

TAMPA AUDUBON SOCIETY



Avocet

“To conserve and restore our ecosystems, focusing on birds, wildlife, and their habitats, through education, advocacy, and community

www.tampaudubon.org

FALL 2011

Monthly Membership Meetings

The **4th** Thursday of the month except where noted

Hillsborough County Extension Office

5339 CR 579, Seffner, 7:15 PM, 1/2 mile south of exit 10 on I-4 (left side of road)

Now meeting in the Conference Room, in the building behind where we met last season, watch for signs

Photo Club will meet at 6 PM



September 15 (Third Thursday)

Ann Paul ~ Beginning Birding

Don't miss Ann's fun talk on how to watch the birds around us!

Calling All Traveling Birders!

And those who'd like to start traveling too!

Tampa Audubon Society is hosting a 7-day birding tour to Panama in April of 2012! We will be staying at the famous Canopy Lodge for all 7 nights, and touring out from there during the days. Most meals will be at Canopy Lodge, with just two days when we'll be out for the full day. Other days will have 2 distinct tours each day. (That means that if you prefer to stay at the Lodge to bird the grounds or just relax for half days, you'll be able to.) The tours will take us to a variety of habitats and birds, from the mountain heights to the coasts and all elevations in between. We will have a guide with us to help us figure out which of the almost 600 different possible birds we're looking at!

April 16 - 23, 2012 \$1500 pp/dbl Itinerary on page 5

October 20 (Third Thursday)

Barbara Walker ~ Bald Eagles

A Historical Perspective from West Central Florida

See Barb's article on Swallow-tail kites on page 3



November 17 (Third Thursday)

Mary Keith ~ **What is the Christmas Bird Count?**

Jason Guerard ~ **What is eBird?**

Remainder of meetings are the 4th Thursday



December 22(4th Thursday)

Christmas Party and Covered Dish Dinner

January 26, 2012 **The biology and reclamation of the Mosaic Phosphate Mine Lands**

February 23 **Hillsborough Bay, Mark Rachal**, Tampa Audubon Conservation Coordinator

March & April to be announced

May 24 **Photo Club Presentation**

June 28 **Bill Lamoureux**, Tampa Audubon Fieldtrip Chairman

The 2011 Flatwood Park Bluebird season is officially over! The last 2 babies fledged this week which brings us to a total of 232 fledglings with 164 being bluebirds. That is 38 more fledglings than last year and 16 more bluebirds. Isaac, all 5 of your boxes had birds, so thanks for adding more boxes to the trail. Isaac Molina worked on a Boy Scout project. Of the 50 boxes, only 4 were not used. That is more than previous years. It was a great year.



Thanks to Monitor Mary Miller

Hatched Two, Fledged Two!

Article By Barb Walker

Swallow-tailed Kites nest along the edges of the Brooker Creek Preserve and I have observed them carrying nesting materials every March and April since 2008. I think there are approximately 6 pairs of Swallow-tailed Kites along the western edge of the preserve. This is based on yearly counts at night time roosts and surveyed checkpoints at suspected kite nesting territories. I suspect additional nesting pairs on the eastern edge of the preserve on the Hillsborough side and additional nests northward into Pasco County. Swallow-tailed Kites here typically arrive and get busy with nesting and courtship the first week of March. This year I had the pleasure of watching two young chicks being raised. Despite a portion of the nest falling, the two chicks were hanging in there but it was getting crowded and the youngest chick ended up out of the nest. I heard his calls in the swamp and saw the parents delivering food, but after several days he was found in an open area with a slight injury to his left foot. He was unable to balance well and at that point was unreleasable. I hoped that the kite would quickly improve and that we could put him right back out with his parents as there were no breaks found in the leg or foot. The parents were tracking his whereabouts on the ground and

they exchanged vocalizations when they checked on the injured chick. The chick had to be taken to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey and placed with an adult kite in rehab as improvements were slow and meds were needed. While he continued to improve the older kite chick fledged and the group began to drift farther and farther off the natal territory for longer and longer periods of time. The younger kite chick was not 100% but had greatly improved and was likely to do fine continuing to heal in the wild with his parents tending him. He really didn't have a minute to lose as critical flying and learning time was being lost and the risk of him missing the departure of his parents was becoming greater. He was released on a pine limb and then we waited and watched. His first flight and landing to a nearby tree was beautiful and strong. A turkey vulture came

