



Santa Fe Audubon Society

Melrose, FL

**AUGUST 2024  
NEWSLETTER**

<http://www.santafeaudubon.org>

and



Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

## SFAS NEWS



Please watch for our letter and membership form to arrive in the mail mid September.

Our first program of the season will be “**Bats**” with speaker Donna Bear, from the Jacksonville Zoo, on Tuesday, October 8, 2024 6:45 PM at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall, 204 SR 26 in downtown Melrose.

The safety of our membership and board is of utmost importance, and we encourage everyone to wear a mask.

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

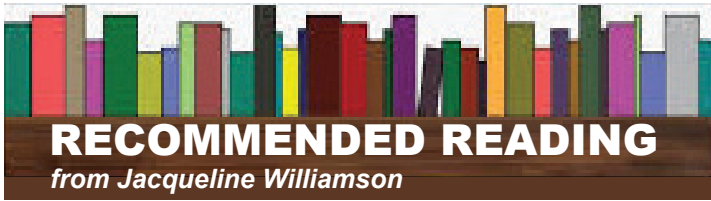
Complete details of each months program and field trip will be on page 1 of that month’s Kite, starting in October. The Kite will be emailed approximately 1 week before the each program.

### SFAS DISPLAY AT THE PUTNAM COUNTY LIBRARY IN MELROSE

Various bird items on display through September.

Thank you to the Melrose Library for the opportunity for us to display items. Also thank you to our Vice President Celina Rohman and Treasurer Laura Berkelman for coordination and installation.



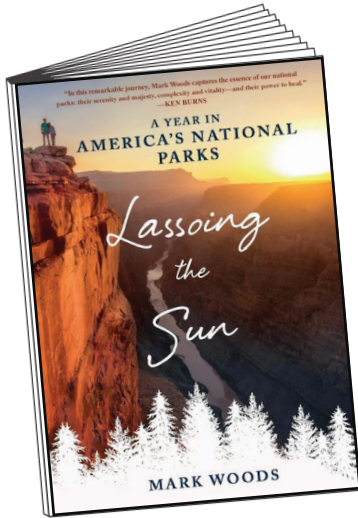


## RECOMMENDED READING

from Jacqueline Williamson

### A YEAR IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS LASSOING THE SUN

by Mark Woods



"In this remarkable journey, Mark Woods captures the essence of our National Parks: their serenity and majesty, complexity and vitality--and their power to heal." --Ken Burns

## GOOD NEWS

from Jacqueline Williamson

### FLORIDA GRASSHOPPER SPARROW RELEASED BACK INTO THE WILD



Grassland & Florida Grasshopper Sparrow photos from Audubon Florida website

Over the past two decades, the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow population has plummeted from more than 1,000 birds in the wild to less than 100, making it the most endangered bird in the continental United States. A turnaround may be in their future: The 1,000th captive-bred sparrow has just been released back into the wild. Audubon and its partners celebrated the release of the 1,000th Florida Grasshopper Sparrow on July 16 at Avon Park Air Force Range.

## BIRD OF THE MONTH

### FLORIDA GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum* subspecies *floridanus*)



Photo from Audubon Florida website

The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow is a federally endangered bird found nowhere else in the world.

The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow is restricted to the dry prairie ecosystem of central and south Florida. One of four subspecies of Grasshopper Sparrows in North America, the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow does not migrate, living here year-round (endemic). Perhaps the most endangered bird in the continental US, few people have seen or even heard it.

### COOL FACTS:

The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow nests in spring (April-July) on the ground, under palmettos or in grass clumps. The female lays 3-5 eggs, and young fledge within 9 to 10 days. The male sings from a low perch to defend territory--about the only time they are readily visible--and helps raise the young. Diet includes seeds and invertebrates. It is thought that most individuals live their entire lives within a few miles of their birthplace.

For more information about the FLORIDA Grasshopper Sparrow go to:

