

THE SNAIL KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

www.fosbirds.org



Save the date for our 2023 fall meeting!

Where: Boyd Hill Nature Preserve in South St. Petersburg (1101 Country Club Way S, St. Petersburg, FL 33705)

When: Friday, November 10—Sunday, November 12

We hope to see you there for some interesting talks and exciting field trips!

The Conservation Committee has a lot planned for the rest of this year! Members are encouraged to become involved and present ideas to the committee. *See page 4 for more information.*

The Waterbird Society Meeting will be held in Fort Lauderdale this year! This is a great opportunity to present your research, hear about science and conservation of waterbird species from all around the world, and network with other students and professionals. *See page 5 for more information.*

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Don’t forget to follow us on social media for more frequent updates!



President's Message—Ann Paul

Life on earth, here.

I think about that a lot, as a human living in Florida, as a person living on earth, and now, as I write a short note for the *Snail Kite*. Years ago, a highlight to my week was watching David Attenborough's excellent television series, *Life on Earth* on PBS. Every week, the amazing videos of special places were the focus of the program. As a child, my teaching included the words "Brighten the corner where you are".

Today, these two ideas have merged to lead me to work to protect the habitats of the United States – through my small but regular financial support of conservation organizations that do this work across our nation, Florida – through my work as your FOS president and working with organizations that are state-focused, Hillsborough County – through long-term involved committee work with the Agency of Bay Management and Hillsborough County's Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program, and the Tampa area, by being an active member of the Tampa Audubon Society and the Florida Birding and Nature Festival.

This work gives me a lot of joy and a sense of purpose, as I have retired from my career as a biologist for Audubon Florida. I know I can't "save the world" alone, but I think that this focus is critical as our world is saved acre by acre, habitat by habitat, species by species. Locations are critical for our birds and wildlife to survive, raise their young, migrate to summer nesting and winter foraging habitats, and carry on their life histories as designed by eons of evolution. Place-based action protects the habitats needed by birds and wildlife, but also the special places that provide long-term clean air and water we need for ourselves, our children, and grand-

children, and a refuge for me and other society-stressed humans, reducing our anxiety and day-to-day concerns by offering a walk in the woods, a kayak trip along a river, a boat ride on a bay.

Thank you for helping to protect our Life on Earth, Here! In Florida and in your own neighborhoods, by your membership and participation in the Florida Ornithological Society! I truly believe that working together, we do make a difference for Life On Earth, Here!

Sincerely,
Ann

Sidebar:

Living in Texas years ago, I always remember a quote from the mayor of Port Aransas, who said, "I don't see what the big deal is about Whooping Cranes. We've got plenty of them around here." Saving them there is just the point.





Fall 2023 FOS Meeting

Boyd Hill Nature Preserve in South St. Petersburg
1101 Country Club Way S, St. Petersburg, FL
33705



Friday, November 10 – Sunday, November 12

Field Trips will visit Ft. DeSoto County Park, Egmont Key NWR/State Park, Honeymoon Island State Park, and other great regional birding sites.

Friday afternoon, 2 p.m.

Board of Director's Meeting. Members welcome.

Friday evening Supper & Flocking – Tales of the BBAs.

Share your stories, slides, and remembrances of your BBA surveys and other work for BBA I and BBA II! That includes you, Wes!

Saturday morning

Field Trips

Saturday afternoon

Membership Meeting
Scientific Session, Student Papers, Skin Quiz

Saturday Evening Banquet and Keynote Talk

Dr. Stephen A. Nesbitt, "Secrets of the Sandhills" or "The Life History of the Florida Sandhill Crane" After 35 years of working with dozens of known individual Florida Sandhill Cranes, Nesbitt, a retired biologist formerly with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, will discuss what they learned. How can you tell an old crane from a young crane? How can you tell a male from a female? Do cranes really pair for life? What is the typical home range for a pair of Florida Sandhill Cranes? What does it take for a pair to successfully raise a chick to the age of independence? How long can a Florida crane live? What does the future for cranes in Florida look like? These are some of the topics to be discussed.

Sunday morning

Field Trips

Cabins and campsites are available for rent at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, first-come, first-served. Reserve yours today! (727) 893-7326

Other details and registration to follow.

Conservation Committee Updates—Marianne Korosy and Jon Hoch

The FOS Conservation Committee met on Wednesday, March 1 to welcome new co-chairs Marianne Korosy and Jon Hoch.

