



Santa Fe Audubon Society
Melrose, FL
**SEPTEMBER 2026
NEWSLETTER**



<http://www.santafeaudubon.org>



Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAMS 2026 - 2027

Our programs are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month (October 2026 to May 2027) beginning at **6:45 PM** in Trinity Episcopal's Parish Hall, 204 SR 26 downtown Melrose. You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs. **All are welcome!**

October 13 INSECT ID: WHEN THE BUG IS NOT THERE - speaker Lee Bloomcamp
Details for the above program will be on page 1 of the October Kite, emailed by October 6.

November 10 **NATIVE PLANTS - speaker Susan Carr**

December 8 **TO BE ANNOUNCED**

January 12 **WILDLIFE CORRIDOR - speaker Reed Noss**

February 9 **WOODPECKERS OF NORTH AMERICA - speaker Deb Kainauskas**

March 9 **SFAS Conservationist of the Year, Election of Directors & Photo Show**

April 13 **WILDLIFE RESCUE - speaker Shawn McMahon**

May 11 **SPRINGS - speaker Jim Gross**

FIELD TRIPS 2026 - 2027

Reservations will be required so we can notify you on the event of a date change or cancellation due to weather, etc.

Saturday - October 17, 2026 ORDWAY-SWISHER - Melrose
Details & contact for the above field trip will be on page 1 of the October Kite, emailed by October 6.

Saturday, November 14, 2026 SWEETWATER WETLANDS PARK - Gainesville

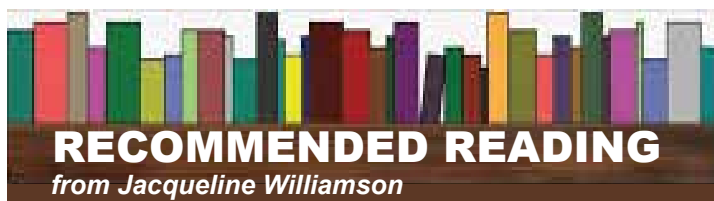
Saturday, January 9, 2027 ORANGE LAKE OVERLOOK - Micanopy

Saturday, February 20, 2027 PLC - OCKLAWAHA TRACT

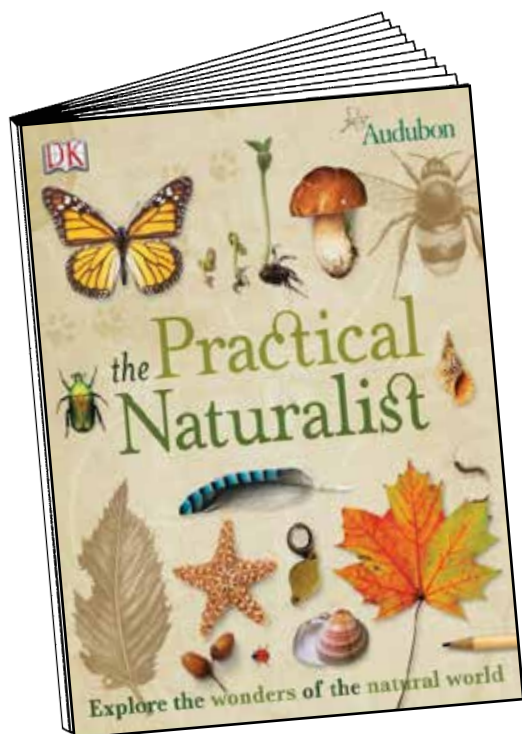
Saturday, March 20, 2027 CEDAR KEY BOAT TRIP **DETAILS IN EARLY 2027**

Saturday, April 24, 2027 MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS HOUSE TOUR & HIKE - Cross Creek

Saturday, May 22, 2027 PRAIRIE CREEK PRESERVE - Gainesville



THE PRACTICAL NATURALIST



Whether the natural world is at your doorstep, in the heart of a concrete jungle, by the sea, or in a cabin in the woods, *The Practical Naturalist* gets readers outdoors and shows how to experience the wonders of the world, and shows what is living in each habitat.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

Band Code TRES



Photo courtesy of
Michael Drummond.



Photo courtesy of Bill Chitty.

Handsome aerialists with deep-blue iridescent backs and clean white fronts, Tree Swallows are a familiar sight in summer fields and wetlands across northern North America. They chase after flying insects with acrobatic twists and turns, their steely blue-green feathers flashing in the sunlight. Tree Swallows nest in tree cavities; they also readily take up residence in nest boxes. This habit has allowed scientists to study their breeding biology in detail, and makes them a great addition to many a homeowner's yard or field.

