



Tropical Audubon Bulletin

Newsletter of the Tropical Audubon Society



5530 Sunset Drive; Miami, Florida 33143

(305) 666-5111

August/September 2002

April Showers South Florida with

Environmental Challenges

TAS Director's Report by Cynthia Guerra

Like the tropical rains we all deal with regularly, a deluge of potential threats to our environment is inundating South Florida. My first two months at TAS have been very busy, as I endeavor to stay informed and take action where trouble looms. Here is a brief summary of a few of my most recent activities:

☼ In early April, I attended the South Florida Water Management District's Governing Board meeting to request the denial of a permit for a proposed development in the Saga Bay area of South Dade. The significance of this particular proposal is that the development is planned in an area that has been identified as crucial for the successful completion of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project (BBCWP).

The BBCWP is just one of the many components of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Its purpose is to improve freshwater flow into Biscayne Bay. Historically, freshwater passed gradually through coastal marshes all along the shoreline and out to the Bay. Over time, this natural flow was modified for the purpose of flood protection through the construction of drainage canals and associated structures. Today, freshwater is discharged into the Bay at only a few points and these discharges carry with them agricultural and urban contamination such as pesticides and petroleum-based chemicals. Through physical alterations to canals and upland areas, the BBCWP will restore a more natural flow of water through coastal areas, which in turn, will improve the water quality of Biscayne Bay, enhance freshwater and tidal wetland areas, and improve near shore habitat.

(Continued on page 7)

TAS SUPPORTS PROPOSED MASS TRANSIT TAX

By Joe Grimes

Nothing in life seems perfect and certainly the proposed Mass Transit Sales Tax isn't. But, it is a viable solution to a serious problem. We all agree that there is a traffic crisis on our roads. Without an adequate mass transit system in place, we can never expect to see fewer vehicles in South Florida. Tropical endorses the Mass Transit Sales Tax and encourages you and your friends to support it at the polls this November.

While not without flaws, there are many elements of the tax proposal that are encouraging. A main focus of the funds generated from this sales tax will be directed toward expanding, enhancing and improving bus service throughout Miami-Dade County. Implementation of this part of the proposal can be expected to begin within six months of the voter's approval.

There is justified concern about how the funds will be managed. Their

use is to be protected by an oversight board to ensure that they are for mass transit projects only. As written currently, this is to be a new body appointed by County Commissioners and the Mayor. This wording needs to be approved by the County Commissioners. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that some type of oversight structure will be put in place in an effort to assure voters that the funds secured will be used as they were intended to be used, for mass transit projects as identified in the proposal.

Land planning, or lack thereof, has contributed to the current traffic crisis. Consideration of building incentives into future development along transportation corridors is part of this proposal.

A popular alternative to a sales tax to meet the financial needs of putting a mass transit infrastructure in place would be a tax on gasoline. However, an increase of 23 cents per gallon would be required to equal the funds a 1/2 cent sales tax is estimated to generate. There are other user fees such as tolls and licenses, where funds could be gotten. Data regarding alternatives and other issues raised over this mass transit sales tax proposal can be viewed on the web at www.trafficrelief.com.

OLD FRIENDS AND TRUE!

Tropical Audubon would like to recognize the generosity of Anne Stillman, an old friend who remembered TAS in a bequest at the time of her death. Ann and her husband Ron lived in Coconut Grove and were close friends of Alice Wainwright. Ron was a lawyer who donated many hours of pro bono service to TAS. He was a member of our board for approximately 10 years in the 1970-80's. Anne's special affection was Fairchild Tropical Gardens. Bob Kelley, a member of our current board, remembers them both well and states that they were "two very special people in our community". TAS was not expecting this gift. It is touching to see that those who seem so far past can still be part of our present. We appreciate Anne's generosity.

This is not a perfect plan but it will provide solutions to the traffic problem which affects not just every driver, but every citizen who breathes the air in our city. We endorse citizens using their cars less. We believe we should adopt behaviors designed to control carbon monoxide emissions. To do this effectively, we need an alternative to using the automobile. Please support this proposed mass transit sales tax and to get your friends, neighbors and family to go along with you.

Birding Recap: February-May 2002

By Brian Rapoza

With all the neotropical migrants that make it no further south than Everglades National Park for the winter, sometimes it's difficult to determine exactly when spring migration begins in South Florida. This year, it seemed that abundant clear skies and persistent easterly winds resulted in sightings of actual north-bound migrants being few and far between. That's not to say there weren't good birds around. In South Florida, with the possibility of strays from every direction, almost every week brings something new and exciting.