In the near future, the committee will focus on completing a position paper about the effects of rodenticides on wildlife, specifically owls and other raptors. We also will move forward on developing the topic of re-wilding yards and reducing lawn coverage with native plants in a format that will be featured on the website with photos rather than take the form of a position paper.

As a follow-up to the already-published FOS position paper on outdoor cats, the committee agreed to develop a simple phone application that will allow citizens to document birds injured or killed by cats, cats outdoors and on public lands, and injured birds brought to rehabbers with the aim of quantifying occurrences with GPS locations.

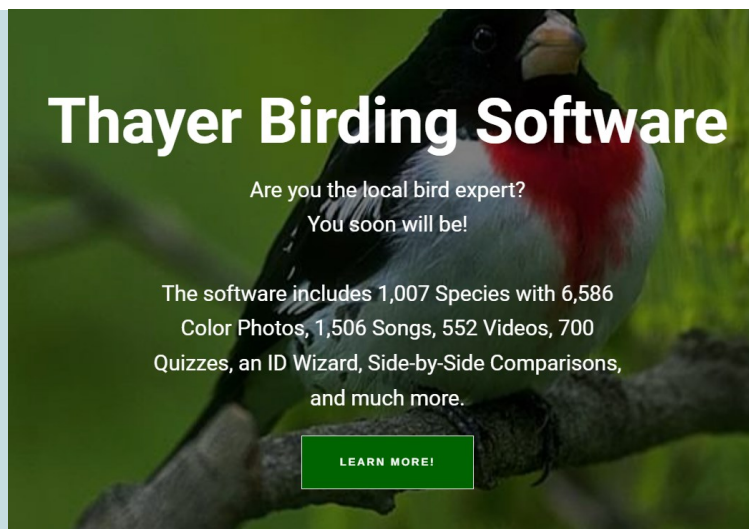
The committee agreed to begin work on a web-based resource page focused on bird mortality caused by light pollution during bird migration. The page will feature information on existing “Lights-out” programs in Florida or elsewhere and other helpful resources.

FOS members are encouraged to join our quarterly committee meetings and to participate in any of the working groups for topics under development. Please reach out to Marianne at mkorosy@gmail.com or Jon at jon.hoch@fdacs.gov.

A Note from Peter Thayer

Thayer’s Guide to Birds of North America can now be downloaded for free. Just visit our new web site at www.ThayerBirdingSoftware.org This birding software features 1,007 species with 6,586 color photos, 1,506 songs, 552 videos and over 700 quizzes as well as an ID Wizard and side-by-side comparisons. You may soon become the local bird expert!

First released in 1994, there have been over forty upgrades over the years. The most recent was version 7.7, released in September 2018. On September 21, 2018 (my 70th birthday) I began offering the software to kids 18 and younger at no cost. After 25 years, I closed Thayer Birding Software LLC in December 2020. But since then, I have heard from many folks asking if the software is still available. So, as of today, you can now get your own copy – at no cost. If you like it, I am asking you to consider making a charitable donation to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at www.birds.cornell.edu Please let others know about this offer as well.



Thayer Birding Software

Are you the local bird expert?
You soon will be!

The software includes 1,007 Species with 6,586
Color Photos, 1,506 Songs, 552 Videos, 700
Quizzes, an ID Wizard, Side-by-Side Comparisons,
and much more.

[LEARN MORE!](#)

Cruickshank Award Winners

Congratulations to our two recipients! We wish you the best of luck on your projects and are excited to see the results!



Connor O'Brien is an undergraduate student at Eckerd College with a project entitled 'Influence of temperature on Least Tern egg and chick survival'.



Zachery Holmes is a masters student at the University of Florida with a projected entitled 'Avian biodiversity in Florida rangelands: The role of pasture type and management strategies'.

The Waterbird Society Meeting to be held in Florida in 2023

The Waterbird Society will hold its **47th Annual Conference** from **October 9-13, 2023** in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA. The conference will be a joint meeting with the Atlantic Marine Bird Cooperative (AMBC) and hosted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The conference will be held at GALLERYone – a DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel in Fort Lauderdale. The conference will include a diverse selection of symposia on the research and management of waterbirds as well as general presentations and a poster session. This year we are also working on offering workshops or training seminars. Potential workshops/training may include the use of UAVs, ARUs, R packages, necropsy, and grant writing. Please check back later for more information on what workshops/training will be available. If you have expertise on any of these topics or have an idea for another workshop and/or would be willing to help lead a workshop, please contact Ricardo Zambrano.



