

THE SNAIL KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Open position: Conservation Committee Chair

We are calling out to all members for someone to volunteer to Chair the Conservation Committee. We are working on writing two more 'position papers'. One is about the effect of rodenticides on wildlife, specifically owls and other raptors. The other will be about re-wilding yards and native landscapes.

In the midterm elections four, Florida counties (Polk, Alachua, Indian River and Pasco) passed referendums on environmental land acquisition and management. This shows that protection of the natural resources of FL is important to our citizens. FOS has prepared a **Position Statement on Wildlife Corridors consistent with land acquisition actions** ([link](#)) relevant to the issue. Now that the counties have the funds to purchase environmental lands, it is important that they do this fairly and swiftly.

If you are interested in the position, please email the current chair, Michelle Wilcox, at 5mmw5a@gmail.com



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Allan and Helen Cruickshanks birding near Long Island Sound. From Box 32, F2.

Special 50th Anniversary Feature on Page 10!

President's Message by Ann Paul

This fall, when we celebrated the beginning of the Florida Ornithological Society in Ft. Lauderdale, it became so clear why FOS was created and what the Society has meant to our members for the last 50 years! And what FOS continues to mean, as its role remains truly relevant today.

At the meeting, professional scientists and enthusiastic bird-watchers came together to learn from each other, to see old friends and make new ones, to attend a fascinating scientific session, to experience birds on the field trips, and to just visit at the meals, lunch and the banquet dinner, and also during the mid-Scientific Session break – still remembering that excellent pretzels-and-mustard snack! WOW!

The Session itself was quite noteworthy. Three students gave presentations about their work, sharing current methods of study and interesting facets of their experiences. And five experienced scientists talked about long-term studies on birdlife in Florida and the Caribbean.

All the talks held the participants in the audience spell-bound, as the speakers presented their information succinctly – due to short time limits – each talk could definitely have been expanded to much longer presentations. Each talk was broad in interpretation of the science presented about long-term studies of Roseate Terns and Bald Eagles in Florida, the Central Florida Non-Migratory Whooping Crane Project, Florida's Flamingos, protection of Black-capped Petrels in Haiti, and the long-time results of Florida's Hawkwatch Project surveys. I wish to express my great appreciation to these professional biologists who generously shared their knowledge, expertise, and energies with our members! Thank you, Ricardo Zambrano, Steve Whitfield, Janell Brush, Steve Nesbitt, Tabitha Stadler, and Jeff Bouton! I, for one, have been

thinking about these talks during the days since you gave them. You gave us a lot to talk about and consider relative to Florida's birds and management of populations, especially of these keystone species.

The student presenters also did a great job. Billy Abbott's talk about Bachman's Sparrows behavior related to temperature, Morgan Slevin's description of microbiology reflecting health in Northern Cardinals, and Zach Holmes discussion of cattle management affecting avian biodiversity were all well-presented and interesting.

During the evening, we were highly entertained, learning about the status of the Second Breeding Bird Atlas which has been such a focus of our FOS activity for years from Jim Cox and Ann Hodgson, a fun presentation about the people and leaders of our Society by University of South Florida Librarians Andy Huse and John Clarke, and Jim Kushlan's exciting talk about his work with Kirsten Hines to publish *Images of America: Everglades National Park*.

Dave Goodwin, who has attended every FOS meeting for 50 years except Fall 2021, told me the meeting was "one of the best ever!"

All in all, it was a simply great celebration of our Society, a good opportunity to share time together, to learn from each other, and to, by gathering, continue to accomplish our goals, uniting amateurs and professionals in the study of wild birds.

Our Spring Meeting will be at Merritt Island and Titusville, so mark your calendars for March 31-April 2. It will be another very special and memorable event. See you then!

