I have recently been appointed your new Executive Director and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and share with you some of my goals. I became involved with TAS first as a member and then as a board member in 2005. I feel that one of the most important responsibilities we all have as conservationists and stewards of the environment is to invest in environmental education. We are currently forming a new committee to reinvent TAS’ education and outreach program, and as members I encourage you to become involved. For me, education has always evoked an internal energy that continues to empower me. I think it is the key to creating a movement of change.

What I have realized since moving here in August 1999 from Jacksonville, Florida, is that most of the problems we face in conservation is a lack of exposure to the issues. Of the many students that I have had over the past ten years I have found simplistic environmental information missing from their experiences and the curriculum and I am saddened that environmental education is not a higher priority within our community. We cannot become environmental stewards if we have never experienced nature. I will work hard to create partnerships with local organizations to help improve this deficit in our community. I will also work hard to facilitate our partnership with George Gann and The Institute for Regional Conservation to quickly restore the land under our stewardship and to use this land to facilitate learning for future education endeavors.

We are also now faced with uncertain times where climate is changing rapidly, sea levels are rising and available clean water becomes one of our biggest challenges. We all must become informed green citizens that strive to reduce our overall human footprint. This subject overwhelms everyone as well it should; I have found the most important thing to start with is yourself, the old adage, “practice what you preach.” Donate to the appropriate organizations; buy a hybrid; support green technologies such as solar or on-demand hot water heaters, energy-saving appliances such as front loading washers and dryers; even use solar panels instead of generators for hurricane back ups. If these ideas seem costly, you can look at GREEN ways to save money:

👩‍💻 Open your windows in your home for at least six months out of the year. You may have to dust more and listen to noise pollution, but you will be amazed by how you will adjust and adapt. Purchase a digital thermostat and allow the temp to go up to 80 when you are not at home.

💡 If you have not done so already, get rid of anything that produces latent heat that you are not harnessing. Exchange incandescent bulbs with compact florescent. Your average savings per household is approximately 1500kWh for a 2000 square foot home. That is about $200 per year at current prices (Florida Solar Energy Center, 2006).

💡 Reduce your use of appliances. The best way is to plug everything into a surge protector or a strip with an on-off button so you can easily manage the amount of energy you are consuming. This way it will not

(Continued on page 4)
Over 100 birders from across North America visited the area in November during the American Birding Association’s Regional Conference, held in Plantation, in Broward County. Daily trips to local hotspots were led by some of Tropical Audubon’s best field trip leaders, as well as birders from Broward Audubon, Audubon of the Everglades, Hendry-Glades Audubon and the Caloosa Bird Club. Participants were treated to a number of Florida’s special birds, including Magnificent Frigatebird, Great White Heron, Reddish Egret, Snail Kite, Short-tailed Hawk, Limpkin, White-crowned Pigeon, Smooth-billed Ani, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Common Myna, Painted Bunting, Shiny Cowbird and Spot-breasted Oriole. As would be expected when so many birders are covering so much territory, a few unexpected birds were seen along the way. During a pre-conference trip to Stormwater Treatment Area 5 in Hendry County, two Greater White-fronted Geese were spotted. A Red-necked Phalarope was discovered among resting shorebirds during a visit to Crandon Beach on Key Biscayne. A very late Gray Kingbird was found near the entrance to Everglades National Park. A Short-eared Owl was also seen in this area; this bird was re-found later in the month. Local birders reported a Western Spindalis from the Long Pine Key campground in Everglades National Park, but this bird could not be re-located by conference participants or trip leaders.

Conference participants who visited Tree Tops Park prior to the start of the conference reported a Townsend’s Warbler, but this bird was not re-located by local birders. The Townsend’s Warbler found at Kendall Indian Hammocks Park in mid-October continued until almost the end of the month. A Philadelphia Vireo was seen in this park in mid-October; another was found a few days later at Lucky Hammock, on Aerojet Road near the entrance to Everglades National Park. Other birds reported from this area during October included Brown-crested Flycatcher, Bell’s Vireo and Wilson’s Warbler. In late October, A MacGillivray’s Warbler was found near the Green Turtle Inn on Islamorada. A Willow Flycatcher was heard and seen near Lucky Hammock during a TAS field trip in early November. A singing House Finch was discovered at the Coe Visitor Center of Everglades National Park during this same field trip. Another House Finch was found at Shark Valley later in the month. Lesser Nighthawks were reported around Lucky Hammock beginning in late November and were seen in the Flamingo campground of Everglades National Park beginning in early December. Both Saltmarsh and Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrows were seen along the Coastal Prairie Trail during this period. Wintering Western Kingbirds and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were found in the Flamingo area; these two species also returned to SW 312 Street, near SW 217 Avenue in Homestead, in spite of new house construction on formerly overgrown fields at this location.

