



Tropical Audubon Bulletin

The Voice of Conservation in South Florida...



5530 Sunset Drive; Miami, Florida 33143

(305) 667-7337

Aug/Sept 2009

FPL Plan Not in Public's Best Interest

Calling all those with a fight left in them: Save Biscayne Bay and our water supply.

by Laura Reynolds

Contact the Tropical Audubon Society and help us work to ensure the Biscayne Aquatic Preserve and Biscayne National Park are protected for future generations to enjoy.

As I write, chloride is moving into drinking water well fields that supply water to Monroe County, Homestead and Florida City. This hypersaline plume has been linked to the cooling canal system (CCS) at Turkey Point by a signature isotope—tritium. The US Geological Survey has determined that the plume has moved through preferential flow paths under the limestone to the east and west, affecting the groundwater and our precious aquifer.

Meanwhile, government officials are

considering the application submitted by Florida Power and Light for construction of two new nuclear towers, an addition that would exacerbate an already damaged ecosystem. As the public now knows, Turkey Point's reactors 3 and 4 are chief among the contributing factors to salt-water intrusion, which affects our groundwater in South Florida.

The CCS is not a closed-loop system, as FPL has called it for 30 years. Can we really allow for more damage before we have assurances that FPL will be held accountable for the damage already on the ground? In the end of 2007 the Department of Environmental Protection granted

FPL the ability to ramp up the use of this canal system and to raise the temperature and ultimately the salinity of those canals. Their handling of FPL in the past, and the fact that the Department has never denied a nuclear expansion, causes TAS to be concerned about the pending application.

Another consideration is the ancillary costs to the community—not only the loss of productivity of an ecosystem over the past 30 years, but the cost we will all face in the future for clean drinking water. Will we be fighting over reuse water? Will we need to pay more for re-

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TAS 2009-10 Event Calendar

Tropical Audubon Society is proud to once again offer an outstanding lineup of outings and monthly programs. You will see bird, plant and butterfly trips; morning trips, all day trips, overnight trips; outings nearby and outings afar; the very important seasonal bird counts; special events (Birdathon!!); workdays; plant sales; and lots of ways to have a good time while supporting a great cause and learning more about our native environment. All events with a confirmed date are included. Please mark your calendars and join us!

All trips (except for the Dry Tortugas trips) are led by volunteer leaders from the Tropical Audubon Society. Unless otherwise indicated, they are free and open to the public, and reservations are not necessary. For more information concerning any field trip, email the field trip coordinator at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org, or call him at (305) 388-1544. For more information concerning workdays and plant sales, email TAS at director@tropicalaudubon.org or call TAS at (305) 667-7337.

All trips take place rain or shine (remember that rainy days are often birdy days, especially during migration). Please remember that some parks charge entrance fees, participants usually share gasoline costs for carpool trips, and overnight and boat trips will mean additional costs. Also, on some of the nature walks a fee may be required. Please note the reservation deadline on trips where reservations are required. To allow communication with trip leaders, walkie-talkies are recommended for carpool trips. The specifics for each trip are indicated below. In some cases, the trip leader has included his/her email address and phone number for direct contact.

For The Complete List of Events, See Pages 4 & 5 inside!

[es] - indicates a trip with bilingual leaders.

Florida Cabinet Denies Lowe's Move of UDB!

The State Cabinet voted 3 to 1, siding with an administrative law judge, to reject the Miami-Dade County Commission's move of the Urban Development Boundary for a Lowe's store. The County Attorney signaled that the county is through pressing the issue. Lowe's, however, might appeal.

The Miami Herald says:

Environmentalists and urban planners hailed the decision, saying it sets a precedent for dealing with counties that attempt to bend state growth management laws and allow sprawl. They hope the ruling will halt attempts by politically powerful developers who are seeking to move development boundaries in other counties, including the creation of a new suburb on the Everglades' doorstep in Miami-Dade called Parkland.

The hard work and passion of a handful of people and a shoe-string budget made this recent victory possible, Tropical Audubon would like to thank and recognize Dawn Shirreffs of Clean Water Action and Richard Grosso of the Everglades Law Center for all their hard work in Holding the Line! Tropical Audubon has been working lock step with these two amazing partners and will continue to broaden and strengthen our coalition for the future. We are expecting an appeal from Lowe's and new applications in the fall, so stay tuned and know your help is needed to continue this essential work!

Other organizations who are working with us are The National Parks Conservation Association, Urban Environment League, Sierra Club Miami Group, Audubon of Florida and Friends of the Everglades.

We are always looking for volunteers who can work on specific issues—such as the Urban Development Boundary—affecting our community. If you are interested in making a difference please contact us for more information:

tropicalaudubon@gmail.com

5TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY PICNIC!

Join Tropical Audubon Society, along with the Native Plant Society, Miami Blue, and TreeMendous Miami, for the Fifth Annual Holiday picnic at AD Barnes Park on Dec. 6th. Details to follow.

TAS 8th ANNUAL BIRDATHON APRIL 3 – APRIL 18!!