Highlights from late February included a Cassin's Kingbird in Homestead and Lesser Nighthawks at Dump Marsh in south Dade. An Iceland Gull sent birders scurrying to Pompano Landfill in Broward in early March, while those willing to hike a bit were treated to a LaSagra's Flycatcher in Delray Beach; this bird was seen sporadically throughout the winter. Another LaSagra's was seen briefly at Matheson Hammock in early April. Virginia Rails were seen up close at both Wakodahatchee Wetlands in Delray and at Shark Valley in March, while hikes down to Snake Bight during the month produced the usual long distance sightings of those fuzzy pink blobs only a powerful spotting scope could determine were Greater Flamingoes. Another south Florida specialty, Smooth-billed Ani, was seen at several locations during the season, including a cooperative group at Fairchild Tropical Gardens.

Wintering birds at Lucky Hammock, outside Everglades National Park, persisted through early spring, including Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Dickcissel, and Lincoln's and Clay-colored Sparrows. Another Yellow-breasted Chat, probably a migrant, was spotted at Cape Florida in early April, while early April sightings at A D Barnes Park included a migrating Wood Thrush and Swainson's Warbler. While migration at the Dry Tortugas was generally slow, this magical archipelago produced several great sightings during April, including White-tailed Tropicbird, Arawak Short-eared Owl, Black Noddy, Bananaquit, and Yellow-faced Grassquit.

Early May brought several sightings of Western Spindalis (Stripe-headed Tanager), including two on Key Biscayne and another on Key Largo. Shiny Cowbirds were also seen in Key Largo during the month, as well as in Flamingo in Everglades National Park. The bird to beat all birds, though, was discovered by Larry Manfredi, passing through Key Largo on his way back from his final trip to the Tortugas. While checking out the neighborhood where the Western Spindalis was sighted earlier, eagle-eyed Larry spotted a dove on a wire with a noticeably shorter tail than the ubiquitous Mourning Doves perched nearby. Closer inspection revealed the white wing patch that could only belong to a Zeneida Dove! The following days brought a stampede of birders from far and wide to catch a glimpse of this rare Caribbean vagrant. Among those

not to see the dove, though, were Paul "Life is Good" Bithorn, who, committed to participate in an offshore fishing tournament that weekend, had to settle for a sighting of a Long-tailed Jaeger! Life is good, indeed.

While the discovery of a rarity like a Zeneida Dove would be tough to top, one could argue that finding a Key West Quail Dove would certainly come close. Such was the case on Elliot Key in Biscayne National Park. This gorgeous Caribbean dove was first reported in mid-May, though apparently park staff had seen it periodically for some time. Since Elliot Key can only be reached by boat, few birders were able to even attempt to chase it. The bird was relocated, though, later in the month; also reported on this same day was a LaSagra's Flycatcher, which was heard but not seen.

Those hard-core birders who attended the majority of Tropical Audubon's bird walks and field trips over the course of the past year had the opportunity to see an incredible 274 species of birds, not to mention countless numbers of south Florida's unique butterflies, plants and other wildlife. Be sure to check the TAS website at tropicalaudubon.org for the complete bird list. Also stay tuned to the website for an all-new calendar of exciting field trips and bird walks, plus, as always, don't forget to check the Miami Bird Board for all the latest sightings.

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.

Editor: Cathy Coates

Layout: 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) 666-5111. 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:
<http://tropicalaudubon.org>

FIRST ANNUAL **BIRDATHON** A BIG SUCCESS

Our first annual birdathon took place on April 27. As of press time, total pledges collected are over \$3500 which is not bad for an introductory effort. Our goal is to double that figure in 2003. A few highlights include: the Top Money prize went to Nancy Freedman who twisted arms to the tune of \$760; the Highest Species Total for a team was Paul Bithorn and Bruce Purdy's "Life is good..." team which garnered 121 species; the Highest Species Total by an individual was earned by Brian Rapoza with 98 species counted. Everyone had fun and a few birders even got their picture in the paper. Next years Birdathon will span 3 weekends offering birders a choice of 24 hour periods to participate. See the calendar for dates and stay tuned for more information.

Chalk One Up for Conservation!

Grassroots activism works. This was evidenced yet again by the recent veto by Governor Bush that stopped the transfer of \$100 million of conservation funding at the end of the 2002 legislative session.

Responding to pressure from over a thousand Audubon members and allied citizen advocates in Florida, Governor Bush vetoed the transfer of \$100 million from the Florida Forever and Florida Preservation 2000 Fund, when he signed the 2002 state budget.

Seventy-three percent of Floridians in 1998 approved enacting Florida Forever, the renowned land conservation program that protects the state's land, water and open space. Florida Forever is the successor to Preservation 2000, Florida's land-buying program credited with protecting more than a million acres of natural Florida from 1990 to 2000. Florida Forever and Florida Preservation 2000 Fund are critical to protect:

- The Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and the Indian River Lagoon - Hundreds of thousands of acres must be purchased to restore the Everglades ecosystem. Land must be purchased to restore flow ways and marshes so water can seep back into natural systems.