The Cutler Bay area produced several fall sightings of note. In late October, a Eurasian Wigeon was discovered at Lennar Flow-way, a property adjacent to the area’s wastewater treatment facility. The Wigeon, a first for Miami-Dade County, moved to nearby Cutler Wetlands in mid-November. Franklin’s Gulls were seen around the wastewater treatment facility, as well as at nearby Black Point marina during the month. Sacred Ibis, origin uncertain, were also found at Cutler Wetlands during this period. A Snow Goose was spotted there in early December. Other birds seen at the wetlands included Gadwall, American Avocet, Common Tern and large numbers of Wood Storks and Roseate Spoonbills. Clapper Rail, a species difficult to find in Miami-Dade, was seen and photographed at nearby Dump Marsh in early December.

In mid-November, a few local birders participated in a pelagic trip that sailed from Ponce Inlet, New Smyrna Beach in Volusia County. An amazing selection of seabirds was found during this trip, including Red-billed Tropicbird, Manx, Cory’s and Audubon’s Shearwaters, Pomarine, Parasitic and Long-tailed Jaegers, Bridled Tern and Red Phalarope. During the return to Ponce Inlet, a Purple Sandpiper was spotted on one of the inlet’s jetties. During early December, a number of sea ducks were reported from Volusia, including Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck and Common Eider. The elder was found near Daytona Beach, wrapped in monofilament line and with fishing hooks imbedded in its tongue and left foot! The bird was treated at a local rehabilitation center and was expected to fully recover. In 2003, TAS partnered with Florida Sea Grant to bring the Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program to Miami-Dade County. For more information about this statewide program, and to see what you can do to prevent sea bird encounters with monofilament, check the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s MRRP web page at http://fishinglinerecycling.com/
It’s Almost Time Again for Birdathon 2008...

Saturday, April 5 – Sunday, April 20
Raise money for TAS! Tropical Audubon’s Sixth Annual Birdathon is coming in April. Bird for up to 24 consecutive hours anytime during April 5-20. 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!

Our Annual Birdathon will span April 5-20, 2008. You can count birds during any 24 consecutive hours in this period. A Birdathon is like a walkathon. You collect pledges for birds species seen instead of miles walked (for example, $1 per bird, 25¢ per bird, etc.), or simply for a flat amount. You can bird solo, form a team, or join an existing team. You can even do your Birdathon on any of the TAS birdwalks during this period.

Collecting $40 in pledges nets you a colorful TAS license plate holder. Individuals that pledge $40 or more get a license plate holder too! Birdathoners win prizes for raising money and for counting the most birds. Prizes in the past have included birding trips to the Dry Tortugas, tickets on American Airlines, binoculars, accommodations in New Orleans and the Keys, Audubon prints, restaurant meals, native plants and more. Check our website for a list of this year’s prizes or call the Doc Thomas House for info. Please contact us at 305-667-7337 or at director@tropicalaudubon.org if you or your business can donate a prize. Prize categories include: Highest pledge total ($) and Most bird species seen by an individual or a team.

To participate, simply download the pledge forms from tropicalaudubon.org. You can receive mailed copies of the pledge forms by notifying us by e-mail at director@tropicalaudubon.org or by phone at 305-667-7337.

How to Birdathon!
1) Get pledges from friends, neighbors, co-workers, strangers. See the info sheet on our website for ideas about how to boost your pledge totals.
2) Count birds.
3) Tell us how many species you saw and how many pledges you received. To be eligible for prizes, this info must be called in by 4 pm April 21st to 305-667-7337. Leave your name, team name, number of birds species seen, total pledged amount. Prize winners will be announced during our annual picnic on April 27th.
4) Collect pledge donations and forward to TAS at 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami, Fl 33143 by May 9.
5) To claim your prizes come to the WingDing on April 27 or contact TAS to arrange a pickup time.

Doing the Birdathon is a lot of fun and every single dollar raised stays right here in south Florida to support Tropical’s work. We need your help to do it, so grab some friends, grab your binoculars, and get birding!

--- & TAS WingDing

Celebrate another great year with us at the 2008 Annual Meeting featuring Keynote Speaker, City Of Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff; Conservation Awards, Birdathon Winners, our 3rd Annual Silent Auction, and more! Flock to our Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 27th from 4 to 7 pm, at the Doc Thomas House, located at 5530 Sunset Drive.