Raise money for TAS! Tropical Audubon's Eighth Annual Birdathon is coming in April. Bird for up to 24 consecutive hours anytime during April 3-18. Collect pledges per bird seen or for the whole day. Win prizes! Stay tuned for more information about our exciting Birdathon...fun teams, good prizes, all day birding and all for a good cause!

2009-10 Native Plant Sales at the Doc THOMAS HOUSE

Our native plant sales are famous and fun. We have a great selection of South Florida plants with knowledgeable sales people to help you choose the best ones for your yard. Come early for the best selection, stay late to enjoy the company. Native Plant Sales will be held on Nov. 7 & 8, Feb 27 & 28, June 5 & 6.

Tropical Audubon Society (TAS) is a group of dedicated citizens who care about the quality of South Florida's environment. Established in 1947, we are a chapter of National Audubon Society and Florida Audubon Society. Our headquarters, the Doc Thomas House, is a Dade County Historic site on three sub-tropical acres of native habitat in South Miami.

Tropical Audubon's purposes are:

1) Conservation: to work toward protection of the natural world and to promote wise stewardship of natural resources, especially native plants and animals and their habitat.
2) Education: to promote, among members and the public of all ages, an understanding and appreciation of nature, the environment, and ecological relationships.

3) Enjoyment: as a society of members with compatible interests, to enjoy together the study and protection of nature. We believe in the wisdom of nature's design. We seek to foster and promote ecological conscientiousness in our community.

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Tropical Audubon Bulletin, the official newsletter of the Tropical Audubon Society, is published bimonthly by the Tropical Audubon Society, a non-profit, 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Throughout this newsletter, "TAS" refers to the Tropical Audubon Society, while "DTH" refers to the Doc Thomas House, the site of our office located at 5530 Sunset

Drive; Miami, Florida 33143. The phone number is (305) 667-7337. Membership rate, \$20 per year. Please make your checks payable to Tropical Audubon Society, and mail to our office (address above). Articles, news of events, original drawings, and letters to the Editor are welcomed, and should be submitted to the TAS office 4 weeks prior to each bi-monthly publication. It would be preferable if your copy were submitted via the internet. See the "About TAS" section of our website for more information.

Visit Tropical Audubon on the internet at:

tropicalaudubon.org

If you find yourself with no time to offer, we are always in need of funds to continue our efforts. If you would like to send in a donation specifically ear-marked for this work please write a note with your donation, indicating how you would like it to be used.

In light of all of the growth management issues we have struggled with this year, TAS will revisit potential support for, "Floridians for Smart Growth" or "Florida Hometown Democracy," which will be on the ballot in 2010. The amendment would allow the public to vote on significant changes in development policy (ie: only when the commission votes to move the CDMP). However, there are potential pit falls with this. This issue and those surrounding growth will be discussed in detail at our September 23rd Conservation Meeting, please plan to join us starting at 7:00pm at 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143.

Even if Amendment 4 passed and gave the public the power to decide or all of the bad growth management decisions of the Florida Legislature were somehow reversed in the next year, we would still have to be tuned into transportation issues such as the proposed 836 extension or the expansion of Krome Avenue and the influence this will have on sprawl. Currently Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Florida Department of Transportation seem to think building more roads and expanding those we currently have are the answers to our mobility problems. TAS feels all those stimulus dollars the state is after should only be available for public transportation and GREEN projects. This would force smart growth, instead of making it easier to live on the edge of the Everglades.

South Florida's Best Bird-Attracting Native Plants

By Roger L. Hammer

When South Florida became available for colonization by plants and animals, a situation created by a drop in sea levels that exposed the southern peninsula and the Florida Keys to the sun, it would stand to reason that plants and animals simply migrated south to colonize the land. This is mostly true for the animals, but certainly not for the plants.

Eighty-five percent of the native trees in Miami-Dade county's hardwood hammocks are of tropical origin, and 66% of the understory species in pine rockland habitat hail from the tropics as well. In the Florida Keys, the native forest trees are wholly tropical. So, how did these plants manage to get to South Florida without a land bridge connecting the peninsula to the tropics?

Some trees, like West Indian mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*) and Jamaica dogwood (*Piscidia piscipula*) produce seeds that are dispersed by tropical storms and fast-moving trade winds. Other species, such as seven-year-apple (*Genipa clusiifolia*), geiger tree (*Cordia sebestena*), and soapberry (*Sapindus saponaria*) produce fruits that are buoyant in seawater and are carried to distant shores by favorable ocean currents. But, trees with wind-dispersed and ocean-dispersed seeds, account for only a small percentage of the tropical trees native to Florida. For the majority of them, we can thank migratory birds.

During spring migration, when birds are bulking up on food for their long journey northward, many birds are preparing to leave such places as Cuba, the Bahamas, and coastal Yucatan (Mexico). For many, their next stop will be South Florida. These birds are flying to Florida with seeds of tropical plants in their bellies and, when they arrive here (what's a nice way of putting it?) they "deposit" the seeds in a pile of fertilizer! If those seeds come from

plants that are native to their country of origin, and if they germinate here and are able to adapt to Florida's weather patterns and soils, along with the ability to propagate and spread from seed in the proper habitat, they represent our native flora of tropical origin. It's as simple as that.

