

SNAIL KITE



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Snail Kite is published by the Florida Ornithological Society as an information exchange among persons interested in the conservation, research and enjoyment of birds in Florida. Notices or requests for information or assistance and news of interest should be sent to the editor: Tom Palmer, 1805 26th St. NW, Winter Haven FL 33881. W. (863)802-7535. Fax (863) 802-7809. H. (863) 967-4711. E-mail tomp47@yahoo.com Recent issues of the newsletter and other information are available on the FOS website www.fosbirds.org

Bird Conservation Initiative Begins In Florida

In recent years, bird conservation efforts have focused on national and regional partnership-based “all bird” conservation initiatives such as Partners in Flight (PIF), the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), and Joint Ventures (JV). Each of these initiatives produces landscape-scale conservation plans and strategies for native birds and establishes both population and habitat goals and objectives. All bird conservation is a high priority for an ever developing Florida given the diversity of species in the state and the intrinsic value birds bring to Floridians and visitors alike. In the tradition of numerous conservation initiatives, Florida has created its own statewide all bird conservation partnership.

The Florida Bird Conservation Initiative (FBCI) was formed as a voluntary public-private partnership that seeks to promote the sustainability of native Florida birds and their habitats through coordinated efforts. With respect to Florida's native birdlife,

and in concert with other local, regional, national, and international efforts, the goals of FBCI are to:

- 1) Promote the conservation and restoration of bird populations and habitats deemed to be most vulnerable or in need of conservation attention.
- 2) Ensure the continued sustainability of bird populations and habitats that are presently secure.
- 3) Improve coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders to more effectively align and leverage resources in support of mutual priorities and objectives.
- 4) Increase awareness and support among the public and conservation community regarding issues, challenges and opportunities related to the conservation of birds.

The FBCI consists of a two-prong approach which includes a website and a statewide partnership and steering committee made up of state and federal agencies, avian non-profit organizations, and stakeholders. Launched in May 2008, the website serves as a clearinghouse of information to support avian conservation efforts by biologists, researchers, public and private land managers/owners, grant writers, policy-makers, educators, and outreach coordinators. FBCI has an active listserv with over 130 participants, which functions as a panel for discussions, a means for information exchange and, in general, improves communication among those working with birds in Florida. The statewide partnership functions to facilitate and improve communications concerning avian conservation. Within the partnership, a steering committee serves as a resource to address avian issues and needs and to guide Florida's overall avian conservation strategy. The idea of FBCI is to blur the lines between organizations and create a super-organization by bringing together scientists, birders, land managers, and citizens to advance bird conservation. Both the website and the listserv have received positive feedback from users. Additionally, our major accomplishments in the past year include:

- 1) Facilitating grant opportunities for partners and securing \$91K for partner projects
- 2) Developing a draft Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 31 species priority list
- 3) Promoting FBCI locally and regionally at conferences, working groups and relevant meetings
- 4) Coordinating the International Snowy Plover Breeding Survey in Florida
- 5) Developing a statewide avian project database
- 6) Increasing Florida's level of involvement in state, regional, and national avian initiatives

How can YOU get involved with FBCI?

To learn more about FBCI, please visit our website by going to MyFWC.com and clicking "Florida Bird Conservation" under "Quick Clicks". If you would like to join the listserv, please contact the program coordinator at Elena.Sachs@MyFWC.com. We also encourage you to contribute your avian projects to the statewide project database found on the "projects" page of the website. Interested in becoming a FBCI partner? Please

take a moment to fill out a Memorandum of Agreement, which can be found on the “Partners” page of the website. Join us in working together to conserve Florida’s birds!

-- Elena Sachs

BIRD NEWS

The Great Backyard Bird Count will occur Feb. 13-16. Go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc for details.

Several upcoming birding festival area planned this winter and spring in Florida. Go to <http://floridabirdingtrail.com/events.asp> for contact information.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website that shows the location of known eagle nests in Florida. It's a map-based website based on Google maps. If members know of eagle nests that are NOT in the database and on the map, they can inform FWC about the nest.

The link is <http://myfwc.com/eagle/eaglenests/nestlocator.aspx>

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

There’s an effort to explore interest in forming a Florida Bluebird Society, which would be associated with the North American Bluebird Society. This would provide a central source for bluebirds in Florida. For more information, contact Bill Pennewill at billsbluebirds@yahoo.com

Auburn graduate student Russell Ligon is interested in Eastern Towhee behavior and evolution. He is looking for locations where red-eyed towhees co-occur with white-eyed towhees. If you have observed both white and red-eyed towhees in the same location (same forest, same city, etc) during the breeding season, please contact him at ligonru@auburn.edu with details.

Dr. James Rotenberg with the Department of Environmental Studies at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington is participating in a range-wide project monitoring wintering Painted Buntings and would like to expand his winter feeder watch program to include Florida. He has about 2000 Painted Buntings color banded and re-sightings would contribute to information on survival. Results are posted at www.paintedbuntings.org). Dr. Rotenberg can be reached rotenbergj@uncw.edu or 910 962-7549.

Volunteers are needed to participate in the Rusty Blackbird Hot Spot Blitz on Feb. 7-15 to get a better idea of this declining species' winter range. You can submit your data via e-Bird. The project is a collaboration involving Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. For more information, go to:

http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty_Blackbird/

MEMBER NEWS

David Hartgrove wrote an article for the July/August 2008 issue of Birdwatchers Digest on the efforts to protect a nesting colony of Black Skimmers on Daytona Beach.

The FOS Web will be updated with a new look. The new Web site will feature copies of all Florida Field Naturalists published from 1973 - 2005. The Image Gallery will become more interactive, as will the Official Florida State Bird List. In the future with the new format, look for videos (including the infamous "Crossing", starring Wes Biggs), Bird Quizzes, an interactive Events Calendar

The Spring Meeting will be April 22-24 in Ruskin. The only detailed confirmed so far is that the banquet speaker will be Dr. Geoff Hill Scharnegal, professor of biological sciences at Auburn University. Dr. Hill will present a talk titled "The Search for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the Florida Panhandle." He has published four books including "Ivorybill Hunters: the search for proof in a flooded wilderness," which he will make available to attendees at the meeting.

LINKS YOU CAN USE

Starting with this issue, we will begin listing some links to birding sites, mostly within Florida. If you know a site that's not on the list that you want to share, pass it along to the editor.

<http://www.abcbirds.org/> American Bird Conservancy

<http://www.archbold-station.org/> Archbold Biological Station

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

<http://www.birdersunited.com/latest.htm> Birders United

<http://www.birdsource.org/> Birdsource

<http://www.fws.gov/chassahowitzka/> Chassahowitzka NWR

<http://www.corkscrew.audubon.org/> Corkscrew Sanctuary

<http://www.nps.gov/ever/> Everglades National Park

<http://www.floridaconservation.org/> Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

<http://www.floridastateparks.org/> Florida State Parks

<http://www.savingcranes.org/> International Crane Foundation

<http://www.fws.gov/merrittisland/> Merritt Island NWR

<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/> North American Bluebird Society

<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/infocenter.html> Patuxent Bird ID Center

<http://www.polkcountybirds/index.html> Polk County Birds

<http://pinellasbirds.com/> Pinellas Birds

<http://www.polkcountybirds/index.html> Polk County Birds

<http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks/> St. Marks NWR

<http://www.talltimbers.org/> Tall Timbers

Please send news, requests for assistance and other information relative to Florida bird life to the editor by April. 15, 2009.

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