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Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### **ETONIAH ROSEMARY SURVEY**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2021**

Every year in October, a census is taken of every known specimen of this endangered species that occurs naturally nowhere else on earth. Volunteers needed, no prior experience or expertise is required. Wear clothes suitable for the weather and hiking in the woods. Meet at **8:30 AM** the Etoniah Creek State Forest Office.

If you would like to volunteer please contact Bill Chitty via email at [bill.chitty@gmail.com](mailto:bill.chitty@gmail.com).



**ADDITIONAL  
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES  
on page 2**

**"OFF THE MAIN TRAIL"**

*Suggested places for creating your own field trip.*

*will return in the October Issue.*

# Santa Fe Audubon Society

Melrose, FL

## **SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER**

## THE NATIVE PLANT CONNECTION

### **SWAMP SUNFLOWER**

*(Helianthus angustifolius)*

aka "Narrowleaf Sunflower" is a member of the family Asteraceae (Aster), which includes herbs sometimes shrubs or vines, rarely trees, with simple or compound, alternate or opposite leaves.



This perennial grows 3 to 6 feet tall with a many-branched stem & rough, sandpapery leaves 3 to 6 inches long. The yellow flowers, 2 to 3 inches across, bloom profusely in late summer and autumn. It grows best in full sun to partial shade and in wet, sandy, loamy, and clayey soils.



It is native to the south-central and eastern United States, found in all the coastal states from Texas to Long Island, and inland as far as Missouri and is typically found in the coastal plain habitat, both the Atlantic and Gulf.

<https://flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-helianthus-angustifolius/>

For additional information on native plants for birds:

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

# ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## ARE YOU A SHARP-EYED CONSERVATION HAWK?



Our Board of Directors could use your help to identify and act on local and regional conservation issues.

Would you let us know if you would help Santa Fe Audubon identify the issues we need to know about?

If yes, please email us at [santafeaudubonfl@aol.com](mailto:santafeaudubonfl@aol.com) to find out how you can help.

## PONTOON BOAT and OWNER/OPERATOR NEEDED



for Melrose Area 32nd Bird Count on Santa Fe Lake  
Thursday, December 16, 2021  
and scouting a few days before

The Christmas Bird Count is one of the world's oldest community science projects, and it relies on volunteers to collect data that contribute to bird conservation.

If you or anyone you know has a pontoon boat and can help please email us at [santafeaudubonfl@aol.com](mailto:santafeaudubonfl@aol.com).

# BIRD OF THE MONTH

## **BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) band code "BEKI"

With its top-heavy physique, energetic flight, and piercing rattle, the Belted Kingfisher seems to have an air of self-importance as it patrols up and down rivers and shorelines. It nests in burrows along earthen banks and feeds almost entirely on aquatic prey, diving to catch fish and crayfish with its heavy, straight bill. These ragged-crested birds are a powdery blue-gray; males have one blue band across the white breast, while females have a blue and a chestnut band.



Belted Kingfisher - male



Belted Kingfisher - female

### COOL FACTS:

The Belted Kingfisher is one of the few bird species in which the female is more brightly colored than the male. Among the nearly 100 species of kingfishers, the sexes often look alike. In some species the male is more colorful, in others it is the female.

Pleistocene fossils of Belted Kingfishers (to 600,000 years old) have been unearthed in Florida, Virginia, Tennessee, and Texas. The oldest known fossil in the kingfisher genus is 2 million years old, found in Alachua County, Florida.

For more information about Belted Kingfisher visit:  
[www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Belted\\_Kingfisher/overview](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Belted_Kingfisher/overview)

### Fun Fact:

A group of Belted Kingfishers are collectively known as a "crown", and a "rattle" of kingfishers.





## BIRDING ETHICS

including  
photography

*Practical guidelines for Field Trips and Christmas Bird Count, 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
- Walk quietly in woods (pick up your feet)
- Be alert for bird sounds/movements
- Keep your distance
- ***Especially during spring nesting season:***  
DO NOT flush or disturb birds  
Keep bird call playback & pishing to a minimum  
*Current research suggests that birds often use so much energy reacting to call playbacks and pishing that it can actually lower survival rates. Many places do not allow playback or pishing.*
- Stay on established trails
- Respect other birders
- Coughing/sneezing? Stay away from group or, if possible, in vehicle
- Wear earth toned color clothing, when possible
- Avoid using a flash when taking photographs
- Stay hydrated and safe

*A few of our previous  
field trips.*

*Cedar Key Boat Trip  
March 2017*



*Wildflower Walk at Santa Fe Swamp  
April 2016*