-Ann Paul



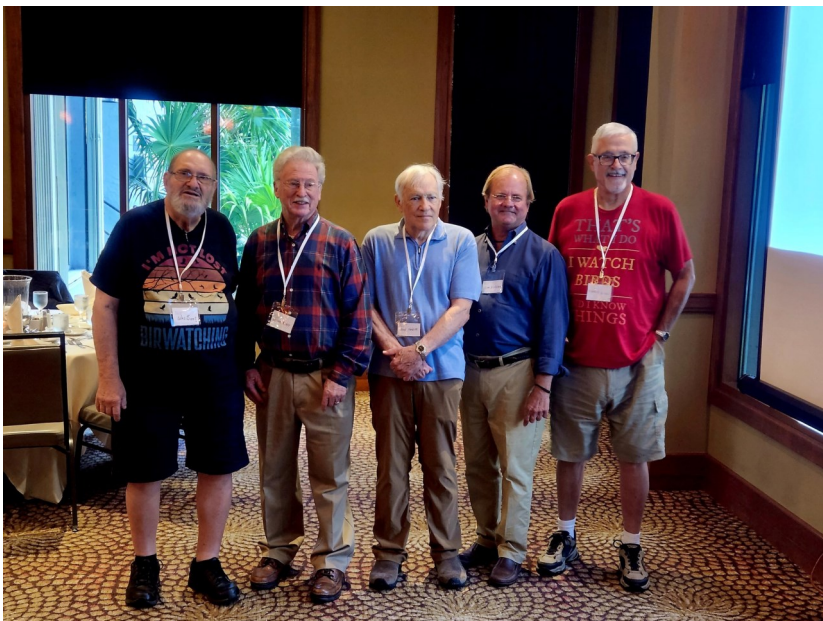
Fall Meeting Highlights



During the banquet, past FOS presidents were awarded honorary plaques to thank them for their dedication and service to FOS. Pictured from left to right: Ann Paul (current president), Adam Kent (past president), Dave Goodwin (past president), Todd Engstrom (past president). Photo by Morgan Slevin.



Andy Kratter, the ornithology collections manager of the Florida Museum of Natural History and FOS Records Committee Secretary, presented a fun, yet challenging skin quiz that focused on raptors of Florida. Photo by Morgan Slevin.



Some of the original members of FOS enjoyed catching up with one another during the meeting. Pictured from left to right: Wes Biggs, Wilson Baker, Steve Nesbitt, Jim Kushlan, and Dave Goodwin. Photo by Morgan Slevin.



Jim Kushlan gave the Saturday evening keynote on the history of the Everglades National Park, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Photo by Dave Goodwin.

Fall Meeting Highlights



Janel Brush from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission presented on breeding Bald Eagle population and demographic trends in Florida from long term survey data (1972-2017). Photo by Morgan Slevin.



Morgan Slevin, a graduate student at Florida Atlantic University gave a presentation on his dissertation research entitled 'It's what's inside that counts: A free-living songbird's cloacal microbiome as a signal of health'. Photo by Dave Goodwin.



Zachary Holmes, a graduate student at the University of Florida, gave a presentation about his masters research entitled 'Avian biodiversity in Florida rangelands: The role of cattle grazing management and pasture type'. Photo by Dave Goodwin.



Billy Abbott, a graduate student at Florida Atlantic University, gave a presentation about his masters research entitled 'Testing for effects of high temperature on territorial behavior in Bachman's Sparrow (*Peucaea aestivalis*)'. Photo by Dave Goodwin.

FOS Records Committee (FOSRC) Updates

The 30th report of the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC) will soon be published in the *Florida Field Naturalist*. The report summarizes decisions made by the committee at meetings held in November 2020 and December 2021. Here I present highlights. **Ten** species were added to the Official Florida List: a **Gray-tailed Tattler** in the Florida Keys, a **Common Murre** in Volusia County, a **Bulwer's Petrel** in Pensacola, a **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** at Fort De Soto, **Mitred Parakeet** (accepted as an established exotic species), a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** in Clay County, a **European Robin** at Fort Lauderdale, an **Eastern Yellow Wagtail** in the Panhandle's Gulf County, a **Hermit Warbler** at Palm Beach, and a **Scott's Oriole** in Tallahassee. Pacific-slope Flycatcher replaces "Western" Flycatcher, which had been previously accepted to the species pair Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher. The total number of species on the Official Florida List now stands at 538. Three other three potentially new species for Florida were unresolved or tabled (Great White Pelican, House Crow, Whooper Swan).

Many other rare species - represented by fewer than five previous records - were accepted during our meetings in 2020 and 2021. These include: a Scaly-necked Pigeon in Sanibel was the third record and first in 90 years; Antillean Palm Swifts in Monroe and Lee counties were the fourth and fifth records; two Pacific Golden Plovers (Leon and Palm Beach counties) were the second and third records; a wide-ranging Heerman's Gull was the second record; a Zone-tailed

Hawk in the Keys was the second record; a Piratic Flycatcher in Fort Myers was the second record; a Variegated Flycatcher in Ocala was the third record, a specimen of Western Wood Pewee from Miami Beach was the third record; an amazing three accepted Hammond's Flycatcher records made up the third (Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, fourth (at Lucky Hammock near Homestead), and fifth records (at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge); a Sage Thrasher in Volusia County was the fourth record; a Mountain Bluebird in Pasco County was the fourth record; a Red-legged Thrush in Key West was the fourth record, but the first record of the Cuban subspecies, which is possibly a future split; and two records of Hooded Oriole (Escambia and Hernando Counties) were the third and fourth records for the State. Of 186 evaluated reports, 151 (81.1%) were accepted, 28 were not accepted (15.1%), and seven were unresolved (3.7%).

