South Florida Birding Recap: Spring, 2006

By Brian Rapoza

If you want to see respectable numbers of migrating warblers in southeast Florida, you have to watch the winds. Easterly (that is, onshore) winds are typical during spring. Under these conditions, sightings of Caribbean-wintering species such as Cape May and Black-throated Blue Warbler predominate. Days with westerly winds tend to bring trans-Gulf migrants to our coast, greatly increasing the variety. Such a day was this past April 18, when an amazing 22 species of warblers were reported at A. D. Barnes Park. Included in the mix were Blue-winged, Kentucky, Mourning and Canada Warbler. While no other day produced as high a count, spring migration seemed to be more protracted this year, with migrants such as Blackpoll Warbler and American Redstart being reported into late May. This was also a good spring for sightings of Connecticut Warbler, with reports beginning in late April and stretching into mid to late May. Sightings came from a variety of locations, including Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park and Crandon Park on Key Biscayne, Crane Point Museum in Marathon, Spanish River Park in Boca Raton, Pinetree Park on Miami Beach, Hugh Taylor Birch State Park in Ft. Lauderdale and a backyard in Key Largo.

Despite being thrashed by four powerful hurricanes in the past two years, severely damaging much of the vegetation on the islands, the Dry Tortugas continued to attract an impressive assortment of trans-Gulf migrants. Sooty Terns and Brown Noddis returned to nest on Bush Key, with some Sooty Terns even nesting at Ft. Jefferson on Garden Key! Magnificent Frigatebirds also seem to be faring well in spite of the damage to roosting areas on Long Key. A Red-footed Booby was spotted on Long Key in mid-April; Masked Bobbies continue on Hospital Key and Brown Boobies could still be found roosting on channel markers. Other rarities seen in the Tortugas during spring included Black Noddy and Antillean Short-eared Owl. Audubon's Shearwater, Pomerine Jaeger and Bridled and Roseate Terns were seen en route to the islands. Closer to home, Brown Boobies continue to roost on Fowey Light, south of Key Biscayne. A Band-rumped Storm-

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~ What's Inside this Issue? ~

Another Fantastic Year Of TAS Events!!

Tropical Audubon is proud to once again offer an outstanding lineup of outings. You will see bird, plant and butterfly trips; morning trips, all day trips, overnight trips; outings nearby and outings afar (including a trip to Panama!); birding and botany classes; 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. Please mark your calendars and join us! All events with a confirmed date are included in this issue of the Bulletin! Check it out...

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TAS Schedule of Bird Walks and Nature Outings

IMPORTANT NOTE: All trips (except for the Panama and Dry Tortugas trips) are led by volunteer leaders from TAS. Unless otherwise indicated, they are free and open to the public, and reservations are not necessary. For more information concerning any field trip, call the field trip coordinator at (305) 388-1544, or email fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org.

Please be aware that some parks charge entrance fees; participants on car-pool trips usually share gasoline costs for shared 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. 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.

Sat., Aug. 26 - Everglades Agricultural Area Birding Paul Bithorn will lead an all day carpool trip to the sod farms 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.

Sat., Sept. 2 - Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk Jeff Weber will lead birders through Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park on Key Biscayne. Meet in the west end of the Seaquarium parking lot on the Rickenbacker Causeway at 7:30am. Participants will carpool to the state park. Costs include an entrance fee to the park and the causeway toll.

Sun., Sept. 3 - A.D. Barnes Park Bird Walk Bill Boeriger will lead birders through A.D. Barnes Park. Enter on SW 72nd Ave. just north of Bird Rd. (SW 40th St.) and take the first left to park near the baseball fields. Meet at 7:30am, returning at approximately 11:00am.

Sat., Sept. 9 - Matheson Hammock/Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Bird Walk John Boyd will lead birders through Matheson Hammock and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. The group meets at 7:30am in the parking area on the left inside the Matheson north entrance. Entry to Fairchild is at 10:00am. The Fairchild entrance fee will be waived for TAS members. Return is at approximately 11:30am.

Sun., Sept. 10 - Elaine Gordon Enchanted Forest Bird Walk Alex Harper will lead a group through the Elaine Gordon Enchanted Forest. Meet at 8am in the first covered picnic area just inside the park entrance at 1725 NE 135th St. west of Biscayne Blvd.

Sat., Sept. 16 - Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk Paul Bithorn leads. See Sept. 2 for details.

Sun., Sept. 17 - Kendall Indian Hammocks Bird Walk Brian Rapoza will lead a group through Kendall Indian Hammocks at 11345 SW 79th Street. The entrance is on the west side of SW 112th Ave. at SW 79th Street. The group meets in the parking area adjacent to the baseball field at 7:30am, returning at approximately 11:00am.


