



# Crested Caracara

## Hendry-Glades Audubon Society

September/November 2009

*Audubon mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitat for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.*

### **Meetings**

*Second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM, September thru May – Please check for updates and meeting locations.*

*Meetings locations will alternate between the Dallas Townsend Building in LaBelle and the Clewiston Museum in Clewiston.*

### **Next meeting:**

*September 14 in LaBelle  
Steve Lawrence: National Wild Turkey Federation*

*October 12 in Clewiston  
Elizabeth H. Fleming: Defenders of Wildlife*

*November 9 in Labelle  
Dr. John Ogden: Audubon*



## ***President's Message***

Hendry-Glades Audubon Members and Friends,

We are starting the new Audubon year with an enthusiastic slate of new and returning officers and board members. If you are interested in becoming more active in HGAS contact any of the officers or board members to volunteer or to share your ideas and suggestions in order to promote the Audubon mission: "To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. "

**Kim Willis** will be publishing the quarterly HGAS Crested Caracara newsletter, in order to provide members with information about upcoming news and events. If you would like to submit news or photos for the newsletter e-mail [kim\\_willis@comcast.net](mailto:kim_willis@comcast.net) or mail **Kim Willis** at: 405 Trinidad Ave. Clewiston, FL 33440. If you would like to receive e-mail updates of meetings and events, please send an e-mail request to me at [sta5birding@embarqmail.com](mailto:sta5birding@embarqmail.com) .

I am looking forward to the upcoming year. Thank you for your support and participation. "Birds the Word" in the Lake O Region,

***Margaret England***

***Hendry-Glades Audubon, President 09-10***

### **Officers**

*Margaret England, President  
Butch Wilson, Vice-President  
Kim Willis, Secretary  
Janet Falk, Treasurer*

### **Board Members**

*Norm Dillman  
Julie Jeffers  
Martha Valiant  
Ellen Minichiello-Boles  
Rhonda Roff  
Sonny Mowbray  
Terri Lazar  
Add Austin*

# News You Can Use.....

## Upcoming Events

### **North American Migration Count – Fall Saturday, September 19, 2009**

Contact **Margaret England** for more information 863-677-0965

### **Nature Lecture Series DuPuis Management Area**

Saturday, November 28, 2009 10:00 a.m. – Geocache Blast

For information contact **Kim Kanter** at 561-924-5310 x 3339

### **2009 Audubon Assembly, October 23 - 24 in St. Petersburg**

AUDUBON ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION information and details will appear in the summer *Naturalist*. The [Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park](#) is surrounded by lakefront hiking trails. Participants at the 2009 Audubon Assembly get a special room rate of \$109/night, plus free parking and wireless internet in rooms and throughout the property.

### **HGAS Volunteers Are Needed to Participate In AIAC at Big Cypress**

November 8-9, 2009 10am – 5pm, HGAS has been invited to have a free booth at the American Indian Arts Celebration (AIAC) at Big Cypress. The booth could promote membership, programs, and events, as well as the Great Florida Birding Trail and Big O birding. A limited number of passes are available for pre-event bird counts or photo trips to the 1½ mile Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum boardwalk. Contact **Margaret England** for more information or to obtain a pass.



## Save the date

**John Canter:** The Whooping Crane's Story: Endless Vigil to Recover and Sustain a Fragile and Imperiled Species, December 8 - Clewiston Museum (HGAS December meeting)

Big O Birding Festival, March 26-28, 2010 [www.bigobirdingfestival.com](http://www.bigobirdingfestival.com)

2010 Audubon Academy, March 26-28, 2010 at [www.ParamountPlaza.com](http://www.ParamountPlaza.com) Gainesville

Connect – WGCU TV 30/Cable 3 September 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 p.m. or September 6<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 p.m. featuring the Clewiston Area. **Butch Wilson, Karson Turner** and **Margaret England** were among area residents interviewed for the program. Go to [www.wgcu.org](http://www.wgcu.org) to view the segment anytime after it premieres, and post your comments.

## Stay Connected

**Audubon of Florida:** <http://www.audubonofflorida.org>

## STA 5 Highlights

A new addition was made to the STA5 bird checklist. During the **July 11** STA-5 tour a single Smooth-billed Ani was sighted! Also sighted on this tour were three Ruddy ducks in breeding plumage and a Greater Flamingo flyover on Blumberg Road. Though the number of visitor's was small it was still a great day all around with 54 species total for the trip.