- Endangered Species Habitat - Scores of Florida species including scrub-jays, panthers, grasshopper sparrows, indigo snakes, black bears, red cockaded woodpeckers and others face the risk of extinction if land is not set aside for habitat.

- Forests and Swamps - Millions of acres of high quality upland and floodplain forests with excellent water and wildlife benefits face destruction unless placed under easement or purchased.

- Water Recharge - Our water and the water that fills lakes and flows into aquifers and rivers depends on keeping development away from prime recharge lands.

Make your voice heard - visit Audubon of Florida's website (www.audubonofflorida.org) and sign up to receive e-news and conservation updates.

- Shannon Myorga

2002 – 2003 TAS General Meetings, Join Us!

Please note the change in our membership meeting dates which will now be held on the second Wednesday of each month. Again this year, we are happy to have interesting and educational presentations for Audubon friends and thank Bob Kelley who has done the work to make it happen. All programs are held at the Doc Thomas House, 5530 Sunset Dr., near Red Rd., with the doors opening at 7:30pm and the show beginning at 8pm. More information for each event will be available on our web site as the dates near.

1.) Wednesday, 9/11/2002: **Birdwatching in southeastern Arizona.** Bob Kelley and other TAS members will present a program about their trip to SE Arizona in May, 2002. Despite the extreme drought over 150 species of birds were seen in Madera Canyon, the Santa Catalina Mountains, Patagonia, Miller Canyon and the Chiricahuas plus many species of butterflies. Slides and video will be shown.

2.) Wednesday, 10/9/2002: **Hawk Migration in the Florida Keys** Casey Lott from the Audubon of Florida Research Center in Tavernier will update us on the Middle Keys hawkwatch. Plan to join the TAS Fieldtrip to the hawkwatch site on Saturday, 10/12/2002

3.) Wednesday, 11/13/2002: **Everglades Wildflowers** Roger Hammer, Famous Local Nature Man, will present a slide program on his new book on the wildflowers of our area which is due to be published on November 1. Copies of the book will be on sale. Roger is always irreverently entertaining. The program should be fun.

There will be no monthly program in December. Merry Christmas! Check the TAS Fieldtrip schedule for the NAS/TAS Christmas Counts in your area. New counters are always welcome and it is a great way to spend a day birding and learning with local experts.

4.) Wednesday, 1/8/2003: **The Fakahatchee Strand: Florida's Botanical Paradise.** Mike Owen, biologist at the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, will present an introduction to the botany of this orchid paradise. Rick Cohen will again lead a TAS Fieldtrip there in February. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about the area before hitting the trail.

5.) Wednesday, February 12, 2003: TBA

6.) Wednesday, March 12, 2003: **Birds Of The Pinelands** Gary Slater from Everglades National Park will be doing the program on the bird reintroductions into the pinelands at ENP.

7) Wednesday, April 9, 2003: TBA

8) May 4, 2003 - **Annual Picnic at Doc Thomas House!** Details to come!

To all who follow our programs, Tropical needs a Program Chairperson for the 2003-04 season. If you or anyone you may know are interested, please let us know at 305 666 5111.

TAS Schedule of Bird Walks and Nature Outings

All events are led by leaders from the Tropical Audubon Society, and are free and open to the public, unless otherwise specified. Carpool trips require shared gasoline costs. Some parks require entrance fees. Please note that reservations are not required unless specified. For additional information, please visit www.tropicalaudubon.org or call 305 666 5111.

Sat., Aug. 24 - **Islamorada Pelagic Trip - NEW!!** Reservations required! Larry Manfredi will lead birders in search of shearwaters, storm petrels, tropicbirds and other seabirds, sailing from Islamorada on the Gulf Lady. There is a fee for this trip. 10% of the revenue generated will be donated to Tropical Audubon. Contact Larry at birderlm@bellsouth.net to make reservations or call 305 666 5111 for more information.

Sat., Aug. 31 - **Palm Beach Sod Farms / Holeyland Birding** Paul Bithorn will lead a carpool trip to Palm Beach. Meet at 5:45am 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. 7 - **Virginia Key / Key Biscayne Bird Walk** David Wright and Mary Ellen Ahearn will lead birders through Virginia Key and Key Biscayne. Meet in the west end of the Seaquarium parking lot on the Rickenbacker Causeway at 7:30am. Participants will carpool to the Bill Baggs / Cape Florida State Recreation Area, and other destinations on both Virginia Key and Key Biscayne. Shared entrance fees are required, plus the causeway toll.

Sun., Sept. 8 - **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.) and take the first left to park near the baseball fields. Meet at 7:30am, returning at approximately 11am.

Sun., Sept. 15 - **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 11am.

Sat., Sept. 21 - **Virginia Key / Key Biscayne Bird Walk** Paul Bithorn leads. See Sept. 7.

