



**Santa Fe Audubon Society**

Melrose, FL

## **AUGUST 2025 NEWSLETTER**

 **santafeaudubon**

<http://www.santafeaudubon.org>



**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 14, 2025 6:45 PM at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall, 204 SR 26 in downtown Melrose.

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

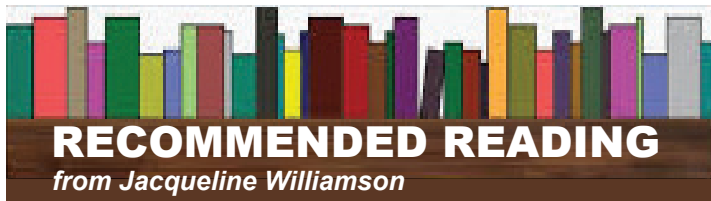
You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs. All are welcome!

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

### **SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAMS 2025 - 2026**

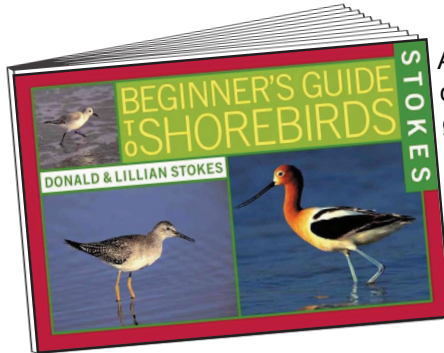
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|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 14  | <b>BATS</b><br>speaker Donna Bear                                                         |
| November 11 | <b>SANDHILL CRANES</b><br>speaker Tim Dellinger                                           |
| December 9  | <b>THE HISTORY OF HUMAN<br/>RELATIONSHIPS WITH<br/>WATERFOWL</b><br>speaker Dr. Paul Gray |
| January 13  | <b>BLACK BEARS</b><br>speaker Allan Hallman                                               |
| February 10 | <b>BUTTERFLIES &amp; POLLINATORS</b><br>speaker Dr. Jaret Daniels                         |
| March 10    | <b>SFAS Conservationist of the Year,<br/>Election of Officers &amp; Photo Show</b>        |
| April 14    | <b>HORSESHOE CRABS</b><br>speaker Dr. Jane Brockmann                                      |
| May 12      | <b>FROGS &amp; AMPHIBIANS</b><br>speaker Dr. Jon Johnson                                  |

**FIELD TRIPS 2025 - 2026  
ARE LISTED ON PAGE 5**



## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SHOREBIRDS

by Donald & Lillian Stokes



A pocket-size, brilliantly colorful, simple-to-use guide to shorebirds, containing dozens of full-color photographs that enable readers of all ages to identify the most common species.

Plus range maps, tips on the best times to view shorebirds, information on habitat needs, life cycle, food preferences; and much more.

## GOOD NEWS

from Kai Sucsy

## RURAL AND FAMILY LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM



Photo courtesy of PLC

The Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP) was recently awarding \$250 million in this year's State budget!

This money will be allocated to fund the conservation of agricultural and conservation lands all around the State of Florida.

RFLPP is a program administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services with the goal of conserving land by purchasing permanent agricultural land conservation easements.

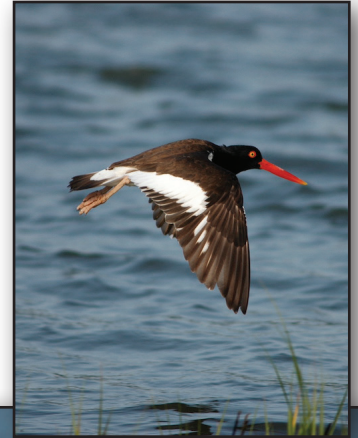
These easements cover the majority of a property to restrict future development while allowing property owners to continue agriculture practices and wildlife management.

The next RFLPP application cycle will open sometime this winter, so anyone who is interested will soon have a chance to apply!

## BIRD OF THE MONTH

### AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER

(*Haematopus palliatus*)  
band code "AMOY"



American Oystercatcher photos are courtesy of Jacqueline Williamson.

A boldly patterned shorebird with red-yellow eyes and a vivid red-orange bill, American Oystercatchers survive almost exclusively on shellfish—clams, oysters, and other saltwater mollusks. Because of this specialized diet, oystercatchers live only in a narrow ecological zone of saltmarshes and barrier beaches. Along much of the Pacific Coast they are replaced by the similar but all-dark Black Oystercatcher. American Oystercatchers are numerous but sensitive to development and traffic on the beaches where they nest; they are on Partners in Flight's Yellow Watch List.