The **August 15** trip brought tropical depression that eventually became Claudette, but this did not stop several die-hard birders from making the trip.

White Pelicans and Mottled Ducks are starting to congregate in larger numbers along with a few Ring-necked Ducks. Several Belted Kingfishers and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks and even a Cooper's hawk were also sighted. With the trip cut short due to the rapidly deteriorating weather we still managed 43 species for the trip.



## Florida Master Naturalist – Hendry County

The 40 hour Freshwater Wetlands Module will be offered at Dallas Townsend Hendry County Extension Office in January 2010, Monday, Thursday & Saturday from 4 pm to 8 pm with field trips on Saturdays. Enrollment is limited to 20 people. For more information contact **Gene McAvoy**, County Extension Director Regional Vegetable Agent IV UF/IFAS Hendry County Extension, PO Box 68 Labelle, FL 33935 - 863-674-4092, Office 863-673-5939

[www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/](http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/)

## Stay Informed

South Florida Water Management District: [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov)

Great Florida Birding Trail: <http://floridabirdingtrail.com/>

All About Birds: <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>

Get the latest Florida Audubon News at the Florida Audubon Blog: <http://www.audubonofflorida.org/index.html>

## HGAS Websites

Hendry-Glades Audubon Society Website: <http://www.orgsites.com/fl/hgaudubon/>

New website under construction: <http://www.hendrygladesaudubon.org>

## Birding Programs for Schools

Goals excite me! One top goal submitted in our annual report was to offer birding education programs to grades K-5 in Hendry/Glades Schools. I am looking forward to bringing birding classes to the local schools as a volunteer for our chapter. My experience has been that anytime I teach children, I also reach adults. Who knows? There could be some direct increase in membership once the adults see how much fun we have in the field!

Can you recycle any birding supplies to the cause? You can help me by bringing any of the following to upcoming meetings:

- Binoculars you do not use anymore that a child might use for practice.
- Outdated Calendars that have Photos of FL Birds
- Audio CD's of birdsong
- Used or new Field Guide

Thanks,

**Ellen Minichiello-Boles**  
Teacher/Naturalist

## STA-5 2009 Schedule

September 19

October 17

November 14

November 28

December 12

December 26



The **OKaloacoochee Slough State Forest** Boardwalk and Foot Trail is open to the public. It is located on Sic Island Road located on the south side of C.R. 832 (Keri Road) 1.5 miles east of S.R. 29 in southern Hendry County. Day use fee is \$2.00 unless you have an annual pass for Florida State Forests.



Sign Up for Audubon email "**Action Alerts**"

<http://audubonaction.org/audubon/home.html>



## **Hello from Steve Buczynski**

Hello to everyone in South Florida from Durham, North Carolina! I hope you have all had a lovely and peaceful summer filled with sightings of birds and butterflies and the absence of significant tropical storms! Hendry-Glades Audubon has concluded an exciting 2008-2009 birding season and the 2009-2010 season looks even more promising! I hope you all get a chance to attend some of the many events that Margaret and the new chapter officers have planned for this year.

With mixed feelings, I left our wonderful glades community this summer and have been re-establishing my life in Durham, NC. I have had the opportunity to spend a week with my parents and siblings in Pennsylvania where I saw my first Rose-breasted Grosbeak (my mom says hello to everyone!), but I have spent most of the summer searching for a new job! Well, since I have yet to be successful in the job hunt, I have been fortunate enough to have some time to get familiar with my new surroundings including the wildlife. The first and most important animals that I learned about are chiggers and ticks! I've been crawled on, bitten by and stung by so many critters lately I look like I have chicken pox! So, now I don't go anywhere without long pants and a healthy shot of DEET! I have also encountered numerous deer, frogs, toads, and even a Red Fox!

I've become acquainted with some new birds this summer such as Northern Parulas, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Carolina Chickadees. My new home still has a lot of trees nearby (sadly, the developers will eventually get to them) which are filled with these birds and many others such as American Goldfinches, Cardinals, Pine Warblers, Downy Woodpeckers, and Barred Owls. The field behind my house has a gaggle of geese waddling by daily, numerous House Sparrows (they are everywhere around here!), and some very cute Chipping Sparrows.