Sun., Sept. 24 - Matheson Hammock Bird Walk Paul Urgelles and Roberto Torres lead. See Sept. 9 for details.

Sat., Sept. 30 - Corkscrew Swamp / Tigertail Beach Birding Brian Rapoza will lead an all day carpool event to Collier County. Meet at 6:00am at the east gate (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). Bring lunch and wading shoes.

Sun., Oct. 1 - Cutler Ridge Birding Roberto Torres will lead this carpool trip to birding locations in the Cutler Ridge area, including Bill Sadowski Park, Black Point, Cutler Wetlands and Dump Marsh. Meet at Bill Sadowski Park, 17555 SW 79 Ave., at 7:30am. Bring lunch.

Sat., Oct. 7 - Greynold's Park Bird Walk Jim King will lead birders through Greynold's 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.


Sat., Oct. 14 - South Dade Birding John Boyd 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.

Sat., Oct. 21 - Shark Valley / Loop Road Birding Paul Bithorn and Juan Villamil 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). Bring lunch.

Sat., Oct. 28 - Babcock-Webb / Ft. Myers Beach Birding Brian Rapoza leads this all-day carpool trip to Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area in Charlotte County and Ft. Myers Beach in Lee County. Meet at 6:00am at the east gate (on SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). Bring lunch and wading shoes.

Sun., Oct. 29 - Charles Deering Estate Nature Walk Rick Cohen and Joe Barros will emphasize the botanical and geological features found in the 420 acre park located just east of Old Cutler Rd. on SW 168th Street. Wear sturdy shoes. Bring water, hat, and bug spray. Rating: easy to moderate. Limited to 10 participants. Reservations required by October 22. Contact the TAS field trip coordinator at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org, or call 305-388-1544. This is a popular outing, so call early! Fee: $18.00 for members, $20.00 for nonmembers includes Deering entrance.

Sat., Nov. 4 - 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.

Sat., Nov. 11 - Everglades National Park Beginning Bird Walk 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
Plan to attend Florida's largest gathering of conservation-minded individuals - the Audubon Assembly in Cocoa Beach. Join chapter members and leaders, wildlife professionals, environmental advocates, scientists, agency staff and elected officials, students and other Floridians to network and learn about the environment.

A great selection of workshops and field trips will be included, as well as a highly participatory session to define the conservation priorities for Audubon of Florida for 2007 and to specify the action plans for chapters and Audubon of Florida to address the current priorities. Get together with old friends and make new ones. Exchange ideas on Chapter governance, conservation projects, education programs, fundraising, and other Chapter activities.

Look for Assembly registration information in the Summer edition of Audubon of Florida's The Florida Naturalist. Registration information is available at www.audubonofflorida.org. Cocoa Beach is just south of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and Cape Canaveral. This casual beachfront setting will be fun for the entire family!

TAS Special Events

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.

Sat., Dec. 16 - Miami-Dade County CBC
Coordinated by Brian Rapoza. For additional information, email Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org.

Wed., Dec 20 - Long Pine Key CBC
Coordinated by Robin Diaz. For additional information, email Robin at Rd4birds@aol.com.

Sat., Dec. 23 - Kendall CBC
Coordinated by Bob Kelley. For additional information, contact Bob at tas005@tropicalaudubon.org or by phone at 305-284-4747(O) or 305-666-9246(H).

Sat., Dec. 30 - Coot Bay / Everglades CBC
Coordinated by Brian Rapoza. For additional information, email Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org.

TAS 6th Annual Birdathon
Sat., Apr. 7-Sun., Apr. 23 - TAS Annual Birdathon!!!
Raise money for TAS! Tropical Audubon's Sixth Birdathon is coming in April. Bird for up to 24 consecutive hours anytime during April 7-23. 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!

TAS Annual Meeting & Silent Auction
Sun., Apr. 29 - TAS Annual Meeting and Second Annual Silent Auction 4-7 p.m. at the historic Doc Thomas House. Come for an exciting program with stimulating keynote speakers and a fabulous silent auction! Stay tuned, more details to be announced!
Birding 101 with Bob Kelley

School Time at Tropical! Thursday and Saturday October 5 and 7

Learn to bird! This is a 2-part program focusing on the birds, beasts and butterflies of South Florida. On Thurs., Oct. 6 at the Doc Thomas House (5530 Sunset, Miami), Bob will cover nature watching basics and present slides of some of our native species. On Sat., Oct. 8, you can put this newly found knowledge to use on a walk in a local park. Call Bob at 305-666-9246 or via email at tas005@tropicalaudubon.org for more information. Fee required: $10 for an individual TAS member/$15 for TAS member families / $15 for nonmember individuals/ $20 for nonmember families (family prices include as many kids as you want to bring). Children and adults will enjoy this class.

We would love to see more people of all ages interested in our unique natural heritage!