along and scared him off though. He flew further east and landed well in a pine while we observed his group flying further west. Ugh! Finally, over an hour later they circled around and a parent landed in the tree with him. They were reunited! The rehabbed baby and the sibling were observed perching together and begging for food and the family quickly became more present on their territory. for longer and longer periods of time. The younger kite chick was not 100% but had greatly improved and was likely to do fine continuing to heal in the wild with his parents tending him. He really didn't have a minute to lose as critical flying and learning time was being lost and the risk of him missing the departure of his parents was becoming greater. He was released on a pine limb and then we waited and watched. His first flight and landing to a nearby tree was beautiful and strong. A turkey vulture came along and scared him off though. He flew further east and landed well in a pine while we observed his group flying further west. Ugh! Finally, over an hour later they circled around and a parent landed in the tree with him. They were reunited! The rehabbed baby and the sibling were observed perching together and begging for food and the family quickly became more present on their territory. The numbers at the communal roosts begin to grow in late June and July as they gather to go southward. Then the kites disappear until next year when we will hope to see them chasing hawks, ospreys, and eagles out of their nesting territories again.

Timeline

2008—2011(March thru April) - Nesting, courtship and mating behavior observed, chasing hawks, ospreys and eagles out of natal territory

2008-2011—(June, July) - Feeding of young and flying lessons

5/30/11—Nest observed with 2 young kites, # of fledged kites in natal territory 3 and sometimes 4, each with varying molt patterns

6/7/11—West side of nest begins to fall

6/9/11—older chick still in nest, younger chick heard calling from the forest, parents making obvious food deliveries to both

6/14/11— younger chick found with slight injury to left foot

6/28/11—kite chick released and reunited with family

7/5/11—kites continued presence on natal territory, perching in trees during rains

GOING GREEN

Have Pets? They can join in on recycle-reuse campaign too

- Dog food sacks are heavy-weight and make serviceable trash bags.
- Reduce packaging when buying pet food by purchasing dried food in large sacks and store in lidded drums.
- Have ceramic or stainless steel bowls for your pet's food and water. They last longer than plastic and are far less damaging to the environment.

FIELDTRIPS

Please check website www.tampaadubon.org for changes and updates

(Many Hillsborough County Parks have a \$2 entrance fee)

Fieldtrips are free and open to the public Except where there is a special fee for a boat ride, etc

Keep in mind that if you ride with someone it is courteous to share in the cost for gas and/or tolls

Sept 10 Lettuce Lake Park for beginning birders. [Bill Lamoureux](#). Meet at 9 am at the visitors center. We will walk the boardwalk and trails looking for waterbirds, ducks and wintering residents. Finished by 11:30. (Entrance fee to the park is \$2.00)

Sunday, Sept 11 – Colt Creek Park – [Mary Keith](#). Meet at 7 am at the McDonalds on Rte 60 near I-75. Nestled in the northwest corner of Polk county, Cold Creek is part of the Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve. We will walk the trails looking for resident and migrating birds. 149 species of birds and 79 species of butterflies have been seen in this park.

Saturday Sept 17 – Coastal Cleanup – Ann Paul (apaul@Audubon.org) County wide event. Contact Ann or watch the news for more information.

Saturday , September 24 – Saddle Creek Park – [Bill Lamoureux](#). Meet at the McDonalds on Rte 60 near I 75 at 7am. This is one of the best places for fall warblers, 19- 20 species in a day is not unusual. Bring water and repellent. About 1/5 mile easy walk. Lunch in Lakeland or bring your own.

Saturday October 1 – Circle B Bar Reserve - Preserve [Bill Lamoureux](#). Meet at 8 am at the McDonalds at Rte 60 near I-75. We will walk the trails at the ranch looking for wading birds, rails and waterfowl. Quite a bit of walking on paved roads. Bring water. Great place to bring your camera. Quite a bit of walking on paved or hard packed roads.

Saturday Oct 8 Lettuce Lake Park for beginning birders. [Bill Lamoureux](#). Meet at 9 am at the visitors center. We will walk the boardwalk and trails looking for waterbirds, ducks and wintering residents. Finished by 11:30. (Entrance fee to the park is \$2.00)

Saturday, Oct 15 – Violet Curry Park – [Jason Guerard](#). Meet at 8am at the parking area on Sinclair Hills Rd. About 3 blocks west of Livingston Rd. (N of Bearass, and I-275) Easy one mile walk around the lake looking for fall migrants and local residents.