So, if you're interested in attracting birds to your yard, it seems logical that the plants that will attract them are those that were brought here by birds in the first place. One consistent characteristic of the native tropical trees and shrubs in the flora of Florida is that most all of them produce small fruits or seeds that are eaten by birds.

Here are the best bird-attracting native trees and shrubs:

INSECT-EATING BIRDS (WARBLERS, GNATCATCHERS, VIREOS, FLYCATCHERS)

WILD TAMARIND
(*Lysiloma latissiliquum*)
SHORTLEAF FIG (*Ficus citrifolia*)
GREENHEART (*Colubrina arborescens*)
BUTTONWOOD (*Conocarpus erectus*)
SATINLEAF (*Chrysophyllum oliviforme*)
BLACK IRONWOOD
(*Krugiodendron ferreum*)
LIVE OAK (*Quercus virginiana*)
FIREBUSH
(*Hamelia patens* var. *patens*)
FLORIDA TREMA (*Trema micranthum*)
WILD SAGE (*Lantana involucrata*)
SEAGRAPE (*Coccoloba uvifera*)
FLORIDA PRIVET
(*Forestiera segregata*)

FRUIT- AND SEED-EATING BIRDS (MOCKINGBIRDS, CATBIRDS, THRUSHES, WAXWINGS, CARDINALS, JAYS)

SHORT-LEAF FIG (*Ficus citrifolia*)
Especially cedar waxwings,
but many other birds as well.
LIGNUM-VITAE (*Guajacum sanctum*)
Especially mockingbirds, catbirds,
and blue-headed vireos.
LANCEWOOD (*Ocotea coriacea*)
Especially thrushes.
BIRD PEPPER
(*Capsicum annuum* var. *glabriusculum*)
Especially mockingbirds and catbirds.
DAHOON (*Ilex cassine*)
WAX MYRTLE (*Myrica cerifera*)
Especially tree swallows.

STOPPERS
(*Eugenia* spp.; *Myrcianthes fragrans*;
Mosiera longipes)
SPICEWOOD (*Calypttranthes pallens*)
MYRTLE-OF-THE-RIVER (*Calypttranthes zuzygium*)
BAHAMA STRONGBACK
(*Bourreria succulenta*)
LITTLE STRONGBACK
(*Bourreria cassinifolia*)
BUTTERFLY SAGE (*Cordia globosa*)
FIREBUSH
(*Hamelia patens* var. *patens*)
WHITE IRONWOOD (*Hypelate trifoliata*)
RED MULBERRY (*Morus rubra*)
AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY
(*Callicarpa americana*)
WILD COFFEE (*Psychotria* spp.)
WILD SAGE (*Lantana involucrata*)
FLORIDA PRIVET
(*Forestiera segregata*)

HUMMINGBIRDS

NECKLACE POD
(*Sophora tomentosa* var. *truncata*)
Hummingbirds will favor necklace pod flowers
over other flowers.
GEIGER TREE (*Cordia sebestena*)
LIVE OAK (*Quercus virginiana*)
Hummingbirds are fond of
eating oak pollen in spring.
SEVEN-YEAR-APPLE
(*Genipa clusiifolia*)
CORAL BEAN (*Erythrina herbacea*)
BAHAMA STRONGBACK
(*Bourreria succulenta*)
LITTLE STRONGBACK
(*Bourreria cassinifolia*)
FIREBUSH
(*Hamelia patens* var. *patens*)
SWAMPBUSH (*Pavonia paludicola*)



2009-10 MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Membership meetings are open to the public and held at the Doc Thomas House, 5530 Sunset Drive, near Red Road. The doors open at 7:30pm and the show beginning at 8pm. Call for more information (305) 667-7337. Monthly Membership Meetings will be held on Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Nov. 11, Jan 13, Feb. 10, Mar 10, Apr. 14.

TAS 2009-10 Event Calendar

Aug. 29 — Everglades Agricultural Area Birding Paul Bithorn will lead an all day carpool trip to sod farms and flooded fields in the Belle Glade area of Palm Beach County. Meet at 6:00am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). There will be a lunch stop at a restaurant.

[es] **Sept. 5 — Fairchild Tropical Botanical Gardens / Matheson Hammock Park Bird Walk** Joe Barros will lead birders through Fairchild Tropical Botanical Gardens, followed by a walk through Matheson Hammock Park. Meet at 7:30am in the Matheson parking area adjacent to Fairchild's north entrance. Entrance fee to Fairchild will be waived for TAS members. Return is at approximately 11:00am.

Sept. 6 — Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk Jeff Weber will lead birders through Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park on Key Biscayne. The park opens at 8:00 AM. Participants should meet at No Name Harbor (from the entrance station, take your first right and drive west to the parking area). The walk will begin by 8:15 AM. Costs include an entrance fee to the park and the Rickenbacker Causeway toll.