Bird Report

(Continued from page 1)

Petrel was spotted offshore from Key Biscayne in early June.

A pair of Caribbean vagrants made the hotlines this spring. A La Sagra’s Flycatcher was discovered at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park in late March and continued to be seen into late April. Also in April, a Western Spindalis was found near Gumbo Limbo Trail at Royal Palm Visitor Center in Everglades National Park, but remained for only a few days.

While Greater Flamingos have not been reported from Snake Bight in Everglades National Park or elsewhere in Florida Bay since last year’s storms, a single flamingo was seen near Key West in late April. For the second consecutive spring, an Antillean Nighthawk was seen and heard at Long Pine Key Picnic Area in Everglades National Park. Smooth-billed Ani, a species that seems to be quickly disappearing from Florida, was seen again at Ft. Lauderdale Airport; others were found in Cutler Ridge and Homestead. Shiny Cowbird reports were widespread during spring, with sightings from Joe Visitor Center and Flamingo in Everglades National Park, Southern Glades Wildlife and Environmental Area, Key Largo Hammocks State Botanical Site and Big Pine Key. Colonization of the southern peninsula by Bronzed Cowbirds appears to continue, with numerous reports from south Miami-Dade during the period. Purple Swamphens also seem to be spreading and are now breeding prolifically at Stormwater Treatment Area 5, in Hendry County. Large numbers of both Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks were reported from STA 5 during spring. Flocks of Fulvous Whistling Ducks were also seen at Belle Glade Marina on the southern shores of Lake Okeechobee, while Black-bellied Whistling Ducks briefly stayed at Cutler Wetlands in south Miami-Dade.

Migrant shorebirds are often attracted to puddles or other shallow bodies of water, where they rest and feed before continuing north to high latitude breeding grounds. In late May, Wilson’s Phalarope and White-rumped Sandpiper were among other shorebirds found feeding in puddles at Marathon Airport. Sightings of White-rumped Sandpiper were widespread in the state during the month; South Florida locations included Cutler Wetlands and Belle Glade Marina. South-bound shorebirds begin to appear in Florida in July and peak in mid to late August. The August 26 carpool trip to Everglades Agricultural Area, led by Paul Bithorn, provides outstanding opportunities to find migrant shorebirds and kicks off an exiting schedule of TAS field trips for 2006-07. Mark your calendar and plan to join us.

Thanks to our Donors!

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

Swallow-Tailed Kite
($5,000 and up)

Anonymous

Roseatte Spoonbill
($1000 to $4,999)

Jim Kushlan

Purple Gallinule
($250 to $499)

Patty Phares

Painted Bunting
($100 to $249)

Daria Feinstein

White-Crowned Pigeon
($50 to $99)

Martin Mary Lou
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John Atkinson

Other Donors

E. B. Pushkin
Sarah Rose Stewart
Donna Fales
Donna Thomas & Carolyn Abbott
Anonymous

Special thanks to donors to our 1st Annual Silent Auction:
TAS Schedule of Bird Walks and Nature Outings

lunch.

Sat., Nov. 18 - Wakodahatchee / Green Cay Wetlands Birding John Hutchinson will lead this carpool trip. Meet at 7:30am at Wakodahatchee (13026 Jog Road, about 1.5 miles north of Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach, Palm Beach County.)

Sun., Nov. 19 - Fakahatchee Strand State Reserve Nature Walk Meet at the Preserve HQ. Wear sturdy shoes and long pants. Be prepared to wade. Bring water, a hat, bug spray, and snacks. A walking stick can be helpful. A change of clothes and shoes at the end is suggested. Rating: moderate to difficult, trail can be wet and muddy. Led by Rick Cohen. Limited to 10 participants. Reservations required by November 12. Contact the TAS field trip coordinator at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org, or call 305-388-1544. This unique trip is very popular, so call early. Fee: $25.00 for members, $30.00 for nonmembers.

Sat., Dec. 2 - South Florida Exotics Trip Paul Bithorn will lead birders in search of parrots, bulbulis, 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).

Sat., Jan. 6 - South Dade Birding Raul Urgelles and Roberto Torres lead. See Oct 14 for details.

Sat., Jan. 20 - Wakodahatchee / Green Cay / Loxahatchee NWR Birding John Boyd will lead this carpool trip. Meet at 6:30am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami) or at 7:45am at Loxahatchee Wetlands (13026 Jog Road, about 1.5 miles north of Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach, Palm Beach County.) Bring lunch. There is an entrance fee to the LNW.

Sat., Jan. 27 - Everglades National Park Birding Robin Diaz and Susan Schneider lead. See Nov. 4 for details.

Sat., Feb. 3 - North Broward Birding John Hutchinson 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.