The FOSRC solicits reports of bird species on the FOSRC Review List - those with 20 or fewer accepted records or reports over the previous ten years- and reports of species occurring for the first (known) time in the state (see Official State List at: <https://www.fosbirds.org/florida-bird-list.html>). Observations and documentation can be submitted on-line at <https://www.fosbirds.org/rarebirdreports.html> or submitted to me by email. On occasion, when population analyses are published, we also consider whether an exotic species meets our criteria for establishment in Florida.



FOSRC 1605. Slaty-backed Gull, Fort Pickens State Park (Escambia County), 16 November 2021. Photo: Brenda and Jerry Callaway. Second Florida record, the first was at the complete opposite end of Florida, in Key West in 2003!

Grants and Awards

Congratulations to the following recipients of the 2022 Mary J. and William B. Robertson Fellowship Award:

Hannah Henry, University of Florida Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

IRES Wildlife Conservation Training Program in the Caribbean

Amount awarded: \$750.

Heather Levy, Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy

Searching for the critically endangered Bahama Nuthatch (*Sitta insularis*)

Amount awarded: \$750.

Michelle Moyer, University of Maryland Department of Biological Sciences

Female Song and Breeding Ecology of the Puerto Rican Oriole (*Icterus portoricensis*)

Amount awarded: \$750.

Grant Announcement: Helen G. and Allan D. Cruickshank Research Awards

This award given to support projects dealing with wild birds in Florida. Proposals submitted for research awards should be directed at improving knowledge of Florida birds and should propose work to be done in Florida. Students (undergraduate to PhD) are especially encouraged to apply; postdoctoral level scientists and non-profit organizations or their representatives may also be considered for funding.

Beginning in 2023, we will be separating awards types and amounts. Undergraduate students may be awarded \$500, masters students \$1,000, and PhD, post-doc, and non-profits \$2,500.

Proposal Due Date: February 15 of each year



Volunteer Opportunities

Christmas Bird Count

How to discover Florida Christmas Bird Count dates and contact emails:

1. For Winter 2022-2023 Go to the website: 123rd Christmas Bird Count ([arcgis.com link](https://arcgis.com))
2. Zoom into Florida, then Click on the count circle you are interested in. Scroll down to 'Count Date' to see the date chosen. If it says TBD, the compiler has not yet entered the date. You can email the compiler using the email you see listed to see if you can join their count!
3. Next year, for winter 2023-2024 you will need to find the 124 th Christmas Bird Count map, which should be updated at this website: Join the Christmas Bird Count | Audubon All subsequent years should be updated there in late fall.



Breeding Bird Survey

You can visit the USGS Patuxent Breeding Bird Survey website [here](#). From there, you can check the requirements for becoming a surveyor, and look to see which routes are vacant. Please contact our state coordinator, Rob Mulligan, at Robert.Mulligan@myfwc.com if you are interested in participating in the next Breeding Bird Survey.



Florida Field Naturalist

There are 3 new articles featured in the newest issue of the Florida Field Naturalist. (50)4. Below the article titles and authors are the first paragraphs from each note.

Re-evaluation of Three Mynas Photographed in Miami-Dade County, Florida in April 1987—Bill Pranty

Archived photographs offer the opportunity to re-examine bird records from years past, and if necessary, to correct identifications made in error. In this note, I correct the identification of three mynas that I photographed at Kendall, Miami-Dade County, Florida in April 1987 and identified as Crested Mynas (*Acridotheres cristatellus*). This re-evaluation should remove Crested Myna from the list of exotic birds that have been verifiably recorded in Florida (Greenlaw et al. 2014).

Apparent Tool Use by a Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) - Paul Jadot and William D. Newmark

Tool use by birds has been documented among more than 30 families worldwide (Shumaker et al. 2011). Shumaker et al. (2011) have identified 21 different modes of tool use in birds. On 25 April 2022, one of us (PJ) photographed a Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) in the Mason Farm Biological Reserve, Chapel Hill, North Carolina during a feeding bout holding a twig positioned lengthwise in its bill immediately above a crevice in the bark of an arboreal vine on which it was foraging.