Help us feather our nest with contributions for our 3rd Annual Silent Auction. We need donations, so if you or your business has an item to donate to the auction, please call us at 305-667-7337 or e-mail director@tropicalaudubon.org. Potential auction items include gift certificates, sporting, cultural, and other event tickets, jewelry, wine, art, electronic equipment, services, or other wonderful and desirable items. Then come to the meeting prepared to bid and win! Items will be auctioned off on a cash and carry basis (Visa, MasterCard and personal checks are accepted).

During this meeting, we will be nominating new and returning members to our Board of Directors. Our nominating committee is actively soliciting names of people who might be interested in serving on the TAS Board. We are always looking for dedicated and energetic individuals who can help with our programs, activities, and fundraising. If you are interested or know someone who might fit the bill, please contact us at 305-667-7337 or e-mail director@tropicalaudubon.org
A Message from TAS’ New Executive Director

(Continued from page 1)

A Parting Note from former Executive Director
Cynthia Guerra

This past January, I was privileged to be honored by the Everglades Coalition when they presented me with the John V. Kabler Award, which is bestowed on someone who has worked to organize and educate the public and generate grassroots support for Everglades restoration. I was being honored specifically for my grassroots efforts to stop development in the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands restoration project footprint, which subsequently led to the area being declared critical restoration habitat by the South Florida Water Management District. This action by the District was monumental, and has set a precedent for protection of lands in restoration footprints throughout the entire system.

Receiving the award was bittersweet — it was an affirmation that I was able to contribute in some meaningful way to the restoration effort, but it came with the realization that my work for TAS, as your foot soldier in the effort to save the Everglades and Biscayne Bay, was over. I also realized that my efforts were the tip of the iceberg; I was standing on the shoulders of all my professional colleagues and partners, and all of you — the supporters, Board Members and members of TAS. TAS may be only a small organization, but we have a track record that leaves no doubt that we are the “Voice of Conservation in South Florida.” I left TAS (with mixed emotions and some reluctance) to accept new challenges in conservation and restoration of South Florida’s amazing ecosystems, but I remain dedicated to TAS as an organization.

I hope you will join me in answering Laura’s call to action and ensuring that TAS continues its important work on behalf of our environment. And thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for letting me serve you in this noble endeavor.

The Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society meets at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, 10901 Old Cutler Road (South entrance) at 7:30. Meetings are free and open to the public and include refreshments starting at 7:15, plant raffle and discussion of the raffle plants (lots of neat, hard-to-get stuff). Call 305-255-6404 for more information or see http://dade.fnpschapters.org.

March 25, biologist Steven W. Woodmansee, presents “Give Peas a Chance? Fabaceae (Pea Family) in South Florida.” The program will include colorful photographs of members of this interesting family.

April 22, Rick Seavey will talk about “Lichens and the Native Flora of Subtropical Florida” - plus a pre-meeting tram tour of the garden (reservation required).

March 15, NATIVE PLANT DAY! 9 am - 4 pm. Free! At Elaine Gordon Enchanted Forest Park, 1725 NE 135 Street, North Miami. Sponsored by the Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society and City of North Miami Parks. Programs, nature walks, and hands-on activities for the whole family, displays, native plant and book sales, raffles and lots more. Bring your questions about plants, insects, wildlife, the environment and landscaping.
The Nature Photography of Trey Mitchell

Trey Mitchell will be our speaker at the TAS March General Meeting... Info below.

Thanks to our Donors!

The following generous individuals and organizations have contributed to TAS since the last Bulletin. As always, we appreciate your support!

**Swallow-Tailed Kite ($5,000 +)**
Porter Anderson Fund at Dade Community Foundation, The Everglades Foundation

**Roseate Spoonbill ($1000 to $4999)**
Alan & Sue Steinberg

**Purple Gallinule ($250 to $499)**
David & Sharon Johnson, Rick & Deborah Covert in honor of Dr. Jose F. Barros, Ruth Balestra, Brother Milledge

**Painted Bunting ($100 to $249)**
Brian Rapoza, Alan & Pat Herbert in honor of Alan & Sue Steinberg, John Atkinson, Georgina Hall, John & Ellen Barrett, Jeanne & George Van Wyck, Rick Cohen, Stephen Pearson, Bill & Lissette Boeringer, Mikolay Plater Zyberk, Catherine Seele

**White Crowned Pigeon ($50 to $99)**
Ellen & Bob Breier in tribute to Peggy Urell, Longin Kaczmasky, Rolando Martin, Patricia McManus, Edward & Crystal Schultz

Please Support TAS
TAS may be a small non-profit organization, but we accomplish so much more than our little budget would suggest that we can. We rely on our Board of Directors, and you – our members – to support the work we do. Please take this opportunity to send your tax-deductible contribution to TAS at 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL, 33143. Every dollar you send to us stays with TAS to support our important conservation work in Miami-Dade County. As always, we appreciate your generosity!