Saturday Oct 22, Cockroach Bay – [Bill Lamoureux](#). Meet at 8am at the McDonalds on Rte 60 near I-75. We will check the sod farms for shorebirds and we will take a buggy ride around the ELAPP property mitigation areas. Chance for Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Bring water and repellent. Very little walking.

Saturday, November 5 – Blackwater Creek. Dave Goodwin (dave.godwin@aol.com) Meet at 7:30 am at the McDonalds on I-4 and MacIntosh Rd. Blackwater Creek is an ELAPP area north of Plant City with a large expanse of woodlands, wetlands and old Florida terrain. Flat walking for several hours. Bring water and repellent.

Saturday, November 12 Lettuce Lake Park for beginning birders [Pat Lewis](#) - . Meet at 9 am at the visitors center. We will walk the boardwalk and trails looking for waterbirds, ducks and wintering residents. Finished by 11:30. (Entrance fee to the park is \$2.00)

Saturday , December 3 – Al Lopez Park – [Bill Lamoureux](#). Meet at 8 am at the Pavilion 302 just inside the entrance on the right. We will walk around the lake looking for water birds, rails and win-

Day 1

Arrival, Orientation, Canopy Lodge Grounds/Feeders

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met by our driver who will transfer you to the Canopy Lodge, located in mountains El Valle de Antón, nestled against the cloud forests of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument. At 2,400-feet in elevation, you will immediately appreciate the noticeably cooler temperatures here! A member of our staff will greet you as you arrive at the Lodge, and you will be provided with an orientation on the use of the facilities. At this time we will answer any questions you may have. As your luggage is being ferried to your room, or after you get settled in, you may visit the dining area and enjoy a refreshing drink and snack. You will immediately want to scan the bird feeders and grounds! Crimson-backed, Blue-gray, White-lined, Lemon-rumped, Dusky-faced & Plain-colored Tanagers, along with Red-crowned Ant-Tanager are about, as are Thick-billed Euphonia, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Streaked & Buff-throated Saltators, Lineated & Red-crowned Woodpeckers, Red-legged Honeycreepers, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Social Flycatcher, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Barred Antshrike, Clay-colored Robin, Rufous Motmot; Rufous-tailed, Snowy-bellied & Violet-headed Hummingbirds and Garden Emerald! Dinner at CANOPY LODGE.

Day 2 AM: Las Minas Trail (20 min. from Canopy Lodge)

After breakfast (during which we watch for Orange-billed Sparrow calling off the end of the dining area), we head to Las Minas, an excellent place to get a wide variety of birds. The road follows the ridge line, with sweeping vistas of forested mountains, speckled with grasslands and small fincas. The views from here are fantastic, as on a clear day near the summit, both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans can be seen! Specialties of the region include Black-and-yellow, Bay-headed & Emerald Tanagers, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Spot-crowned Antvireo, Gray-headed Kite, Barred Hawk, Bat Falcon, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Swallow-tailed Kite, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, White-tipped Sicklebill, Green Thorntail, Orange-bellied & Black-throated Trogons, Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, Tawny-faced Gnatwren, Plain Antvireo, the endemic Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker, Spotted Woodcreeper, Red-capped & White-ruffed Manakins, Band-rumped Swift and Black Guan have all been recorded here! A forested slope here is also our best chance for Black-headed Antthrush! We get back in time for lunch at the lodge.

PM: Cariguana (15 min. from Canopy Lodge)

With a full stomach and some rest, we head to Cariguana Trail, where we enjoy outstanding foothill birding in some of the last remaining examples of quality Dry Pacific Forest. Specialties we hope to find in this bird-rich habitat are Lesser Elaenia, Yellow-olive & Panama Flycatchers, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, , Lance-tailed Manakin, Rufous-breasted & Rufous-and-white Wrens, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Tody & Whooping Motmots and Long-billed Gnatwren. Also resident are Striped Cuckoo, Little Tinamou, Common Potoo, Dusky & White-bellied Antbirds, Barred Antshrike, White-winged Becard, Tropical Screech-Owl and Bat Falcon. Hummers to watch for are Garden Emerald, Long-billed Starthroat and White-vented Plumeleteer. During migration we look for Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green & Worm-eating Warblers. Dinner at Canopy Lodge