I have been looking into joining up with a local Audubon Chapter. They are somewhat dormant in the summer, but come alive with many outings and activities during the fall and spring migration seasons. I understand that there are some amazing fallouts of warblers and birds of prey during the fall. Hopefully I'll have quite a large number of new birds to add to my life list.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for your friendship and support of our chapter over the years. We have hosted many interesting speakers, counted numerous birds, contributed to important citizen science projects, and become a valuable member of our glades communities. I've enjoyed every minute of it and have been rewarded many times over by witnessing the successes of our endeavors.

So, while I'm missing all of the amazing birds and my wonderful friends in Florida (I'm going to miss all of the delicious pot-luck meals!), I'm excited to meet some new people and become more familiar with my new feathered friends in North Carolina.

I wish you all the best with many wonderful new things on the horizon.

**Steve Buczynski,**

Past-President, Hendry-Glades Audubon Society

## **SPECIES SPOTLIGHT**



### **Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*)**

The Smooth-billed Ani is a large, slender bird of tropical savannas in the Caribbean and South America, reaching the United States only in South Florida. This member of the cuckoo family is distinguished by its all-black plumage, long tail, large beak, and distinctive call. This very gregarious species is usually found in noisy groups.

The Smooth-billed Ani lives in small groups of one to five breeding pairs and up to seventeen individuals. They defend a single territory and lay their eggs in one communal nest. Eggs are laid by several females, deposited in layers separated by leaves or grass. Clutch size varies from three to thirty-six eggs, with those at the bottom not hatching. Females share in the incubation, often with two or more females brooding simultaneously.

Smooth-billed Ani is found in open and semi-open agricultural country and cultivation, open woodlands with brush or scrub, fields, gardens and forest clearings. They are mainly insectivorous, feeding on grasshoppers, caterpillars, and moths, but also taking small frogs and lizards. Fruit is an important part of their diet in the dry season. They forage on the ground and in trees and shrubs capturing insects that are stirred up by grazing cattle and power mowers.

The Smooth-billed Ani is commonly found in the tropics but the Florida population is declining rapidly.



### **Did you know.....**

Clewiston is bird sanctuary, home of the Smooth-billed Ani.

One member of a Smooth-billed Ani group often sits on a high perch and watches for danger while the rest forage.

Juvenile Smooth-billed Anis from first broods stay with their natal group and help feed the second brood.

A group of anis is collectively known as a "cooch", "orphanage", and "silliness" of anis.

Eggs are incubated for 14 days by both parents, sometimes assisted by extra birds.

The Smooth-billed Ani has a weak and wobbly flight, but runs well, and usually feeds on the ground.

There are three species of birds in the genus *Crotophaga* of the cuckoo family: Smooth-billed Ani, Groove-billed Ani and Greater Ani.





## **Fins and Feathers on Lake Okeechobee**

**By Butch Wilson  
Clewiston Museum**

For years Lake Okeechobee has drawn sports fishermen from all parts of the country to test their skills and tackle against the lake's famous Largemouth Bass. The reward for their efforts are large - bass trophies hanging in an office or den that forever captures a fisherman's wonderful memories on Lake Okeechobee.

Today the lake is attracting not only the sports fishermen, but the birders. They, too, come from various parts of the country in search of trophies but their memories are captured on film or digital memory cards.

Birders come to Lake Okeechobee because of the diverse bird species that frequent its shores. The shallow waters around the edge of the lake provides an excellent habitat for herons, bitterns, ibis, spoonbills, storks, cranes, rails, stilts and others, while the Hoover Dike and adjacent areas are home to songbirds, hawks, eagles, owls, woodpeckers, turkeys and more.

Historically, the lake has always been unique for its birdlife. The extinct Ivory Billed Woodpecker once lived in the great cypress swamps that bordered the lake, while the last sightings of the extinct Carolina Parakeet were reported on the lake's eastern shores in the late 1800s. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the large and numerous Snowy Egret rookeries on the lake were sought by the Plume hunters.