Sun., Sept. 22 - **A.D.Barnes Park Bird Walk** Jeff Weber and Jill Rosenfield lead. See Sept. 8.

Sat., Sept. 28 - **Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary / Marco Island Bird Trip** Brian Rapoza will lead an all day carpool event to Collier County east of Naples. Meet at 6am at the east gate (on SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive,

South Miami). Gasoline costs will be shared. Admission fee required for Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, as well as for Tigertail Beach on Marco Island. Bring lunch and wading shoes.

Sun., Sept. 29 - **Kendall Indian Hammocks Bird Walk** Ellen and Todd Snow will lead a group through Kendall Indian Hammocks at 11345 SW 79th St. The entrance is on the west side of SW 112th Ave. at SW 79th St. The group meets in the parking area adjacent to the baseball field at 7:30am, returning at approximately 11am.

Sat., Oct. 5 - **Matheson Hammock Bird Walk** Juan Villamil leads. See Sept. 15.

Sun., Oct 6 - **A.D.Barnes Park Bird Walk** Gigi Pardo leads. See Sept. 8.

Sat., Oct. 12 - **Middle Keys Hawk Watch.** This is an all day carpool event, led by John Boyd, to the official keys hawkwatch site at Curry Hammock State Park (mile marker 56). Meet at 7:30am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami), or proceed directly to Curry Hammock State Park. Bring lunch.

Sun., Oct. 13 **Virginia Key / Key Biscayne Bird Walk** Ellen and Todd Snow lead. See Sept. 7.

Sun. Oct. 13 - **Beginning Birdwatching Class at Matheson Hammock Park** Bob Kelley will lead this trip. Reservations are required. Please contact hornedowl@earthlink.net to register or call 305 666 5111.

Sat., Oct. 19 - **South Dade Birding** Larry Manfredi will lead this all day carpool trip, which may include stops at Lucky Hammock, Mary Krome Park, and Dump Marsh. Meet at 7:00AM in the parking lot of the Burger King on US1 in Florida City (just after the end of the turnpike). Bring lunch.

Sun., Oct. 20 - **A.D.Barnes Park Bird Walk** Mickey Wheeler and Jill Rosenfield lead. See Sept. 8.

Sat., Oct. 26 - **Beginning Botany Class at Matheson Hammock Park** Rick Cohen will teach aspiring botanists while wandering Matheson Hammock. Meet at 9:00AM in the parking area on the left just inside the main gate on Old Cutler Road.

Sun., Oct. 27 - **Wakodahatchee Wetlands / South County Regional Park Birding** Ellen and Todd Snow 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 7:45 AM at Wakodahatchee (13026 Jog Road, about 1.5 miles north of Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach.) Bring lunch.

Sat., Nov. 2 - **Shark Valley / Loop Road Birding** Paul Bithorn and Juan Villamil will lead this carpool trip. Meet at 7am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). You can also meet at the entrance to Shark Valley (Tamiami Trail) at 8:30a. Bring lunch.

Sat., Nov. 9 - **Everglades National Park Birding** Paul Bithorn and Juan Villamil will lead this all day carpool trip. Meet at 6:30am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami) OR in the parking lot of the Coe Visitor Center at Everglades National park at 7:30am. Bring lunch.

Sun., Nov. 10, - **Charles Deering Estate Nature Walk** Reservations required! Rick Cohen will emphasize the botanical and geological features found in the 420 acre park. The park entrance is located just east of Old Cutler Rd. on SW 168th Street. Wear sturdy shoes. Bring water, hat, and bug spray. Admission fee to park required. Rating: easy to moderate. Contact rickc@tropicalaudubon.org and include your phone number or call 305 666 5111. This is a popular outing and space is limited so call early!

Sat., Nov. 16 - **Marco Island /Briggs Nature Center Birding** Brian Rapoza will lead this all day carpool trip. Meet at 6:30am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). Bring lunch and wading footwear.

Sat., Nov 23 - **South Florida Exotics Trip - NEW!** Paul Bithorn will lead birders in search of parrots, bulbuls, mynas, and other introduced species in this carpool trip. Meet at 7:30am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami).

Sat., Dec. 7 - **Everglades National Park Beginning Birding Class** Jeff Weber, Kevin Sarsfield and Paul Bithorn will lead this trip. Contact Bob Kelley at hornedowl@earthlink.net, or by calling 305 666 5111 to register and to obtain information on the meeting location and time.

Sun., Dec. 8 - **Upper Keys Birding, Botany and Geology** Led by David Wright, Mary Ellen Ahearn and Joe Barros, this is an all day carpool trip to Windley Key Geological Site. Meet at 7:00AM in the parking lot of the Burger King on US1 in Florida City (just after the end of the turnpike). Bring lunch, water and insect repellent. There is a fee for entering Windley Key Geological Site.