### COOL FACTS:

The oldest American Oystercatcher was at least 23 years, 10 months old. It had been banded as an adult in Virginia in 1989 and was found in Florida in 2012.

For more information about American Oystercatchers go to:  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American\\_Oystercatcher/overview](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Oystercatcher/overview)

**Fun Fact:** A group of Oystercatchers are collectively known as a "parcel" or "stew" of Oystercatchers..





# Kestrel Corner

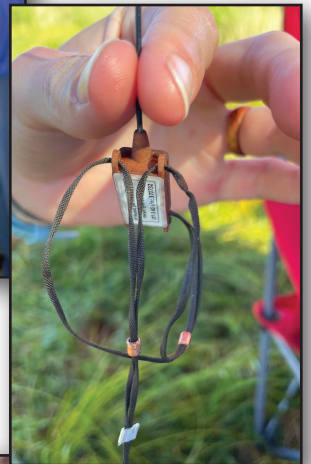
by Bill Chitty

August 15, 2024

Good news from the Kestrel Corner this month. Not only did we have our first ever successful re-nesting Kestrel pair, but all four of her eggs hatched and the young were successfully raised, fledged during the first week of August. This is by far the latest in the summer we have seen in the ten nesting seasons we have had kestrel boxes in Etoniah Creek State Forest. With personnel from the Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) and the Florida Forest Service (FSS), we visited this last brood of young Kestrels during the last week of July and banded all four young and radio tagged one female and one male. The older siblings were almost ten days old before the last egg hatched. As a result, that young male was very much the runt and we feared he would not survive. We were happily wrong as our banding visit found him very close to the same weight as the others. Our total number of fledged Kestrels this year is sixteen, from six different boxes. Which is average for the last 5 years.

A little sad news is that right before time to fledge, one of our young Kestrels from another box was taken by a snake. Previously reported as fledged, once the images from the ARCI monitoring camera were reviewed, it was determined that a snake had been at work inside the box.

Milestones this year: This was our tenth nesting season, and we surpassed 100 fledged Kestrels (actual total is 113).



Again, thank you to Dr. Ken Meyer and the Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) for their collaboration on banding and attaching GPS tracking devices that phone home once a day with current coordinates on our Kestrels. Also thank you to all our volunteers.

To learn more about ARCI and to donate to the kestrel project visit their website: [www.arcinst.org](http://www.arcinst.org)



DISCOVER  
**200**  
1824 - 2024

**ALACHUA  
COUNTY**  
BICENTENNIAL



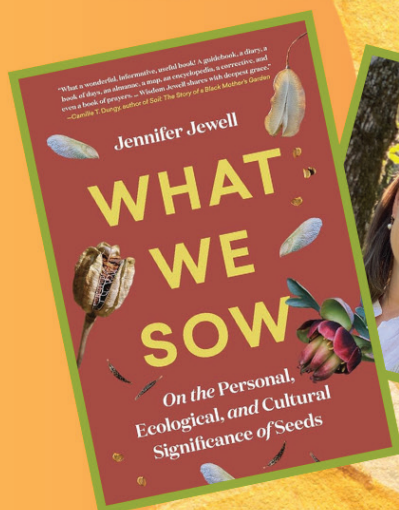
**UF** IFAS Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



# Fall Horticultural Expo & Plant Market!

## October 18, 2025

Alachua County Agriculture  
& Equestrian Center  
23100 W Newberry Road



- 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Free Entry
- Over 75 Vendors
- Wildflower Seeds
- Bugs, Birds & More
- KIDS ZONE
- Demonstrations
- Food Trucks

## Jennifer Jewell

Keynote Speaker

“Cultivating Place” - Host  
Nationally Syndicated Public  
Radio Program & Author

WHERE THE  
**WILD**  
THINGS  
GROW  
2025

Create Your

# BEST FALL GARDEN!



An Equal Opportunity Institution

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WITH WATERFOWL** - speaker Dr. Paul Gray

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Program topics and speakers are subject to change at the last minute for various reasons.*

## FIELD TRIPS 2025 - 2026

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

Saturday, **October 11** .....Smith Lake or Little Rain Lake Preserve - Keystone Heights

Saturday, November 15..... GTMNERR (Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine  
Research Reserve) - Ponte Vedra Beach

Saturday, January 17.....Boat Trips on Santa Fe Lake - Melrose

Saturday, February 21 .....Masters Tract Stormwater Treatment Facility - Hastings

Saturday, March 21 .....Satsuma Springs Easement Property - Satsuma

Saturday, April 18 .....Orange Lake Overlook - Micanopy

**FRIDAY**, May 22.....Anastasia Island Beach Bird Nesting - St. Augustine