The rich assortment of aquatic foods found in Lake Okeechobee's waters (750 square miles) draws birds year round to its shallow waters. Large, bulbous-shaped Apple Snails provide a gourmet delight to the Everglades Kite and the Limpkin, while shrimp, minnows, crayfish, and a multitude of other aquatic dishes provide fine fare to the many species of wading and diving birds.

The ideal way to see the birds around Lake Okeechobee is to travel by boat. Most of the birds are found along the shallow shores, so a small boat is ideal. A kayak works great since it can enter the shallower areas that power boats can't, and is quieter than a power boat, allowing one to observe the birds closer.

There are many public boat ramps around the lake as well as private ramps to launch a boat. Marinas provide rental boats and also offer qualified guides, who can take groups to some great birding places.

Hoover Dike is the "Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail." It follows the contour of the lake and is 110 miles long. Almost half of the Scenic Trail has been paved, providing easy riding or hiking, plus small shelters have been placed along the dike trail for the weary adventurer.

Those birders who are landlubbers and don't like the idea of rubbing shoulders with a scaly alligator have the option to walk or bike the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. I bicycle the trail from Clewiston to Moore Haven and see a host of birds on the lake's shoreline, dike and adjacent areas.

Migratory birds, that move south to escape the cold winters up north, are always a treat to avid Lake Okeechobee Birders, who for several months get to enjoy their new guests. However, there are also summer guests that make an annual trip to Lake Okeechobee - Swallow-tail Kites. This summer visitor flies in from Peru and is a Florida resident several months before it takes leave and returns to Peru. The largest Swallow-tail Kite rookery in the United States is found at Glades County in close proximity to the lake.

**Fins and Feathers on Lake Okeechobee**  
**By Butch Wilson**  
**Cont'd**

The migratory Swallow-tail Kite is currently roaming the Lake's shoreline. They fly low over the 35 foot dike (Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail) and pass very close to hikers and bicyclist, as they search for insects. One food source is the Bird Grasshopper that is plentiful along the trail this time of year (breeding season) and makes a great snack for the kites.

That portion of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, which spans Hover Dike from Moore Haven to Clewiston, is paved and offers a great place to view these graceful birds as they soar effortlessly through the sunny skies over Lake Okeechobee. Bring your binoculars, boat, bike or walking shoes and enjoy a day on Lake Okeechobee watching the kites and other feathery residents that inhabit its shores.



*What I did for my summer vacation.....*

**Greetings from the heart of the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge....**

...where we are working as volunteers while living on site; birds everywhere and more to come. Bird banding for (mostly) first year song birds starts 8/15 and continues thru 10/31. Butterfly and Tiger Beetle counts finished. Diamond back Terrapin research continues. Huge flocks of immature white ibis, quantities of Northern Flickers, American Goldfinch, Common Yellowthroat, Robins, Barn Swallows and Cardinals. Look forward to migration for shorebirds, water fowl, songbirds, and raptors. We are at the tip of the Delmarva Peninsula at the mouth of the Chesapeake where birds rest and store energy for the 20 mile crossing of the Bay. Some days in September we are to expect as many as 100,000 Monarch Butterflies. Herds of 50 deer not uncommon in the evenings near our site.

***Janet & Gary LeGates***

***Member Photos***



*Photos by Larry Frogge – Glades County*

# Calling all Birders!



## **You are invited to participate with the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual North American Migration Count – Fall 2009**

The Third Annual Hendry/Glades NAMC and post count gathering will be held Saturday Sept. 19th.

Team leaders, spotter, compilers, photographers are needed for the following teams.

1. STA5/Blumberg Road: Kim Willis
2. Glades Northwest including Rainey Slough: Helen Obenchain
3. Harney Pond, Ft. Center, Curry Island, Brighton: Paul Gray
4. Big Cypress Reservation/835/C&B Farms: Rhonda Roff
5. Fisheating Creek West: hike and canoe/kayak: Deen Mountain
6. Okaloacoochee Slough: Chris Schmiege
7. LaBelle, Ft. Denaud, Glades southwest: Leader needed
8. Highway 80/27 Lee County Line to Clewiston: Leader needed
9. Dinner Island: Butch Wilson

For more information or to volunteer contact:

Margaret England

LaBelle

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