[es] **Sept. 12 — Cutler Bay Birding** Roberto Torres will lead this tour of Cutler Bay birding locations. Meet at Bill Sadowski Park, 17555 SW 79 Ave., at 7:30am. Other stops may include Black Point, Dump Marsh and Cutler Wetlands.

[es] **Sept. 13 — A.D. Barnes Park Bird Walk** Gigi Pardo will lead birders through A.D. Barnes Park. Enter on SW 72nd Ave. just north of Bird Rd. (SW 40th St.), turn left at the T intersection and park in spaces on either side of the road. Meet at 7:30am, returning at approximately 11:00am.

Sept. 20 — Matheson Hammock Bird Walk John Boyd will lead birders through Matheson Hammock on Old Cutler Rd. immediately north of Fairchild Gardens. The group meets in the parking area on the left inside the park entrance at 7:30am. Return is at approximately 11:00am.

Sept. 26 — Greynolds Park Bird Walk Jim King, Chief Naturalist for Miami-Dade Parks, will lead birders through Greynolds Park, 17530 West Dixie Highway in North Miami Beach. Meet at

the park boathouse at 7:30am. Parking is available near the playground and the elevated mound opposite the boathouse. Return is at approximately 11:00am.

Sept. 27 — Kendall Indian Hammock Park Bird Walk Brian Rapoza will lead birders through Kendall Indian Hammock Park, 11395 SW 79 St. (entrance is on SW 107 Ave.) Meet at 7:30 AM at the parking area near the ballfields, returning at approximately 11:00am.

Oct 3 — A.D. Barnes Park Bird Walk Bill Boeringer will lead. See Sept. 13 for info.

Oct 4 — Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk Paul Bithorn will lead. See Sept.6 for more info.

Oct. 10 — Corkscrew Swamp / Tigertail Beach Birding Brian Rapoza will lead an all day carpool trip to Collier County. Meet at 6:00am at the east gate (on SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). There is an admission fee for Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary (discount for Audubon members) and Tigertail Beach on Marco Island. Bring lunch and wading shoes. Walkie-talkies are recommended.

[es] **Oct. 11 — Matheson Hammock Bird Walk** Raul Urgelles will lead. See Sept. 20 for more info.

[es] **Oct. 17 — South Dade Birding** Roberto Torres will lead this all day carpool trip, which may include stops at Lucky Hammock, Castellow Hammock and Dump Marsh. Meet at 7:00am in the parking lot of the Burger King on US 1 in Florida City (just after the end of the turnpike). This is an all day trip. Bring lunch.

Oct. 24 — Shark Valley / Loop Road Birding Paul Bithorn will lead this carpool trip. Meet at 7:00am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). There is an entrance fee to Shark Valley. Bring lunch.

Oct. 31 — Everglades National Park Beginning Birding Jeff Weber will lead this trip. Meet in the parking lot of the Coe Visitor Center at Everglades National Park at 7:30am. There is an entrance fee to the park. Bring lunch.

Nov. 7 — Everglades National Park Birding John Boyd will lead this all day carpool trip. Meet in the parking lot of the Coe Visitor Center at Everglades National Park at 7:30am. There is an entrance fee to the park. Bring lunch.

Nov. 14 — STA-5 Birding Hendry Glades Audubon Society invites TAS to join them for a tour of Stormwater Treatment Area-5 in Hendry County. For those planning to carpool, this trip is limited to 20 participants and reservations are required. Contact Brian Rapoza for details, including meeting place and time.

Nov. 21 — Wakodahatchee / Green Cay / Okeehchee Birding John Hutchison will lead this carpool trip. Meet at 7:30am at Wakodahatchee Wetlands (13026 Jog Road, about 1.5 miles north of Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach, Palm Beach County.) Bring lunch.

Dec. 5 — South Florida Exotics Trip Paul Bithorn will lead birders in search of parrots, bulbuls, mynas, and other introduced species in this carpool trip. Meet at 1:00pm at the east parking lot of Baptist Hospital (8950 N Kendall Drive).

Dec. 12 — Snake Warrior Island Birding Broward Audubon Society's Paddy Cunningham invites TAS to join her for a tour of Snake Warrior Island Natural Area in southern Broward County. The park is at 3600 SW 62 Avenue in Miramar. From I-95, take US 441 north to County Line Road, drive west to SW 62 Avenue, then north to the park. Meet Paddy at 8:00 AM, return is at about 12:00 PM.

2010

[es] **Jan. 9 — South Dade Birding** Raul Urgelles will lead. See Oct. 17 for more info.

Jan. 16 — North Broward Birding John Hutchison will lead this carpool trip to birding locations in northern Broward County. Meet at 8:00am at Fern Forest Nature Center, 201 Lyons Road South, Coconut Creek (just south of Atlantic Boulevard and west of Florida's Turnpike). Bring lunch.

Jan. 23 — Everglades National Park Birding John Boyd. See Nov. 7 for more info.

Jan. 30 — Wakodahatchee / Green Cay / Okeehchee Birding Nancy Freedman will lead. See Nov. 21 for more info.