Day

3

AM: La Mesa Road (15 min. from Canopy Lodge)

After breakfast, we continue our quest for more lifers with a trip to La Mesa Road. This area, which is a visually pleasing blend of secondary forest, scrubby pastures, overgrown fincas and grassy borders, is home to many of the area's specialties. Here is where we look for such great birds as Spot-crowned Barbet, Cinnamon Becard, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Silver-throated, Golden-hooded, Tawny-crested & Bay-headed Tanagers, Spot-crowned Antvireo and Spotted Woodcreeper; hummers, such as, White-tipped Sicklebill, Rufous-crested Coquette, Violet-crowned Woodnymph and Black-throated Mango. Also resident are Blue-throated Toucanet, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant and Orange-bellied Trogon. Lunch at CANOPY LODGE.

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PM: Water Cress Trail (15 min. from Canopy Lodge)

After lunch we are off to water cress trail, named after the herb which is commercially grown in the terraced creek near the entrance. This easy trail traverses through good secondary forest, which is framed by picturesque forested mountains of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument. Good birds here are Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Black-headed Saltator, Great Antshrike, White-ruffed Manakin, White-thighed Swallow, White-bellied Antbird and Tody Motmot; hummers, such as Long-billed Starthroat, Rufous-crested Coquette and, when the Inga is in bloom, we scan for Snowcap! We will also listen for Purplish-backed Quail-Dove. Dinner at CANOPY LODGE.

Day

4

EI Chiru/Juan Hombron Beach /Lunch Playa Santa Clara (45 min. from Canopy Lodge) FULL DAY

After breakfast we are off for a full day of birding in more Dry Pacific Forest and its wonderful suite of birds! Among the birds we will be seeking out today are Yellow-headed Caracara, Roadside, Gray & Short-tailed Hawks, Peregrine & Aplomado (rare) Falcons, White-tailed Kite and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. We will also search for Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Golden-fronted Greenlet, Grassland Yellow-Finch, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Brown-throated Parakeet, Blue Ground-Dove, Crested Bobwhite, Red-breasted Blackbird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher and Crested Oropendola. We stop at a spot where we sometimes find Common Potoo. Hummers to be on the watch for in this unique scrubby area are Veraguan Mango (endemic!) and Garden Emerald. We enjoy a picnic lunch at a popular beach at Santa Clara where we hope to spot Sapphire-throated Hummingbird working the coastal shrubbery. You may want to bring your bathing suits to take a dip in the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean (80F/27C). On the beach or flying by we look for Least, Western & Spotted Sandpipers, Sanderling, Blue-footed & Brown Boobies, Sandwich, Royal & Elegant Terns and Franklin's & Laughing Gulls. At Juan Hombron rice fields we hope to find Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Crested Caracara, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Pale-eyed-Pygmy-Tyrant, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher, Southern Lapwing, Great Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Plain-breasted Ground-Dove, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Savanna & Common Black Hawks and Pearl Kite. Dinner at CANOPY LODGE.

Day

5

AM: Cerro Gaital (20 min. from Canopy Lodge)

Today after breakfast, we proceed to Cerro Gaital, a steep, forested, mist-shrouded mountain that you see from the lodge! Cerro Gaital (3,500') is the namesake of Cerro Gaital Natural Monument, which protects more than 335 hectares of mature cloud forest. This area offers sightings of Black Guan, Blue-throated Toucanet, Orange-bellied Trogon, Spotted Barbtail, Common Bush-Tanager, Silver-throated Tanager, Black-headed Antthrush, Slaty Antwren, Spot-crowned & Plain Antvireos, Black-faced Grosbeak, Blue Seedeater, Rufous-capped Warbler, Gray-headed Kite, White Hawk, Tawny-capped Euphonia, Pale-vented Thrush, Thrush-like Schiffornis, White-tailed Emerald, Green-crowned Brilliant, Violet-headed Hummingbird and Violet-crowned Woodnymph. Scaled Antpitta and Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo have been recorded here! Back for lunch at the CANOPY LODGE.

