



# Tropical Audubon Bulletin

The Voice of Conservation in South Florida... 

5530 Sunset Drive; Miami, Florida 33143

(305) 667-7337

May/June 2007

## Local Audubon Chapters take on Global Warming

By Cynthia Guerra (TAS)  
& Barry Heimlich (BCAS)

**L**ately, it seems as though the tide is finally changing on the debate over global warming. With broad scientific consensus that rise in global temperatures is being accelerated by human activities, people are beginning to seriously consider how to address the problem. Major consequences of global warming include rising sea levels, greater frequency and intensity of hurricanes, loss of coastal wetlands, beach erosion and impacts to drinking water supplies. These issues are of critical concern to South Florida so it's appropriate for local Audubon chapters to take the lead.

TAS was recently appointed to the newly created Miami-Dade County

Climate Change Advisory Task Force (CCATF). The CCATF began meeting in February, and seeks to expand the County's level of effort in its own Urban CO2 Reduction Program which began in 1993. This program (initiated and lead by Miami-Dade Clerk Harvey Ruvlin who now chairs the CCATF) had the admirable goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Miami-Dade County by 20% of 1998 levels by 2005. Through this program, the County has reduced total carbon dioxide emissions by 34 million metric tons. This reduction moves the County towards meeting the goal set, but the County fell short because the federal government failed to take any action to improve vehicle fuel efficiencies as advocated for by the County. In other words, if the federal government had taken steps so that most cars and trucks got better

than 30 miles to the gallon, instead of the more common efficiency of less than 20 mpg now, the County would have met its targets.

The CCATF is now charged with analyzing the impacts of environmental changes on South Florida, continuing efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, exploring alternative energy sources, and identifying ways to minimize, mitigate, cope and adapt to the inevitable changes in the environment from global warming. Moving forward, the CCATF will develop recommendations to be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for review and implementation. Once these recommendations are forwarded to the County Commission, you can help to encourage them and other local elected officials do what is

*(Continued on page 4)*

### Notice of Election National Audubon Society Board of Directors

**A**t the June Board Meeting, the Directors of TAS will be voting for a nominee to fill a Southeast Region position on the National Audubon Society Board of Directors. There are three nominees: Cathy Coates formerly with TAS now with Baton Rouge Audubon, Neil Davies with Flagler Audubon, and Donald McKee from Mississippi Coast Audubon. The TAS Board vote will take place June 6 at 8 pm. Interested members can contact us at 305-667-7337 to provide comments on the candidates or preference as to the vote.

### TAS Native Plant & Book Sale at the Doc Thomas House

**S**aturday June 2 (9 am to 5 pm) & Sunday June 3 (9 am to 3 pm)

Our native plant sales are famous and fun. We have a great selection of South Florida plants and knowledgeable sales people to help you choose the best ones for your yard. Plants available are perfect for creating bird, butterfly and wildlife habitats and also help to conserve water. Come early for the best selection, stay late to enjoy the company.

**A**lso make sure to check out our great selection of used books for sale at cut-rate prices. All proceeds from the sale support TAS. If you have birding or nature books you'd like to donate, please bring them anytime during the posted sale hours. Books that are not birding or nature books will not be accepted. No books will be accepted at anytime other than during the sale.



**L**oggerhead Kingbird is a fairly common bird of lowland to mid-elevation forests throughout the western Caribbean, including Cuba, the Bahamas, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and the Caymen Islands. After a number of Loggerhead Kingbird sightings in Florida during the 1970's, this species was added to both the Florida and ABA Area checklists. In the late 1990's, all of these sightings were reevaluated by P. William Smith, Glen Woolfenden and Sandy Sprunt, who concluded that photographic evidence suggested that these birds had been misidentified. Based on the paper they published in *North American Birds* in 2000, Loggerhead Kingbird was subsequently removed from both checklists. That's how things stood until early this March, when Carl Goodrich and Ron Hamburger, birders from Key West, discovered a Loggerhead Kingbird at Ft. Zachary Taylor State Park. For most of the month this incredibly cooperative bird, likely of the Cuban race, was viewed by hordes of birders from around the country (and some from other countries), and photographed by many. Its distinctive call was even recorded. Once accepted by the state records committee, Loggerhead Kingbird will be bird #499 for the Florida checklist, and will likely return to the ABA checklist. It didn't take long for Florida bird #500 to turn up; a White Wagtail, found in mid-March at Moon Lake Park in Pasco County, north of Tampa. This Eurasian species can regularly be found in western Alaska, but rarely in the lower 48 states. Though the wagtail (determined to be of the European race) was seen by a number of birders over the course of the next few days, and was well photographed, it proved to be more unpredictable than the kingbird, and disappeared within a week.