<https://fl.audubon.org/birds/florida-grasshopper-sparrow>

**Fun Fact:** A group of Grasshopper Sparrows are collectively known as a "plague" of sparrows.



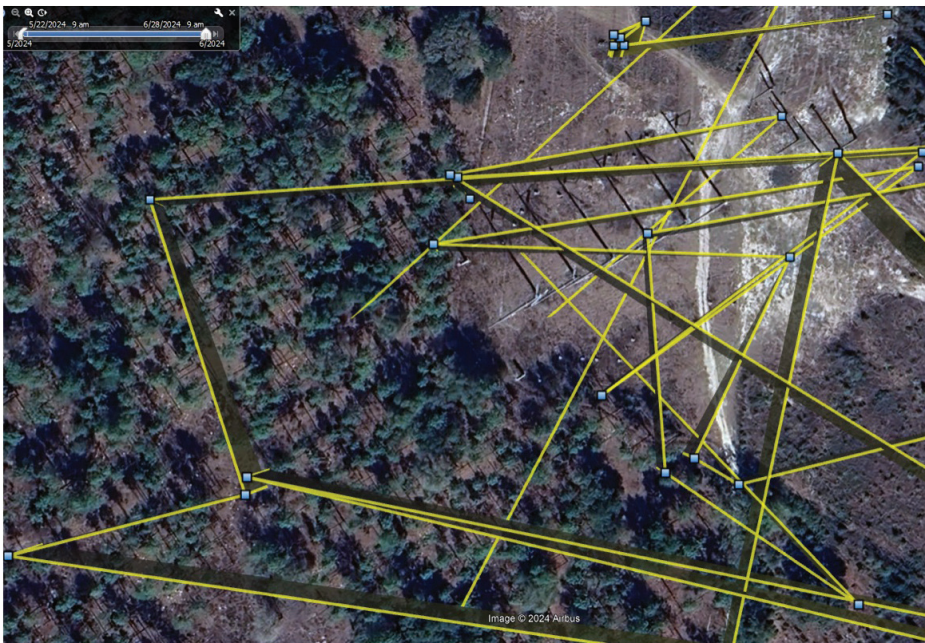
# Kestrel Corner

by Bill Chitty

August 15, 2024

In the last month there have been several Southeastern American Kestrel sightings in and around Etoniah Creek State Forest. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately for the young Kestrels) none of the sightings so far have been at a close enough distance to discern whether the birds had been banded or radio tagged. This speaks well to their survival instincts but sure makes the job of trying to track them very difficult. While still in the nest box before fledging, we banded 9 nestlings with not only the basic Federal Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum band, but also light weight colored bands. So in the future when these birds are spotted, we will know exactly which box they fledged from.

While banding the nine individuals, we also radio tagged five. So these particular young kestrels are fairly easy to track, using the very latest available technology. Our Kestrels have been active as you can see in the pictures below showing their movements during the early summer. Unfortunately, we did lose one bird, only out of the nest a few days. That's actually good news because our 20% loss in the first week is far less than average. The fact that four of the five tagged birds have almost made it through the summer is just short of amazing. The first 30 days out of the nest box normally has the highest mortality rate.



Each blue dot represents exactly where the Kestrel was at 1PM on successive days. This is the tagged Kestrel from box 26. The small cluster near the top edge is the box location.

In the weeks since this download was generated, our Kestrels seem to be moving toward the northwest, visiting both Gold Head Branch State Park and Camp Blanding. As a group, they are well traveled, sometimes venturing over 40 miles from their natal box.

Again, thank you to Dr. Ken Meyer and the Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) for their collaboration on banding and attaching radio telemetry devices on our Kestrels.

To learn more about ARCI and to donate to the kestrel project visit their website:

[www.arcinst.org](http://www.arcinst.org)

# **SAVE THESE DATES**

## **SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAMS 2024 - 2025**

October 8, 2024 ----- **BATS** speaker Donna Bear

November 12, 2024 --- **AMERICAN KESTRELS** speaker Karl Miller

December 10, 2024 --- To be announced

January 14, 2025 ----- **BIRDS OF THE EVERGLADES** speaker Richard Rathe

February 11, 2025 ----- To be announced

March 11, 2025 ----- **CONSERVATIONIST AWARD • ELECTION OF OFFICERS • PHOTO SHOW**

April 8, 2025 ----- To be announced

May 13, 2025 ----- To be announced

*You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs. All are welcome!  
Program topics and speakers are subject to change at the last minute for various reasons.*

## **FIELD TRIPS 2024 - 2025**

*Reservations will be required. Field trips are subject to date change or cancellation due to weather, etc.*

Saturday, October 12, 2024 ----- **Cones Dyke Paynes Prairie** - Micanopy, FL  
For migrating warblers

Saturday, November 16, 2024 ----- **Cones Dyke Paynes Prairie** - Micanopy, FL  
For wintering sparrows

Saturday, January 10 & 11, 2025 -- **Boat Trips on Santa Fe Lake** - Melrose, FL  
For wintering waterfowl and gulls

Saturday, February 22, 2025 ----- To be announced

Saturday, March 29, 2025 ----- **O'Leno State Park** - High Springs, FL  
For spring migration

Friday, April 18, 2025 ----- **Sweetwater Wetlands Park** - Gainesville, FL  
For Bobolinks and more

May 2025 ----- To be announced