COOL FACTS:

Migrating and wintering Tree Swallows can form enormous flocks numbering in the hundreds of thousands. They gather about an hour before sunset and form a dense cloud above a roost site (such as a cattail marsh or grove of small trees), swirling around like a living tornado. With each pass, more birds drop down until they are all settled on the roost.

For more information about the Tree Swallows go to:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tree_Swallow/overview

Fun Fact: A group of Tree Swallows are collectively known as a "stand" of swallows.

VOTE **NO** ON **AMENDMENT 3** **THIS NOVEMBER**

Amendment 3 Threatens Florida's Communities, Water, and Wildlife

Drastically lowering property taxes will have a catastrophic impact on Florida's quality of life, water quality, and available wildlife habitat. The Amendment 3 proposal will significantly reduce the budgets of both cities and counties while limiting where they can spend the money they do have. Such strains will make it difficult for them to serve communities – and nearly impossible to protect things like parks, stormwater infrastructure, and more. Wildlife habitat in parks is critical for birds, panthers, and more – and many of these parks are managed and restored at the local level.

Development proposals require county and city staff to review projects – planners, engineers, environmental specialists, and more. Cuts to municipal budgets will lead to cuts in these departments – reviewing rapidly expanding proposals will become impossible. Moreover, water management district budgets will shrink, further shrinking their ability to safeguard water supplies and water quality. Algal blooms could become an every year occurrence, while restoration will become an impossibility.

Florida is facing ever greater threats to our economy, quality of life, future resilience, and environment. Now is not the time to hamstring our ability to meet these challenges.



Audubon Florida

Florida's rural communities are at risk of being gobbled up by sprawl. Amendment 3 will hit the budgets of rural cities and counties even harder, because of their smaller budgets and higher proportion of homesteaded properties. At the time when they'll need growth management staff the most, these local governments will be forced to consider eliminating the function entirely.

Important Background:

Amendment 3 on November's ballot would significantly reduce property taxes for many Florida homeowners, but will result in dramatic cuts to local services – everything from growth management to community parks and flood control.

The resulting annual cut to city and county revenues is estimated to be \$5 billion in the first year, and \$12 billion by Year 5. Water management districts will lose revenue as the tax base shrinks. Local governments are the last line of defense against sprawl, provide parks for people and wildlife, and restoration projects to address flooding and sea level rise. With budget shortfalls of this magnitude, they will have no choice but to radically reduce essential services funded by property tax revenue.

Looking Forward:

While no one relishes paying taxes, local governments have to have funding to provide the services that our communities depend upon. If this amendment passes, Floridians will be left with one-size-fits all decisions being made for them from Tallahassee and little ability at the local level to shape their own communities and quality of life.



Audubon Florida Assembly

The 2026 Audubon Assembly will take place October 15-17 in St. Pete Beach.

Black Skimmer with chicks. Photo: Jean Hall

Join us in St. Pete Beach for Florida's premier conservation gathering, where grassroots leaders from around the state join Audubon's professional staff and partners to grow their knowledge and skills to protect Florida's precious natural resources.

For this year's event, held October 15-17, 2026, at the TradeWinds Resort on St. Pete Beach, our theme is "Protecting What Connects Us — Water, Wildlife, and Community."

2026 Audubon Florida Assembly INFORMATION link

<https://www.audubon.org/florida/get-involved/audubon-florida-assembly>

2026 Audubon Florida Assembly REGISTRATION link

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-audubon-assembly-tickets-1986899263182?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true

Sign up for The Advocate Newsletter

Stay up-to-date on the
legislative session to learn
when you can use your
voice for birds!

Visit fl.audubon.org/advocate to sign up

 Audubon | FLORIDA



SCAN TO SIGN UP



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



FALL Horticultural Expo

EDIBLE BY NATURE

PLANT FOR PEOPLE, POLLINATORS & OUR PLANET

Fall Plant Market
Bugs, Birds & More
UF/IFAS Fang Fest
KIDS ZONE
Demonstrations
Food Trucks
Live Music
Free Entry & Parking

October 17, 2026

9 AM - 4 PM

**Alachua County Ag &
Equestrian Center
Newberry, FL**



Featuring Brie Arthur
Author of
Foodscape Revolution



www.ggcfl.org/fallexpo

No Pets Allowed, Service Animals Permitted
An Equal Opportunity Institution

SAVE THE DATE

Flatwoods Fire & Nature Festival Saturday, January 23rd, 2027 - 10 am to 4 pm



Tabling questionnaires will be sent to those on our current list of participants, late October 2026.

The goal of this festival is to educate attendees on the role of fire in our pyrogenic ecosystems and introduce guests to many of the outstanding environmental organizations in this area.

Sponsored by: University of Florida, Florida Forest Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Alachua Conservation Trust, and Partners

Austin Cary Forest -
Roland T. Stern Learning Center
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