T A S notes

General Meetings

Membership meetings are open to the public and held at the Doc Thomas House, 5530 Sunset Dr., near Red Rd. The doors open at 7:30pm and the show beginning at 8pm. Call for more information (305) 667-7337.

Our next meeting will be held
March 12 and our speaker will be

"Everyone who's ever checked the Tropical Audubon Bird-board has learned never to miss Trey's gorgeous photos of everything from dragonflies to orchids to every species of bird--even tiny warblers and hummingbirds, and even flying and foraging. How does he do it? Learn his secrets, and follow his adventures over the past few years as he became--simultaneously!--a highly skilled birder and a professional nature photographer."

Conservation Meetings

TAS members and guests are invited to attend the Conservation 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.

March 26: Pete Frezza from Audubon of Florida will lead a discussion on the devastating algal blooms that have been plaguing Biscayne and Florida Bays.
April 23: FP & L has been invited to present info and hear our concerns on the proposed nuclear plant expansion at Turkey Point.
Sat. Mar. 1 — Everglades National Park Birding This is an all day carpool trip. John Boyd 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. Walkie-talkies are recommended.

Sat. Mar. 8 — Shark Valley Biking and Birding Brian Rapoza leads this 15 mile bike and birding tour on Shark Valley's tram road. Everglades National Park entrance fee is required. Bring a bicycle (rentals are available at Shark Valley). helmet, lunch, water and insect repellent. Mid-afternoon return. Reservations are required by March 1. Limited to 20 participants. E-mail Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org for further information.

Sat. Mar. 15 — Wakodahatchee / Green Cay Wetlands Birding Nancy Friedman 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.)

Sun. Mar. 16 — 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. This is an excellent chance to see the grass-pink orchid in bloom. Meet at the Ernest Coe Visitor Center in Everglades National Park at 8am, return approximately 11:30am. 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 to register or for more information.

Sat. Mar. 29 — Lake Kissimmee Area Birding This is an all day carpool trip to the Lake Kissimmee State Park and Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area. 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.

Sat. Apr. 5 — Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk Robin Diaz 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. (Turn right at the first intersection after the park toll booth. A sign will indicate No Name Harbor.) The walk will begin by 8:15 AM. Costs include an entrance fee to the park and the Rickenbacker Causeway toll.

Sun. Apr. 6 — Matheson Hammock Bird Walk Joe Barros 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 side of the north park entrance at 7:30am. Return is at approximately 11:00am.

Sun. Apr. 6 - Wed. Apr. 30 — 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! Eight trips available: April 6-9, April 9-12, April 12-15, April 15-18, April 18-21, April 21-24, April 24-27, April 27-30. 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: http://www.southfloridabirding.com/

Sat. Apr. 12 — 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.

Sun. Apr. 13 — 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, Pump Marsh and Cutler Wetlands. Bring lunch. Walkie-talkies are recommended.

Fri.-Sun. April 18-20 — Ft. DeSoto Birding Brian Rapoza and Paul Bithorn lead this 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: $225.00 per person double occupancy; $75.00 single supplement (includes hotel and van/gas). Reservations are required by April 4. E-mail Brian for further information.

Sat. Apr. 19 — Greyndold’s Park Bird Walk Jim King will lead birders through Greyndold’s Park, 17550 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.

Sun. Apr. 20 — Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk David Wright and Mary Ellen Ahearn 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. (Turn right at the first intersection after the park toll booth. A sign will indicate No Name Harbor.) The walk will begin by 8:15 AM. Costs include an entrance fee to the park and the Rickenbacker Causeway toll.

Sat. Apr. 26 — A.D. Barnes Park Bird Walk Susan Schneider will lead. See April 12 for details.

Sun. Apr. 27 — Matheson Hammock Park Bird Walk John Boyd will lead birders through Matheson Hammock on Old Cutler Rd. immediately north of Fairchild Gardens. The group meets in the Matheson parking area on the left, inside the north park entrance, at 7:30am.