PM: Valle Chiquito (20 min. from Canopy Lodge)

After lunch we are off to Valle Chiquito! This valley is accessible by a newly paved road and passes through nicely forested woodlands crossed by two rivers. At Rio de Jesus we search for Green Kingfisher and listen for Sepia-capped Flycatcher. We also see a nice colony of Chestnut-headed Oropendolas in a Cecropia tree. We also try for Tody Motmot, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-backed Oriole, White-bellied Antbird, Gray-chested Dove, Yellow-billed Cacique, Zone-tailed & Gray Hawks, Black Hawk-Eagle, Lance-tailed Manakin, Panama Flycatcher, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Little Tinamou, Long-billed Starthroat and Garden Emerald. Wrens are abundant here, with Black-bellied, Rufous-and-white, Bay, and Rufous-breasted Wrens all lurking about in the thickets!

Day

6

Altos del Maria (1 hr. from Canopy Lodge) FULL DAY

Departing early in the morning after breakfast, we drive from El Valle in air conditioned 4x4 SUVs back along the Pan-American Highway and then up into the mountains. As the sun rises over the highlands ahead of us, spectacular mountains, vast valleys and towering cliffs come into view! Set in the mountains on the continental divide east of El Valle, Altos del Maria provides a spectacular addition to the Best of Central Panama Birding Package. Ascending an excellent paved road, we will climb a ridge to our destination, an expansive area of cloud forest at 3,600 ft. This area harbors an exciting variety of highland forest birds. Some of the characteristic species of this cloud forest include Black-crowned Antpitta, Black-headed Saltator, White Hawk, Barred Forest-Falcon, Orange-bellied Trogon, Spotted Woodcreeper, Red-faced Spinetail, Spotted Barbtail, Russet & Great Antshrikes, Tufted & Sulphur-rumped Flycatchers, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, White-ruffed Manakin, Ochraceous Wren, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Pale-vented Thrush, Green Shrike-Vireo, Yellow-billed Cacique; Black-and-yellow, Bay-headed, Dusky-faced & Tawny-crested Tanagers; White-vented Euphonia, Slate-colored Grosbeak and Yellow-eared Toucanet. Even the bizarre Brown-billed Scythebill is seen here regularly. Hummers we may spot include Band-tailed Barbthroat, the exquisite Snowcap, Garden & White-tailed Emeralds, Purple-throated Mountain-Gem, White-tipped Sicklebill and Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer. After a picnic lunch in the field, we will drop down into a valley and climb to the ridge on the opposite side. Reaching some large swaths of mature humid forest along this ridge, we will explore some trails and roadside spots in search of even more forest birds. Around mid-afternoon, we will head back into El Valle for some relaxation time prior to dinner at CANOPY LODGE.

Day

7

Rio Indio & Jordanal (40 min. from Canopy Lodge) FULL DAY

After breakfast we depart for a fun-filled day of Caribbean Slope birding! These fine, forested, new areas are not well-birded—by anybody—so who knows what might turn up! First stop is at Rio Indio, a great spot to try for the area's specialties, the Sulphur-rumped Tanager, Spot-crowned Barbet and Barred Puffbird! We also strive to find Crested Oropendola, White-vented Euphonia, Buff-rumped Warbler, Long-tailed Tyrant and raptors, such as White & Gray Hawks and Black Hawk-Eagle, as well as White-collared & Band-rumped Swifts. Hummers to look for are Green, Long-billed & Rufous-breasted Hermits and White-necked Jacobin. We search for Lineated & Red-crowned Woodpeckers, Jet & Dusky Antbirds, Lesser & Yellow-bellied Elaenias, Tropical Pewee; Dusky, Piratic & Gray-capped Flycatchers, Cinnamon & White-winged Becards, Black-chested Jay, Bay Wren, along with Tawny-capped Euphonia, Emerald, Bay-headed & Golden-hooded Tanagers! If that is not enough, we hope to see Shining Honeycreeper, finches, such as Yellow-bellied Seedeater, Thick-billed Seed-Finch, Black-striped Sparrow, as well as Streaked & Buff-breasted Saltators! After a pleasant picnic lunch at a thatched-roof shelter on the Jordanal River, we bird our way back to the Canopy Lodge where a relaxing afternoon awaits us—but not until we check the feeders one last time! Dinner at CANOPY LODGE.

Day

8

Departure to Airport (about 3 hrs. from Canopy Lodge)