Sun., Feb. 11 - Fakahatchee Strand State Reserve Nature Walk Rick Cohen leads. See Nov. 19 for details, reservations required by February 4. Contact the TAS field trip coordinator at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org, or call 305-388-1544. Fee: $25.00 for members, $30.00 for nonmembers.

Sat., Feb. 24 - Marco Island Birding Brian Rapoza will lead this all day carpool trip, which will include stops at Big Cypress Bend boardwalk, Eagle Lakes Park, and Tigertail Beach. Meet at 6:30am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). Bring lunch. The first stop will be at Kirby Storter Park. Shared gasoline costs, plus $4.00 per vehicle at Tigertail Beach. Bring lunch and wading footwear.

Sat., March 3 - Everglades National Park Birding John Boyd leads. See Nov. 4 for details.

Sat., Mar. 10 - Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area Birding This is an all day carpool trip to the Lake Kissimmee property. 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.


Sat., Mar. 24 - 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. Meet at the Ernest Coe Visitor Center in Everglades National Park at 8am, return approximately 1:30pm. Reservations and fee required. $40 members/$45 nonmembers includes a autographed copy of Roger's recent book, Everglades Wildflowers. Call 305-247-1634, or e-mail Roger at hammer@adelphia.net to register or for more information.

Sat., Mar. 31 - Matheson Hammock Bird Walk Joe Barros leads. See Sept. 9 for details.

Sun., Apr. 1 - Charles Deering Estate Nature Walk Rick Cohen leads. See Oct. 29 for details, reservations required by March 25. Contact the TAS field trip coordinator at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org, or call 305-388-1544. Fee: $18.00 for members, $20.00 for nonmembers includes Deering entrance.

Sat., Apr. 7 - Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Bird Walk Robin Diaz and Nancy Freedman lead. See Sept. 2 for details.


Sun., April 29 - Matheson Hammock Park/Pinecrest Gardens Bird Walk John Boyd will lead birders through Matheson Hammock on Old Cutler Rd. Immediately north of Fairchild Gardens and Pinecrest Gardens (formerly Parrot Jungle) on Red Road. The group meets in the Matheson parking area on the left, inside the park entrance, at 7:30am.

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 repellant.
Pack Your Bags and Binoculars for
TAS Overnight Trips

Sat.-Mon., Jan. 12-15 - North Florida Birding
Brian Rapoza and Paul Bithorn will lead this four day, three-night van trip to the Tallahassee area. Costs ($250.00 per person double occupancy: $75.00 single supplement) include hotel and van/gas. Reservations are required by December 29. E-mail Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org for further information.

Feb. 7-18 - The Best of Panama Birding
Tropical Audubon Society once again partners with Exotic Birding for a tour of Panama. The tour will be led by a master Panamanian birding guide and offers a unique mix of Central and South American birds. The tour is priced at $3,450 from Panama City, of which $345.00 will be donated to TAS (that $345.00 is tax-deductible). For more information, email Brian Rapoza at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org, or phone Brian at 305-388-1544, or contact Laura Fellows of Exotic Birding toll-free at 877-247-3371, or see the Exotic Birding website at www.exoticbirding.com

Fri.-Sun., Apr. 20-22 - 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. Costs ($250.00 per person double occupancy: $75.00 single supplement) include hotel and van/gas. Reservations are required by April 6. E-mail Brian at fieldtrips@tropicalaudubon.org for further information.

Conservation Committee

(Continued from page 1)

The establishment of the “Negro” beach was a significant victory during the early days of the Civil Rights movement. Virginia Key Beach Park served as a cherished locale for the South Florida community until the Park was transferred to the City of Miami and closed in 1982.

In June 1999, a group of citizens called the Virginia Key Beach Park Civil Rights Task Force was established in response to plans of private development of the beach park. Later that year, the Miami City Commission established the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust to oversee the development of the historic Park property.

David Shorter, Executive Director of the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, will make a presentation on the Trust's master plan for development. The discussion will be focused on the potential impacts of those development plans on the critical natural resources of Virginia Key.

Wed. Aug 23, 7:30 p.m. -
Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve
The Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve was established by the Florida Legislature in 1974. The legislative intent for establishing the preserve was “that the state-owned submerged lands in areas which have exceptional biological, aesthetic, and scientific value...be set aside forever...for the benefit of future generations.” This statement, along with the other specific state regulations, provides direction for the management and protection of Biscayne Bay.

The BBAP consists of two separate areas of the Bay, one occupying the northern part of the Bay (roughly, just south of Cape Florida on the east, and just south of Chicken Key on the west), and the other occupying the southern portion (Card Sound). The two areas are separated by Biscayne National Park. Marsha Colbert, BBAP manager, will give a presentation on the state of the Preserve and we will discuss some of the challenges faced in the protection of this ecological jewel.

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