As winter turned to spring, Florida was visited by two other birds that are rarely seen in the eastern United States. In early March, a Spotted Towhee, the western counterpart to our Eastern Towhee, was found in the yard of John Murphy, a birder from Alligator Point in the Panhandle. The towhee stayed in the vicinity of his yard for most of the month, and was viewed by a number of visiting birders. In early April, Mary Acken, who lives in the Orlando area, hosted a Lazuli Bunting at her backyard seed feeder. Unfortunately, the bunting appeared sporadically and stayed only a couple of days. Both John and Mary are to be commended for graciously allowing birders to visit their properties in search of these birds. Closer to home, local bird guide Larry Manfredi hosted a Brewer's Blackbird during March at his backyard feeders. With the exception of the western Panhandle, this species is

rarely seen in Florida. Like John and Mary, Larry welcomed visiting birders to his Homestead home, not only to view the blackbird, but also to see Shiny and Bronzed Cowbirds that were regularly visiting his feeders.

During March, a Shiny Cowbird was also coming to feeders at Green Cay Wetlands, in Palm Beach County. The Eared Grebe, first found at Green Cay in November, continued at that location into early April. Broward County hosted a number of rarities during the season. In late March, Bryant Roberts spotted a Great Cormorant perched on a channel marker at the north end of John U. Lloyd State Park in Dania Beach. This largest member of the cormorant family, commonly found in North America only from New England's rocky coast northward to Quebec, seemed to find this channel marker to its liking and stayed for several days. At Evergreen Cemetery, just south of downtown Ft. Lauderdale, a Bahama Mockingbird was discovered in early April by Russal MacGregor and Monte Stickel. That same morning, Mark Berney re-found the Western Spindalis first seen there earlier this winter. Finally, Broward County continues to host a small group of Smooth-billed Anis. This species, which seems to have disappeared from much of its previous range in Florida, can still be reliably found south of Ft. Lauderdale International Airport. Lately, the anis have been found in weedy fields around a warehouse along Old Griffin Road, and have been seen by a number of both local and visiting birders.

### "One good tern deserves another..."

**A**s this newsletter goes to press, several talented birders (and not so talented ones, like me) are out looking for birds as part of this year's Birdathon! Teams and individuals have taken the opportunity to take part of a great day birding while at the same time helping to support the important conservation work of TAS. The following teams and individuals registered in time to be recognized in this Bulletin:

- 📍 Ingrid & Aileen Bartholemew
- 📍 Mass Ducks (John Hutchinson and Friends)
- 📍 Jocelyn Robinson
- 📍 King Boyds (Nancy Freedman, John Boyd and Alex Harper)
- 📍 Life is Good... (Paul Bithorn and Brian Rapoza)
- 📍 Corkscrews (Laura Reynolds, Pilar Rodriguez, and Brooke Shamblim)
- 📍 Dolora Batchelor
- 📍 Hey, this isn't Sailing! (Cynthia Guerra and Friends)

If you didn't do a Birdathon this year – stay tuned for next year's event. Great prizes are always awarded. This year's top prizes include a \$500 gift certificate to American Airlines, a pelagic birding trip with professional bird guide Larry Manfredi, binoculars from Eagle Optics, and more! Our appreciation goes out to Birdathoners, folks who made pledges, sponsors and prize donors.

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 subtropical 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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Desk Top Publishing: Steven Mumford

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 by-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](http://tropicalaudubon.org)

## - Be part of a successful Flight plan - Join the Wings of Success & Help Tropical Soar

Tropical Audubon Society is a dynamic chapter with many functions, meetings, and activities. With so many pots on the fire we could always accept a helping hand from you, your skills, experience, and contributions. Fundraising is important in every organization but having an infrastructure of volunteers is no less important. In reviewing our needs we could benefit from a team of volunteers who could work together to open the house on a daily basis helping with a wide array of activities including house tours, answering the phones, and allowing access to the library (an up and coming TAS member benefit). More specifically, we would welcome a volunteer who could manage regular data entry, simple computer bookkeeping, and organizing volunteers. Would you rather be outside? With over two acres of property in the heart of South Miami, there are outdoor activities such as managing our native plant nursery and being active with the Native Plant Sales, or keeping bird, butterfly and plant records of the property. The opportunities are endless depending on your wishes and desires with the im-

portant part being that as little as a couple hours a week or two can help boost TAS activities, exposure and accomplishments. Please call us at 305-667-7337, let us know you are interested by leaving your name and number so we can get back to you.

### WHAT OUR FRIENDS ARE DOING:

#### FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

**The Dade Chapter** of the Florida Native Plant Society meets at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, 10901 Old Cutler Road (South entrance) at 7:30 on 4th Tuesdays. Meetings are free and open to the public and include refreshments starting at 7:15, plant raffle and discussion of the raffle plants. Call 305-255-6404 for more information or see <http://dade.fnpschapters.org>. Please note: even though we meet at Fairchild, we are not an activity of Fairchild!