Sat., Jan. 4 - **Everglades National Park Birding** Paul Bithorn, David Wright and Mary Ellen Ahearn lead. See Nov. 9.

Sat.-Sun., Jan. 11-12 - **Merritt Island Overnight Bird Trip** Reservations required! Ellen and Todd Snow will lead this overnight

TAS Schedule of Bird Walks and Nature Outings

carpool trip to Brevard County. Shared gasoline and hotel costs are required. Call 305 666 5111 for more information.

Sun., Jan 12 - **South Dade Birding** John Boyd will lead this all day carpool trip, which may include stops at Lucky Hammock, Mary Krome Park, and Dump Marsh. Meet at 7:00AM in the parking lot of the Burger King on US1 in Florida City (just after the end of the turnpike). This is an all day trip. Bring lunch.

Fri.-Mon., Jan. 17-20 - **North Florida Birding - NEW!** Reservations required! Brian Rapoza will lead this four-day, three-night carpool trip to North Florida. Stops will include Paynes Prairie, Tall Timbers Research Station, Black Swamp, Florida Caverns State Park, Alligator Point, and St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Shared gasoline and hotel costs are required. Call 305 666 5111 for more information

Sat., Jan. 25 - **Loxahatchee NWR / Wakodahatchee Wetlands / Pembroke Pines 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, Miami). Bring lunch. Entrance fee to the LNWR is required. Call 305 666-5111 for directions if you'd rather meet on site.

Sat., Feb. 1 - **Archbold Biological Station/ Old Venus Birding** This is an all day carpool trip to Highland County. Meet Ellen and Todd Snow at 6:30am at the east gate (SW 55th Ave.) of the Doc Thomas property (5530 Sunset, Miami). Gasoline costs will be shared. Bring lunch.

Sat., Feb. 8 - **Everglades National Park Birding** Ellen and Todd Snow and Dick Cunningham lead. See Nov. 9.

Sat., Feb. 15 - **Flamingo Road ESL / Pembroke Pines Birding** Paul Bithorn will lead a trip to the Flamingo Road Environmentally Sensitive Land, and to the wetlands at the South Broward Regional Library in Pembroke Pines. Meet at 7am at the east gate of the Doc Thomas property on SW 55th Ave. just south of Sunset (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami) to carpool OR in the ESL parking lot at 8am. Directions: From I-75 exit Griffin Rd. east to Flamingo Rd; turn north on Flamingo to SW 36th Ct.; west on SW 36th Ct. to SW 130 Ave; north on SW 130 Ave to the entrance on the left. There are grass trails and no facilities.

Sun., Feb. 16 - **Fakahatchee Strand State Reserve Nature Walk** Reservations required! Leader: Rick Cohen. The Fakahatchee Strand is one of the most botanically rich areas in No. America. It contains the largest stand of Royal palms found in the state, as well as many unusual species of plants. We will 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 for the end is suggested. Rating: moderate to difficult, trail can be wet and muddy. Space is limited to 20 so call early! Contact Rick at rickc@tropicalaudubon.org and include your phone number or call 305 666 5111.

Sat., Feb. 22 - **Everglades National Park Beginning Birding Class** Jeff Weber and Dick Cunningham will lead this trip. Contact Bob Kelley at hornedowl@earthlink.net, or by calling 305 666 5111 to register and to obtain information on the meeting location and time.

Sat., March 1- **Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary/Ft. Myers Beach Birding** Brian Rapoza will lead this all day carpool event to Collier and Lee Counties. See Sept. 28.

Sun., Mar. 2 - **Charles Deering Estate - Birds, Butterflies and Native Plants** Reservations required! This trip will be led by Joe Barros. Bring water and insect repellent. Admission fee required. Contact tas008@tropicalaudubon.org or call 305 666 5111.

Sat., Mar. 8 - **Everglades National Park Birding** John Boyd leads. See Nov. 9.

Sat., Mar. 15 - **Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area Birding** This is an all day carpool trip to the Lake Kissimmee area. Meet Brian Rapoza at 6am at the east gate of the Doc Thomas property on SW 55th Ave. just south of Sunset (5530 Sunset Drive, South Miami). Gasoline costs will be shared. Bring lunch.

Sun., Mar 16 - **Florida Trail, Big Cypress National Preserve Nature Walk** Reservations required! Leader: Rick Cohen. This section of the Florida Trail passes through open prairie, pineland, and a hardwood hammock. Spring wild flowers and other plants of the Big Cypress will be featured on the trip. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water, snacks, a hat, bug spray. A walking stick can be helpful. Long pants advised. Rating: moderate. Contact Rick at rickc@tropicalaudubon.org and include your phone number or call 305 666 5111 to register.