To **register and submit abstracts** please click [HERE](#). Before registering please **first** create an account.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

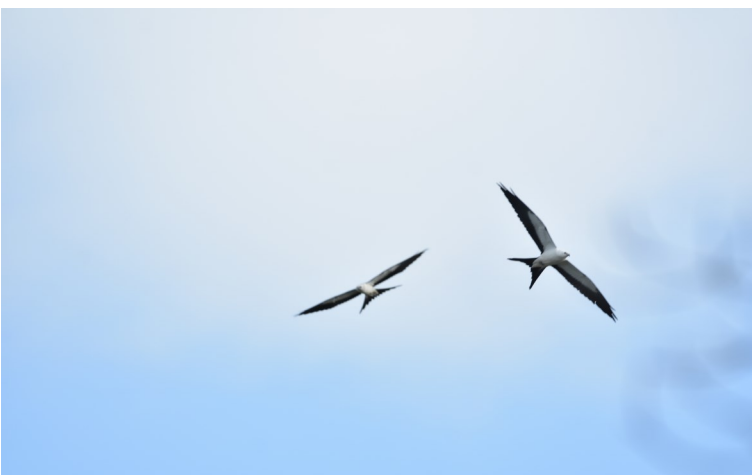
- **Registration and abstract submission opens: May 1**
- **Deadline for early bird registration: July 1**
- **Deadline for submitting abstracts: August 10**
- **Deadline for hotel reservations at conference rates: September 8**

Florida Keys Hawkwatch—Mariah Hryniewich

Did you know right here in our own backyard you can see the spectacle of migration? Hundreds of Peregrine Falcons making that long trek south, Short-tailed Hawks flying by daily during their peak, and Swallow-tailed Kites kettling by the hundreds are just a few of the moments you can experience here.

The Florida Keys Hawkwatch is the southernmost migration monitoring project in the continental United States located right in the middle keys in Marathon, Florida. This project has been dedicated to promoting the appreciation and conservation of birds for over two decades, making it the largest raptor migration dataset for the state of Florida! Today we observe diurnal birds of prey at Curry Hammock State Park, but monitor the migration of all avian species with morning flights at Long Key State Park.

This site is unique because of where it is located. Since birds tend to follow land as long as possible during migration, Florida acts as a funnel for them. As they prepare to cross the Florida Straits and Gulf of Mexico into the Caribbean, the Keys are the last bit of land they see. These birds get down to this island chain and become more concentrated as the land is so narrow (some spots being less than a mile wide). You can observe these raptors following this land mass to gain altitude or you can watch some of them fly right over the water straight to Cuba!



A pair of Swallow-tailed Kites counted during Hawkwatch. Photo by Mariah Hryniewich.



Mariah Hryniewich and Luis Gles on the platform . Photo by Mark Hedden.

The Florida Keys Hawkwatch is known as the “Peregrine Falcon Migration Capital of the World” due to no other project in the world documenting higher numbers in a single day than here. On October 10th, 2015, the most incredible phenomenon happened with 1,506 Peregrine Falcons passing the site! Since then October 10th has been deemed “Dia de los Peregrinos” or “Day of the Peregrines.”

In addition to the Peregrine flight, Swallow-tailed Kites are now being highlighted. One of the only sites in the United States to count these graceful birds, we have doubled the length of the count season to include “Kite Flight.” For the past two years we have begun counting on August 1st. Counting a mind blowing 3,910 of these birds in 2022, our team is eager to see what the future will bring with this extended time.

You can see daily sightings during the season and look at past seasonal data on <https://hawkcount.org>. Please go to <https://floridakeyshawkwatch.com> to support this important project and learn more.

All are welcome to enjoy this spectacle, so come visit this fall season between August and November! It is a sight everyone should witness with their own eyes.