**May 22**, Keith Bradley, Assistant Director of the Institute for Regional Conservation: *"Poking Into the World of South Florida's Cacti."*

**June 26**, Roger Hammer, Senior interpretive naturalist, Miami-Dade Parks Department: *"Poisonous and Edible Wild Natives."*

## Thanks to our Donors!

*The following generous individuals and organizations have contributed to TAS since the last Bulletin.*

#### Great White Heron

(\$500 to \$999)

Nancy Freedman  
Alan Steinberg

#### Purple Gallinule

(\$250 to \$499)

James Sigsbee

#### Painted Bunting

(\$100 to \$249)

Freda Tschumy

#### White-Crowned Pigeon

(\$50 to \$99)

Thomas Trotta  
Charles Wheeler  
Peter Klein  
Jacquelyn Esco  
Anonymous

#### Other Donors

Seena Rogers  
Yehudit Teitelbaum  
John Atkinson

Special thanks to Leah Harman, Marlene Kocher, James Everett and Anonymous for making contributions to TAS through workplace giving programs. Special thanks to Brian Rapoza for covering the costs for the 2006 Christmas Bird Count.

#### Extra Special Thanks!

Thanks so much to local business donors who helped to support our Silent Auction and Birdathon with fabulous items:

Bellezza Spa Salon & Boutique  
305-284-0669  
[www.bellezzaspa.com](http://www.bellezzaspa.com)

Hilary's Framing Gallery  
305-661-4518

Titanic Brewing Company  
305-667-2537  
[www.titanicbrewery.com](http://www.titanicbrewery.com)

Dynamic Shapes  
Personal Training  
305-467-1409

Mobile Music Academy  
305-322-0087  
[www.bh-music.com](http://www.bh-music.com)

#### Please Support TAS

Many folks continue to respond generously to our 2006 Year-End Annual Fund Appeal letter and for that we are extremely grateful. Tropical Audubon 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!

*As always,  
we appreciate  
your support!*

## TAS and BCAS take on GLOBAL WARMING!

(Continued from page 1)

needed to meet the challenge of global warming. Fortunately, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Alvarez and many of Miami-Dade's City Mayors have committed to doing what they can to move this initiative forward and to implement greenhouse gas emission reduction programs of their own.

The Broward Audubon Society has been successful in getting twenty-three Broward Mayors to join the fight on global warming. To date, the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement has been signed by over 393 mayors from all 50 states representing a total population of over 56.4 million (19%). To view these

names, or get more information on the Agreement, go to <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/>. Under the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, participating mayors strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, urge state and federal governments to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target, and urge the U.S. Congress to pass bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation.

It is a major step in the right direction that municipal authorities in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties recognize that they must confront global

warming. With political leadership, industries and businesses can also be encouraged to move in the right direction as well, or they can be mandated to through regulation. But there is a critical component missing in programs such as these, and that's you. Each one of us makes decisions everyday that have global consequences. By learning to conserve energy, you can do your part to reduce your own contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. And the things you can do are easy, and often save you money in the long run.

**TAS encourages you to take the steps necessary to reduce energy consumption:**

- \*Plant native trees.
- \*Keep the tires on your car properly inflated and your engine properly tuned up.
- \*Reduce the number of miles you drive by carpooling, using mass transit, and combining trips when you run errands.
- \*Turn your thermostat up to 80 degrees when you are away from your house.
- \*Replace your traditional light-bulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
- \*Plug your small electronics chargers (cell phones, PDAs, etc) into a surge protector and turn the surge protector off when you are not charging up batteries.
- \*When it's time to replace a major appliance, pick those with the Energy Star label. If you are replacing your air conditioner, choose one with a high EER or SEER rating.
- \*When it's time to replace your car, choose a hybrid or at least one that gets the best fuel economy in its class.

### WHAT OUR FRIENDS ARE DOING:

#### N. AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION MIAMI BLUE CHAPTER EVENTS

Check [www.miamiblue.org](http://www.miamiblue.org)  
for more details on any event

**Every Sunday**, 10:00 am, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Sunday Morning Butterfly Walk

**Sun., May 6**, 1:00 pm, Castellow Hammock Preserve, Quarterly Miami Blue Chapter meeting: Miami Blue Chapter conservation & general business discussion.

**Sat., May 19**, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Castellow Hammock Preserve Bird & Butterfly Gardening Festival

**Sun., May 27**, 9:00 am, Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park Butterfly Walk.

**Sat., Jun 2**, 8:30 am, Deering Estate Butterfly Walk

**Sat., Jun 16**, 8:30 am, Shark Valley Butterfly Walk

**Sat., Jun 23**, 8:30 am, 13th Annual NABA Coral Gables Count

**Sat., Jun 30**, 8:30 am, 5th Annual Tri-County-Pinecrest NABA Count

## TAS CALENDAR

**Sat., May 5 — North Key Largo 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 7:30am in the parking lot of the Burger King on US1 in Florida City (just after the end of the turnpike).

Bring water and insect repellent.

## TAS WORKDAYS

**Want to learn about native plants**, help Tropical Audubon 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  
[volunteer@tropicalaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@tropicalaudubon.org)  
for more information.

**Workdays will be held  
May 19 and June 16**

Tropical Audubon Society  
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