feeders typically are designed with red parts to attract the notice of hummingbirds.

Hummingbirds do not live on sugar water and nectar alone. They eat insects and tiny spiders to supply protein and also feed on tree sap.

COOL FACTS:

Like many birds, hummingbirds have good color vision and can see into the ultraviolet spectrum, which humans can't see. They are attracted to red, as well as other brightly colored objects, because they have learned to associate high-quality nectar with red flowers.

Fun Fact: Hummingbirds have many collective nouns including a "bouquet", "glittering", "hover", "shimmer" and "tune" of hummingbirds.

For more information about Ruby-throated Hummingbirds visit:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ruby-throated_Hummingbird/id