Fri. - Sun., Mar. 21 - 23 **Grand Bahama Birding - NEW!** Reservations required! Larry Manfredi will lead this three day, two night trip to Grand Bahama Island. Airfare, van rental and hotel costs are required. Contact birderlm@bellsouth.net or call 305 666 5111 for more information.

Sat., Mar. 29 - **Wakodahatchee Wetlands Beginning Bird Class** Kevin Sarsfield and Jeff Weber will lead this trip. Contact Bob Kelley at hornedowl@earthlink.net, or by calling 305 666 5111 to register and to obtain information on the meeting location and time.

Sat., Apr. 5 - **Matheson Hammock Bird Walk** Juan Villamil leads. See Sept. 15.

Sun., Apr. 6 - **A.D.Barnes Park Bird Walk** Gigi Pardo leads. See Sept. 8.

Sat., Apr. 12 - **Virginia Key / Key Biscayne Bird Walk** Ellen and Todd Snow lead. See Sept. 7.

Sat., April 12 - **Biscayne National Park Snorkeling Trip - NEW!** Reservations required! Jeff and Linda Weber, and Brian Rapoza will lead this trip out of Convoy Point in Biscayne National Park. Snorkeling equipment provided by the National Park. Reservations and snorkeling fee required. Call 305 666 5111 for more information.

Sun., April 13, - **Charles Deering Estate Plant Walk** Reservations required! Leader: Rick Cohen. This walk will emphasize the botanical features found in the 420-acre park. The park entrance is located just east of Old Cutler Rd. on SW 168th St. Wear sturdy shoes only. Bring water, hat, bug spray. Admission fee to park required. Rating: easy to moderate. Contact Rick at rickc@tropicalaudubon.org and include your phone number or call 305 666 5111 to register.

Sat., Apr. 19 - **Matheson Hammock Park Bird Walk** Juan Villamil leads. See Sept. 15.

Sun., Apr. 20 - **Elaine Gordon / Enchanted Forest Park (No. Dade) Bird Walk** Joel Abramson, listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for having seen the most bird families in the world, 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., April 26- **Virginia Key / Key Biscayne Bird Walk** Jeff Weber leads. See Sept. 7.

Sun., Apr. 27 - **A.D.Barnes Park Bird Walk** Gigi Pardo and Jill Rosenfield lead. See Sept. 8.

Sat., May 3- **Matheson Hammock Park Bird Walk** Juan Villamil and John Boyd lead. See Sept. 15.

Sun., May 4 - **Kendall Indian Hammock Birding** Brian Rapoza leads. See Sept. 29.

Sun., May 11 - **A.D.Barnes Park Bird Walk** Mickey Wheeler and Jill Rosenfield lead. See Sept. 8.

Sat., May 17 - **North Key Largo State Botanical Site. Birds, Butterflies and Native Plants** Joe Barros will lead this trip. 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.



NEW ON THE BOARD

Please join us welcoming the new members to the board of Tropical Audubon. They are: David Price, Tony Abella and Joe Grimes. We are fortunate to have their energy and enthusiasm working for our cause. The other members and officers include Joe Barros, President; Karsten Rist, Treasurer; Cathy Coates, Secretary; Dick Townsend, 1st VP; Rick Cohen, 2nd VP; Dennis Olle 3rd VP; David Wright, 4th VP; Alison Austin; Ed Davidson; George Gann; Roger Hammer; Gary Hunt; Bob Kelley; Jorge Khuly; Amy Kimball; Penny Lambeth; Tom Lodge; Brian Rapoza; Alan Steinberg; Stuart Strahl; and Bertha Vazquez.

EAGLE OPTICS VISITS TROPICAL

Did you miss Eagle Optic's last visit to Miami? It was a fun and educational event for anyone interested in optics or looking to buy new equipment. We hope to schedule another one this spring. Ron Windingstad answers all questions about binoculars and spotting scopes and their applications in bird watching, butterfly watching and nature viewing. There are products on hand from a variety of manufacturers for the beginner as well as the advanced enthusiast. Participants can compare various types of equipment, ask questions, and purchase or order items of their choice. Keep your eyes open for the schedule.

TAS NATIVE PLANT SALES

Mark your calendars for Tropical Audubon's popular Native Plant Sales. They are from 9-5 on Saturday and 9 until the last plant is gone on Sunday. As always, there will be knowledgeable sales people to help determine the best plants for your home and garden. You should plan to arrive early for the first pick. The sales are located at our historic home and garden on 5530 Sunset near the intersection of Red Rd. Look for the big sign and the crowd. Visitors are welcomed to tour the property. Sat. - Sun., Sept. 28-29, 2002; Sat. - Sun., Mar. 29-30, 2003; and Sat - Sun., June 7-8, 2003.