Florida Field Naturalist

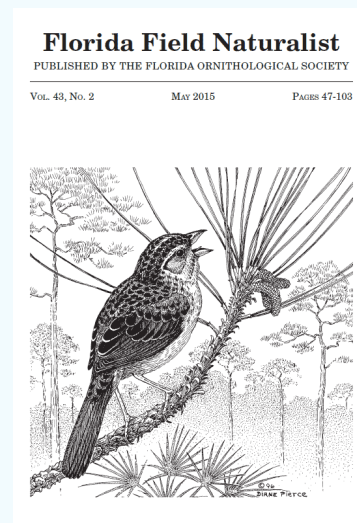
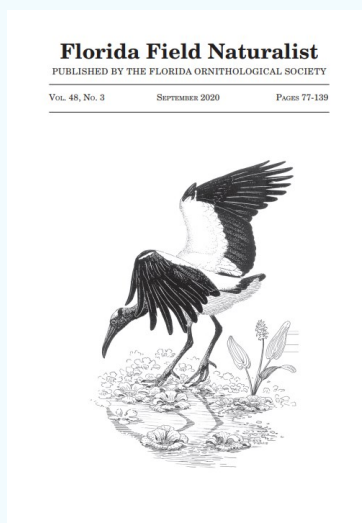
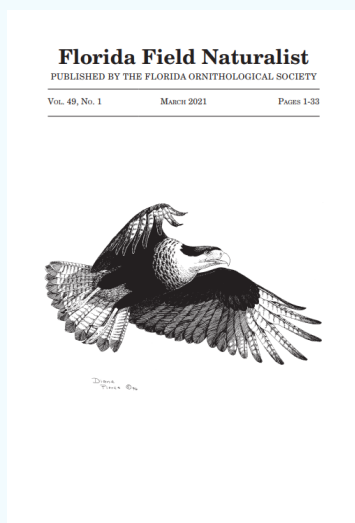
There are 2 new articles featured in the newest issue of the Florida Field Naturalist. (51:1). Below the article titles, authors, and a brief description.

Habitat associations for Eastern Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis*) in South Florida by Chance Hines, Laura Duval, and Braynan Watts

Hines et al. examined habitat parameters important to predicting occupancy of the South Florida Everglades population of the Eastern Black Rail. They found that saturated soils, topographic heterogeneity, and herbaceous cover positively influenced rail occupancy and the number of trees was negatively associated with occupancy. Extinction rates were higher for areas that dried between years.

Comparing the frequency of incest between siblings in two populations of Florida Scrub-Jays (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) by Kelly Roberts, Abigail Valine, Angela Tringali, Michelle Dent, and Reed Bowman

Roberts et al. searched historical nest records at Avon Park Air Force Range and Archbold Biological Station to identify incidence of incest in Florida Scrub-Jays. They found that incest between siblings was rare but was more frequent at Avon Park (2.62%) than at Archbold (0.92%).



Call for submissions for the Florida Field Naturalist!

Thank you for considering publication in the Florida Field Naturalist of your article or note containing the results of

- biological field studies
- distributional records
- natural history observations of vertebrates, especially birds

from Florida, adjacent states, the Bahamas, and nearby West Indies. Please check out our [website](#) to send an email to the managing editor of the FFN with a short description of what you would like to submit.



Contribute your personal birding histories!

1972

FRIGATE BIRD, C-3-Y,
 REDDISH EGRET, 3, (B)
 SNOWY EGRET, C-1, (B)
 LOUISIANA HERON, C-5, (B)
 AM. FLAMINGO, 750± (B)
 BAHAMA DUCK, 2, (C)
 SPARROW HAWK, 1, (C)
 SEMIP. PLOVER, 1, (B)
 COLLARED PLOVER, 2 (B)
 SNOWY PLOVER, 12± (B)
 STONE, 15+ (B)
 W. LEGS, 1, (B)
 YELLOWNECKS, 1, (C)

Florida Field Naturalist
 PUBLISHED BY THE FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
 Vol. 43, No. 2 December 2023 Pages 77-108

2022

**The University of South Florida &
 The Florida Ornithological Society**

Contribute Your Own Birding History to the FOS archives!

- The FOS Archives are preserved at USF Libraries' Special Collections.
- Donate your field notes, research data, and photographs to help preserve and write the history of Florida's birds.
- Your photographs may be featured in the Breeding Bird Atlas II!

For more information (or to donate), contact:

John Clarke jaclarke@usf.edu • Amanda Boczar amandaboczar@usf.edu

USF Special Collections (813) 974-2731 or spcinfo@usf.edu

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