TAS 2009-10 Event Calendar

Feb. 6 — Harold Campbell PUA Birding Brian Rapoza will lead this carpool trip to Harold Campbell Public Use Area in southern Palm Beach County. Meet at 6:30am at the east gate (on SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami) or at 7:30am at Harold Campbell PUA, on Holeyland Road, 5.5 miles west of US 27 on the Broward/Palm Beach county line. Bring lunch.

[es] **Feb. 13 — Porter-Russell Pine Rockland Walk** Joe Barros will lead this walk through Tropical Audubon's own pine rockland, a remnant of Miami-Dade's most threatened habitat. See wildflowers, butterflies and birds and witness the struggles involved in preservation of this fragmented and globally imperiled habitat. Meet at 7:30am. From Florida's Turnpike, exit at SW 216 Street. Turn right and drive west on SW 216 Street, across US-1, to SW 124 Avenue. Turn left and drive south to SW 220 Street. The pineland is on the right, just south of SW 220 Street.

Feb. 20 — Shark Valley/Loop Road Birding John Hutchison will lead. Meet at 8:00am at the airboat concession on the north side of Tamiami Trail (US 41), one mile west of the Shark Valley entrance. There is an entrance fee to Shark Valley. Bring lunch.

Feb. 27 — Everglades National Park Beginning Birding Jeff Weber will lead this trip. See Oct. 31 for more info.

Mar. 6 — Everglades National Park Birding John Boyd will lead this all day carpool trip. See Nov. 7 for more info.

Mar. 13 — Lake Kissimmee Area Birding This is an all day carpool trip to Lake Kissimmee State Park in Polk County and Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area in Osceola County. Meet Brian Rapoza at 6:00am at the east gate of the Doc Thomas property on SW 55th Ave. just south of Sunset (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). Bring lunch. Walkie-talkies are recommended.

Mar. 20 — Wakodahatchee / Green Cay / Okeehetee Birding Nancy Freedman will lead. See Nov. 21 for more info.

Sun., Mar. 21 — Spring Wildflower Walk with Roger Hammer Well known South Florida plant expert, Roger Hammer, will lead this walk down the Long

Pine Key Nature Trail in Everglades National Park. See the wildflowers, butterflies and birds that share the varied habitat of pine rockland, Everglades prairie and upland hammock communities. Meet at the Ernest Coe Visitor Center in Everglades National Park at 8am, return approximately 11:30am. There is an entrance fee to the park. Reservations and fee required: \$40 members/\$45 nonmembers includes an autographed copy of Roger's recent book, *Everglades Wildflowers*. Call 305-247-1634, or e-mail Roger at RHAMMER@miamidade.gov to register or for more information.

Mar. 27 — South Broward Birding John Hutchison will lead this carpool trip to birding locations in southern Broward County. The trip begins at Long Key Nature Center in Davie. From I-75, exit at Griffin Road, drive east to Flamingo Road, turn left and drive north to S.W. 36th Court. Turn left and drive west until S.W. 36 Court curves to the right to become S.W. 130 Avenue. The entrance will be on your left. Meet at 8:00 AM. Bring lunch.

[es] **Sat., Apr. 3 — A.D. Barnes Park Bird Walk** Gigi Pardo will lead. See Sept. 13 for more info. birders through A.D. Barnes Park. Enter on SW 72nd Ave. just north of Bird Rd. (SW 40th St.), turn left at the T intersection and park in spaces on either side of the road. Meet at 7:30am, returning at approximately 11:00am.

Tues. Apr. 8 - Thurs. Apr. 28 — Dry Tortugas Spring Migration Boat Trips Larry Manfredi leads birders aboard the Playmate out of Key West. These four-day, three-night trips are every birder's dream! Six trips are available: April 8-11, 11-14, 15-18, 18-21, 22-25, and 25-28. Reservations and fee required. Ten percent of your fee will be donated to TAS and is tax-deductible. Email Larry at birderlm@bellsouth.net or call 305-258-9607. More information is on Larry's website at <http://www.southfloridabirding.com/>.

Sat., Apr. 10 — Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk Robin Diaz will lead. See Sept. 6 for more info.

[es] **Sun., Apr. 11 — Fairchild Tropical Botanical Gardens / Matheson Hammock Park Bird Walk** Joe Barros will lead. See Sept. 5 for more info.

Sat., Apr. 17 — Greynolds Park Bird Walk Jim King, Chief Naturalist for Miami-Dade Parks, will lead. See Sept. 26 for more info.

[es] **Sun., Apr. 18 — A. D. Barnes Park Bird Walk** Raul Urgelles will lead. See Sept. 13 for more info.

Apr. 24 — Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk David Wright and Mary Ellen Ahearn will lead. See Sept. 6 for more info.

Apr. 25 — Matheson Hammock Park Bird Walk John Boyd will lead. See Sept. 20 for more info.

Apr. 25 — TAS Wingding: 4-7pm, Doc Thomas House

May 1 — Big Cypress Swamp Birding Jeff Weber will lead this carpool trip to Loop Road in Big Cypress National Preserve. Meet at 7:30am at the Shark Valley entrance to Everglades National Park. Bring lunch and insect repellent.