TAS HONORED

Dade Heritage Trust awarded its prestigious Community Service Award to Tropical Audubon Society at the organization's Annual Meeting at The Biltmore Hotel on April 30th. TAS was honored for its outstanding work in protecting, restoring and preserving environmental quality in South Florida through advocacy and education.

President Joe Barros and Karsten Rist accepted the award on behalf of TAS.

WORK DAYS AT DTH

We need you at the Doc Thomas House! Come get some dirt under your fingernails raking, trimming, digging and planting. Bring your family and friends. There will be plant experts and plenty of learning available for those who ask questions. 5530 Sunset, 8am until around noon. When? Saturdays: September 21, 2002; and then January 18 and March 22, 2003.

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Capt. Ed Davidson, Chairman Emeritus of Florida Audubon, long time Board member of Tropical Audubon, and former eco-tour concessionaire for Biscayne National Park, lives on site and is available for tours, discussions, and environmental field trips for student and adult groups.

Located in the heart of the Keys at Mile Marker 52 in Marathon - 2 hrs from Coral Gables, 1 hr north of Key West. Call Capt. Ed at 305-743-6054 -- 24 hrs, 7 days for info, or email:

CaptEcoEd@aol.com

HOUSE FOR SALE

TAS Bulletin reader Ruth Wendenburg and her husband, a structural engineer by profession, are selling the house which they have been building since 1994. It is their retirement dream home, a labor of love, which is secluded and remote, on 5 acres of land 4 miles from the Bay at 14993 SW 364 St. The house runs on windmill and solar power and, since they began construction after Andrew, is built to withstand a hurricane. There are 2 bedrooms and 2 baths in 1600 square feet. Outside is a 700 sq.ft partially covered patio with a tile and wood deck. The house is 10 ft. above ground to prevent flooding. Due to poor health, the Wendenbergs must move back to civilization. They dearly hope to find some enterprising nature lovers to buy their home.

Please contact Mrs. Wendenburg at 786 210 5954.

TAS members and guests are invited to attend the Conservation Committee meetings which now take place on the 4th Wednesday of every month at the Doc Thomas House. We discuss environmental issues facing South Florida and how Tropical is working to affect changes. This is the core activity of TAS. The meetings are educational and informative. Call DTH for more information.

(305) 666-5111.

Join the Bird Counts!

These are all day events covering Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. 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. Volunteers are needed for all areas. Call 305 666 5111 for more information and team assignments.

Dates are as follows:

Sat., Sept. 14 - Fall Migration Bird Count for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties

Sat., Dec. 14 - Miami-Dade County Christmas Bird Count - Coordinated by Brian Rapoza

Wed., Dec 18 - Long Pine Key Christmas Bird Count - Coordinated by Dick Cunningham

Sat., Dec. 21 - South Dade County Christmas Bird Count - Coordinated by Dick Cunningham

Sat., Dec. 28 - Coot Bay / Everglades National Park Christmas Bird Count - Coordinated by Dick Cunningham

Sat., May 10 - Spring Migration Bird Count for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties

Director's Report

(Continued from page 1)

This was the first time that the Governing Board considered an application within a proposed CERP area. Unfortunately, they voted to approve the permit request, but the battle is not yet over. Audubon of Florida, TAS and other local environmental groups are taking steps to appeal the permit decision. You can help.

Use the following internet address <http://www.audubonofflorida.org/main/Publications/factsheets.htm> and add your voice to the fight. With public participation, we can make the State of Florida reverse this decision.

Although the Governing Board chose to authorize this project, they did recognize that there was an organizational need to identify permit applications for proposed projects within the CERP footprint, so that they could fully consider the long-term implications of the proposal. Shortly after the meeting, the District implemented new procedures so that the CERP staff and the regulatory staff can coordinate better, and we appreciate that effort.

✿ In a similar fashion, I recently appeared before the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, requesting the denial of an application to move the Urban Development Boundary (UDB). The UDB is the proverbial "line in the sand," the line that defines the limits of development for the county. The application to move the UDB was made on behalf of the Codina Group, a politically-connected development firm that intends to build an industrial park on a parcel of land west of the Turnpike and

north of SR 836. The proposed development will be located about two miles south of the Northwest Wellfield, an area that supplies about a million county residents with their drinking water.

With the adoption of the Northwest Wellfield Protection Plan (NWPP) in 1985, the County Commission acknowledged that land use restrictions in this area were necessary in order to protect the water quality of the Northwest Wellfield. In fact, industrial and commercial development of the type that is currently being proposed was strictly prohibited by the NWPP. The applicants have proposed that they can maintain protection of the wellfield through the construction of a several features that will create a hydrologic divide, and therefore be consistent with the NWPP. However, in a December 2001 letter from the South Florida Water Management District to the project consultants, the District stated that the modeling of this hydrologic divide was insufficient to demonstrate that the wellfield would be protected. In light of the many scenarios in which the proposed divide might fail, and in light of the fact that modeling has yet to provide guarantees that the wellfield will be protected, I believe that there is a risk that the aquifer may become contaminated.

Unfortunately, the Commissioners did not agree with me or the other environmental groups that were there to speak out against the application. The Commission voted 11-2 to approve the project. Commissioner Morales was listening to my comments though. He insisted that he would only grant approval of the request provided that the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General oversee the project to ensure compliance of all of the conditions of the approval. And, again, the battle is

not yet over. The developer is now faced with a very long regulatory process. I will be at all the public meetings fighting for the protection of our water supply!

✿ The Miami-Dade County School Board has recently initiated an effort to have new schools constructed in County Parks with Haulover and Greynolds being the first targeted for development. While I understand the need for more schools, I am disheartened by the School Board's efforts to change the County Charter to allow construction of school buildings within our Parks. In a joint letter with the Urban Environment League, Friends of Miami and the Sierra Club Miami Group, I urged the County Mayor, County Manager and County Commissioners to oppose any effort to change the County Charter.

Our parks are used by all county residents for recreation and enjoyment of open space. Parks are not excess land, they are a necessity to our quality of life. I encourage all of you to lend your support to our fight. Call the School Board at (305) 995-1334 and tell them you do not support the charter change. You can also write them a letter, and fax it to (305) 995-1572, or send it to 1450 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami, 33132. Send copies of your letters to Mayor Penelas, Manager Shiver and your Commissioner (you can get their contact information from www.miamidade.gov).

I am honored to do the conservation work that needs to be done here in Dade County. I encourage you all to get involved and stay engaged. We can make a difference! If you would like to learn more about an issue, send an e-mail to director@tropicalaudubon.org or call me at 305-666-5111.

TAS SPECIAL EVENTS FOR 2003

Sat.-Sun., Apr. 12-27 - **Spring Migration Birdathon**

Have fun and earn money for your favorite nonprofit (Tropical Audubon) during our second annual Birdathon. This year will be organized differently. Birds can be counted during any 24 consecutive hours between Apr. 12-27 which includes 3 weekends. Winners will be announced at the Annual Picnic on May 4. Stay tuned for details on the web or call 305 666 5111.

Thurs.-Sun. Apr. 17 - 20 - **Dry Tortugas Spring Migration Boat Trip**

Birders dream of this trip, an annual event for Tropical Audubon, to the tiny cluster of islands off Key West. Our 2002 trip was a sell-out! Call 305 666 5111 to be for more information.

Sun., May 4 - **Tropical Audubon Picnic and Annual Meeting**

Come one, come all, bring your friends and family! Tropical Audubon will have its pot-luck picnic and annual meeting in the back under the chickee from 12 - 2p. Call 305 666 5111 to tell us what type of dish you would like to bring.

TOUR THE AWARD WINNING TAS BOTANICAL GARDEN!

David Lysinger, native plant expert, architect of the Botanical Garden at the Doc Thomas House and Tropical Audubon's Patron of Botany, will lead monthly tours of our gardens. Each tour lasts from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Learn about our botanical heritage and visit the garden at the historic Doc Thomas House (5530 Sunset Drive; near the intersection of Red Road).

Sunday, September 29
Sunday, October 27
Sunday, November 17
Sunday, December 29
Sunday, January 19, 2003
Sunday, February 23
Sunday, March 23
Sunday, April 20

TAS BOTANICAL GARDEN WINS AWARD

The Botanical Garden at Tropical Audubon Society was presented with an award in the Design with Natives landscape program by the Florida Native Plant Society at its annual state conference in Tallahassee in March. The project was submitted by David Lysinger, designer of the Botanical Garden. The judges recognized the Botanical Garden for its unique historical significance as well as its botanical and ecological value by creating a new category, "Historical Gardens", for this and other projects. The Botanical Garden was previously featured at the FNPS conference in 2000 in Dade County when FNPS members from around the state enjoyed an evening tour. Many in attendance at this year's conference remembered the Garden and cheered the award. Congratulations to all who have supported the Garden and its upkeep and to David for his design and ongoing leadership and nurturing of the Garden. by Patty Phares, Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society.

Action Alert!!!

Would you like to participate in our important conservation work? TAS is developing an e-mail list of concerned members.

Send your e-mail address (along with your name) to director@tropicalaudubon.org to receive periodic notices that can help us make a difference!!

WISH LIST

Want to help? TAS needs NEW office equipment! TAS would love to hear from you. Please remember that your gift will support our worthy cause and be tax-deductible. **WHAT WE NEED:** Copy machine, Printer, Fax Machine, Two New Desktop PC's, and a Laptop PC. If you can help, please call the Doc Thomas House at 305-666-5111

Tropical Audubon Society
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