May 2 — Kendall Indian Hammock Park Bird Walk Bill Boeringer will lead. See Sept. 27 for more info. birders through Kendall Indian Hammock Park, 11395 SW 79 St. (entrance is on SW 107 Ave.) Meet at 7:30 AM at the parking area near the ballfields, returning at approximately 11:00am.

[es] **May 15 — Key Largo Hammocks State Botanical Site: Birds, Butterflies and Native Plants** Joe Barros will lead this trip to the largest remaining tract of coastal tropical hardwood hammock in the Florida Keys. Meet at 6:30am in the parking lot of the Burger King on US 1 in Florida City (just after the end of the turnpike). Bring water and insect repellent. Lunch at a Key Largo restaurant.

May 22 — Offshore Miami Pelagic Birding Roberto Torres, Larry Manfredi, Paul Bithorn and Raul Urgelles will lead this all-day boat trip in search of shearwaters, storm-petrels, tropicbirds and other pelagic species. We'll visit Fowey Light, a reliable location for Brown Booby, then head to the edge of the Gulf Stream to search for weed lines and associated pelagic birds. Our vessel will be the Another Reward, a 70-foot air-conditioned party fishing boat based out of Miami Beach. Cost is \$160.00 per person; reservations are required and space will be limited. For details, including meeting place and time, as well as a full list of probable and possible species expected, contact us at

fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org.

Tropical Audubon, Virginia Key Advocates Urge Changes in Master Plan for the Key

The Virginia Key Master Plan designed by planning firm EDSA has unified many members of the community who fear a commercialized, over-developed Virginia Key. Tropical Audubon Society has been an outspoken voice for changes to the Master Plan, which calls for the construction of athletic fields, dry storage racks and a BMX course, among other things. TAS recently worked with Urban Environment League, Sierra Club, Dade Heritage Trust and many other concerned individuals to compose a letter and white paper, which identify many questionable elements of EDSA's plan. The documents were hand delivered to Mayor Manny Diaz, City Manager Pete Hernandez and City Commissioners, who will vote on the plan in the coming months.

Among the greatest concerns is the massive sports complex, made up of dozens of playing fields and courts, planned for the North End of Virginia Key. TAS and its allies suggested the fields be for day use only because the beach around Virginia Key is a nesting spot for sea turtles, which would be disrupted by artificial lights on at night.

For further information on the Master Plan and how to contact your Commissioners, see

www.tropicalaudubon.org

and/or

www.virginiakeymasterplan.com

TAS would like to see a plan with significantly reduced construction. Virginia Key is home to many threatened, endangered or protected species, such as Biscayne prickly ash and Johnson's sea-grass. Native plants must be protected. Destinations such as the Marine Stadium and Virginia Key Beach Park give the island historical significance. An abundance of new development would obscure such sites and threaten the natural environment.

Thirty individuals and ten organizations agreed to these points and signed on to Tropical Audubon's letter. Many of the concerns raised

were mentioned at public meetings hosted by EDSA, though a failure to incorporate the public's recommendations brought us to this point.

Both the Planning Advisory Board and the Waterfront Advisory Board rejected the Master Plan, and it has been removed (for now) from the Commission's agenda. City Manager Peter Hernandez indicated in a letter to the Miami Herald that the plan is being reworked with the public's suggestions in mind.

2009-10 Conservation Meetings

TAS members and guests are invited to attend Conservation Committee meetings at 7:30 pm on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Meetings are held at the Doc Thomas House, 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, 33143. Call 305-667-7337 for more information. Conservation Meetings will be held on Aug. 22, Sept. 23, Oct. 28, Nov. 25, Jan. 27, Feb. 24, Mar. 24, Apr. 28.

2009-10 Workdays at the Doc Thomas House

Want to learn about native plants, help Tropical maintain our native landscape at the Doc Thomas House and get your hands dirty? We need you! Show up anytime between 8:30-noon and you will find a host of hard workers. This is a great opportunity for students to earn community service hours. Call 305-667-7337 or e-mail volunteer1@tropicalaudubon.org for more information. Workdays will be held on the following dates: July 18, Aug. 15, Sept. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 21, Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Feb. 20, Mar. 20, Apr. 17, May 15, June 19 and July 17.

North American Migration Count

The North American Migration Count (NAMC), sponsored in Florida by the Florida Ornithological Society, with the assistance of local Audubon chapters, bird clubs and other interested organizations, is a semi-annual snapshot of the progress and shape of bird migration. On September 19 and May 8 birders from around the country will be collecting information on the abundance and distribution of both migrant and resident birds. If you can find and identify birds and would like to participate in the count in either Miami-Dade or Monroe County, contact us at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org. We'll send you NAMC instructions and a checklist. We'll also let you know which areas need coverage (or, you can let us know which area you wish to cover; it could be your own backyard, neighborhood, a local park or other natural area). It is important that there is no overlap or duplication of coverage areas, so please contact us before September 19 and May 8, respectively.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Join the Bird Counts! Every year since 1900 teams of interested birders have joined together across the country to count the number of individual birds within each species occurring on the same date in the same place. This huge task is coordinated by the National Audubon Society. The consistency of the count creates a viable set of statistics that can be compared and used to measure the effects that changes in the environment have had on the bird population. These measurements act as important warnings of environmental deterioration that should be heeded. In addition to the serious consequences of the bird counts, they are a fun way to spend a day with fellow birding enthusiasts. This is an all day event. Volunteers are needed for all areas.

TBA — Long Pine Key CBC

Coordinated by Robin Diaz. For additional information, email Robin at
robin@tropicalaudubon.org

Fri., Dec. 18 — Biscayne National Park CBC Coordinated by Max Triitt. For additional information, email Max at
Howard_Triitt@nps.gov

Sat., Dec. 19 — Miami-Dade County CBC Coordinated by Brian Rapoza. For additional information, email Brian at
fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org.

Sun. Dec 20 — Broward CBC Coordinated by Bryant Roberts. For information, email Mary Butterfield at
maryb707x@comcast.net or
bcasfieldtrips@gmail.com

Sat., Dec. 26 — Kendall CBC Coordinated by Bill Boeringer. For additional information, email Bill at
bill@tropicalaudubon.org.

Sat., Jan. 2 — Coot Bay / Everglades CBC Coordinated by Brian Rapoza. For additional information, email Brian at (305) 667-7337 or via email at
fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org

TAS OVERNIGHT BIRDING TRIPS!

Join **Brian Rapoza and John Boyd Nov 28-30** for a three day, two-night van trip to the Merritt Island area in Brevard County. Costs (\$300.00 per person double occupancy; \$100.00 single supplement) include hotel and van/gas. Reservations are required by November 7.

Then team up with them again **Jan 15-18** for a four day, three-night van trip to the Tallahassee area. Costs (\$400.00 per person double occupancy; \$100.00 single supplement) include hotel and van/gas. Reservations are required by January 4. Email Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org for further information.

And, **Mar. 27-Apr. 4**, Brian Rapoza and Robin Diaz lead a nine-day, eight-night trip to the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Hill Country of southern Texas, beginning and ending in San Antonio. This trip involves eight full days of birding, and is designed for intermediate to advanced birders. Costs: \$1,175.00 per person double occupancy (not including air fare to San Antonio); \$400.00 single supplement. Cost includes van transportation, hotel accommodations, and park entrance fees. Not included are tips, laundry costs and other incidental expenses. Meals are paid for by each participant. Contact Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org for a detailed itinerary.

Apr. 16-18, Brian Rapoza and Paul Bithorn lead a three-day, two-night van trip to Ft. DeSoto and other spring migration hotspots in the Tampa Bay area. Stops en-route will include Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area, Oscar Scherer State Park and Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Facility. Costs: \$300.00 per person double occupancy; \$75.00 single supplement (includes hotel and van/gas). Reservations are required by April 3. E-mail Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org for further information.

And, last but not least, **June 12 -20**, Brian Rapoza and John Boyd lead a nine-day, eight-night trip, beginning in Detroit, Michigan and ending in Fargo, North Dakota. Target species include Kirtland's and Connecticut Warbler, Great Grey Owl, Yellow Rail and Baird's Sparrow. This trip involves eight full days of birding, and is designed for intermediate to advanced birders. Costs: \$1,390.00 per person double occupancy (not including air fare); \$400.00 single supplement. Cost includes van transportation, hotel accommodations and park entrance fees. Not included are tips, laundry costs and other incidental expenses. Meals are paid for by each participant. Contact Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org for a detailed itinerary.

FOUR GREAT LEADERS! FIVE AWESOME TRIPS!!

What Our Friends Are Doing

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society invites you to the chapter's monthly meetings at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, 10901 Old Cutler Road (South entrance) on 4th Tuesdays at 7:30. Refreshments start at 7:15, followed by the program and plant raffle (lots of neat, hard-to-get stuff!). For more information about all activities, see <http://dade.fnpschapters.org> or call 786-340-7914.

September 22:

"Alien Bee Pollinators Invade Florida"

with Robert Pemberton, PhD, of the Invasive Plant Research Laboratory at the USDA in Ft. Lauderdale. Two neotropical bees have invaded southern Florida in the past few years. Dr. Pemberton will discuss the impact of their pollination activities on invasive weeds, non-native ornamentals and native plants.

NOTE: (There will not be a meeting in August.)

FPL Plan Not in Public's Best Interest

(Continued from page 1)

verse osmosis technology? And will there be any water to return to the adjacent Aquatic Preserve and National Parks that must be re-hydrated and redistributed as part of a multi-billion dollar restoration effort?

The application FPL has submitted offers many unsubstantiated claims and statements backed up by little or no data. Many of the agencies concerned with these projects have submitted their comments to the DEP, which will have the final say in the matter. Those letters and comments can be found on our website and the DEP's website.

Here are some highlights:

Rock-Mining will contribute to salt-water intrusion.

The project requires fill to create a pad, elevating the new units 25 feet higher than the existing ones. Not only will this impact about 300 acres of wetlands in the area critical to the American Crocodile and thousands of migrating birds, but the proposed fill site, southwest of Homestead Air Force Base, will further damage groundwater and exacerbate the salt-water intrusion we are facing along the coast. This fill should be purchased from an area that will pose less of a threat to the fragile coastal system.

Transmission lines threaten migratory birds.

FPL's proposal would of course require transmission lines both to the west and east. These lines will be very intrusive; in order for the company to save money it is proposing the lines not be buried, even those directly in front of Everglades National Park and along US 1. FPL currently owns land in the center of Taylor Slough, where it could never gain approval to put these 500 megawatt transmission lines. Everglades National Park Superintendent Dan Kimball has proposed to exchange a swath of land on the edge of the park for these lines. The land FPL would gain in this exchange would be 60 acres larger than what it would lose. We feel the park should buy the FPL land and force the transmission lines to be buried along Krome Avenue or one of the other 12 alternatives given by FPL.

Reclaimed sewage water added to an aerosol drift will cause pollutants to build up in our ecosystem.

The plan seeks to use 90 million gallons a day (MGD) of reclaimed sewage water to cool the towers, of which 60 MGD will be released into the atmosphere as steam. This will create an entirely different climate around the reactors. On top of that, reclaimed water, treated to its secondary level, contains endocrine disruptors, hormones, vitamins and chloride. These microconstituents will drift over Miami, building up in our system exponentially and affecting agriculture, surrounding wetlands, Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve and our national parks.

Coastal well fields would take almost 125 MGD from the Biscayne Aquifer and surface aquatic preserve waters.

Should the county not provide enough reuse water, the secondary water source identified in FPL's application would come from the power company's own well field, to be built right on the coast, inside of the Biscayne Aquatic Preserve and just outside of the National Park. Our aquifer is between 30-60 feet deep. FPL is proposing to build radial wells that would draw water from 40 feet below the surface, stating that they will pull 95% of their water from the surface of the Bay, changing the salinity slightly. TAS contests this unsubstantiated claim. In fact, the wells will pull more water from the aquifer than from the surface, further exacerbating our problems with salt-water intrusion and combating directly with our goals for restoration. The changes in salinity will yield a lagoon-like composition, where we will see damselfish, not snook and bonefish.

Sea level rise brings into question the safety of storing nuclear waste in perpetuity along our coast.

As if all of this was not enough, FPL's project will extend the life of a facility that is sitting at sea level, in the face of storm surge and sea level rise, without a thoughtful plan for nuclear storage into the future. This plan is not in anyone's best interest, but it is particularly unfair to those residents within close proximity of the plant.

Considering the value of our diminishing water supply, this project could not be done at a reasonable price if all the necessary precautions were taken. When all is said and done, might it not be cheaper to collect solar energy?

Be a part of the solution... GET INVOLVED!

If you would like to be part of an advisory list serve please send e-mail us at tropicalaudubon@gmail.com and let us know you are interested in staying informed about upcoming meetings.

Join or donate to TAS online at tropicalaudubon.org. We will also post updates on this issue on our web page as they become known to us. It will be important for you to voice your opposition to this plan and make it known that it is not in our best economic interest and not a sustainable course of action.

Right now you can send your thoughts to Michael Halpin at DEP's Siting Coordination Office (Mike.Halpin@dep.state.fl.us) as DEP reviews this application. If you would like to help TAS with its campaign, please call our office at 305-667-7337; we can use volunteers to help make our voices heard!

Tropical Audubon Thanks...

The following generous individuals have contributed to TAS since our last Bulletin. We GREATLY appreciate your support!

Purple Gallinule
(\$250 to \$499)
James Sigsbee

Painting Bunting
(\$100-\$249)

Paul & Pamela Bithorn; Miami Plumbers LU, Friends of the Everglades; Marc Allaire, Michael Aronsohn, Dolora Bachelor, John Boyd, Kathy Burkhart, Betty Cash, Paddy Cunningham, John and Mary Curlew; Tony Duque, Roxanne Featherly, Nancy Freedman, Reinhard Geisler, Jutta Geisler, Steve Gross, Kieran Kilday, Joyce King, Jim Kushlan, Judd Patterson, Steven Paez, Ralph Pike, Bonnie Ponwith, Gallus Quigley, Jeanette Rawls, Carlos Sanchez, Ken Schmidt, Jim Sigsbee, Mimi Sutherland, Jim Swarr, Greg Voigt, Ann Wiley, Cole Wolf, Bob Pace, Alice Pace, Troy Henderson, Rick Blanchette, Nancy Blanchette, David Schaffter.

White-crowned Pigeon
(\$50 to \$99)

Wayne & Joan Munyon; Patricia L. Phares, Wilhemina M. Myerburg, Patricia Harris.

Other Donors

Edward Carney, L. J. Snipes, Edward & Alice Carney; Ruben & Josefina Irizarry; and Christopher & Dorothy Podstawski.

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