Florida's First Confirmed Record of a Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*) and a First for the Gulf of Mexico—Lucy R. Duncan and Dorothy Kauffman

Procellariiformes are pelagic species infrequently encountered along the coast or nearshore waters of the southeastern United States. A survey of eBird reports of procellariiform seabirds from coastal states shows random near-shore and coastal observations unrelated to adverse weather conditions. However, along the northern Gulf of Mexico coast, sightings are usually during or immediately after the passage of tropical cyclones or other meteorological events producing strong, sustained onshore winds. These weather conditions increase detectability of procellariiform seabirds. Those most frequently reported from the Gulf of Mexico are Cory's (*Calonectris diomedea*), Sooty (*Ardenna grisea*), Audubon's (*Puffinus lherminieri*), and Great (*Ardenna gravis*) shearwaters normally found well offshore and associated with deep water. Procellariiform seabirds have been observed in the three westernmost counties of Northwest Florida with onshore winds in all months of the year, including those months outside of hurricane season (Duncan and Duncan 2018).

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.



Gift Memberships

Do you have a friend or colleague who is either a birdwatcher or works with birds in Florida and who you think would enjoy the benefits of being a member of the Florida Ornithological Society? Give them a one-year Gift Membership!

For Christmas in 2013 my dear friend and colleague, Mary Dowdell, gave me a gift membership to FOS. She and I met because we were both Red-cockaded Woodpecker Biologists for FWC and she had often invited me to join her Christmas Bird Count in Brooksville, so she knew that I was a bird enthusiast both on-and-off the clock. She thought that I would be benefited by and could contribute to bird conservation in Florida by joining the FOS. Mary used to work for Roger Tory Peterson near the end of his life in Old Lyme, CT, and she extended to me the same advice that she received from him, "you need to do MORE for birds". Peterson himself furthered the study, appreciation and protection of birds and he urged those that he mentored to do the same. I started renewing my own FOS membership after my gift membership expired and have been a member ever since. Sometimes it takes a personal invitation- so give a gift membership to someone you know for 2023.

- Michelle Wilcox, Membership Chair, FOS



New Member Shout Outs!

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations that became members of FOS in 2022. We wouldn't be able to accomplish our mission without our wonderful members!

Michael Fults	West Pasco Audubon Society	Noah Frade
Mat Natali	Kent Weakley	Thomas Daniel
Amy Donner	Sally Robertson	Lisa Rychel
Marcy Packer	Laura Packard	Diana Picklesimer
Choctawhatchee Audubon Society	Richard Murray	Brad Kovach
Halifax River Audubon Society	Cherie Pittillo	Phillip Crabill
Santa Fe Audubon Society	Kimberly Dungan	Rebecca S Clemens
Space Coast Audubon Society	Hans Gonzembach	Jonathan Hoiles
Tampa Audubon Society	Timothy Hardin	Stephen Artusi
The Audubon Society of the Everglades		



University of South Florida Library of Special Collections Rolls out the FOS 50th Anniversary Exhibit

From the USF 50th Anniversary Exhibit: "In 2021, the University of South Florida Libraries and the Florida Ornithological Society (FOS) announced a formal partnership in which the libraries became the repository of the society's records. Since then, the libraries have digitized the society's [fifty-year archive \(link\)](#) of the society's activities and collaborated on the creation of the society's landmark Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II. The USF Libraries Special Collections congratulates the membership of the Florida Ornithological Society on celebrating its first fifty years of birding and advocacy for bird conservation in Florida.

In this exhibit, we celebrate the organization of the FOS with a flight through their archival collection and a glimpse at the people who made it possible. We have made every effort to include as many FOS members and activities as possible with the sources available to us. While the FOS archives are extensive, they are not an exhaustive representation of all the work of the society, but a sample from the materials that were preserved. We hope this exhibit inspires birders to contribute and preserve their own papers where they can be searched and accessed, enabling researchers everywhere to broaden their research base and include more voices in their work."

You can check out the exhibit [here \(link\)](#).



Nicholson wading into water while pursuing a Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow. Circa 1927. From Box 4, F11.



We couldn't resist adding this image from the USF Oracle showing a faculty member interacting with a Scrub Jay.

Donate to FOS through AmazonSmile

If you shop on Amazon, be sure to use Amazon Smiles to donate to FOS! Just type in 'Florida Ornithological Society' on smile.amazon.com. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer's selected charitable organization."

Open position: Social Media Coordinator

In addition to seeking a chairperson and members for the conservation committee, we are also looking for an enthusiastic volunteer interested in helping to manage our social media platforms. This person would be responsible for helping to create and post content on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, and to communicate and coordinate with different board members. This is a great opportunity to get a pulse on happenings within the ornithological community around the state and to get experience with creating content and managing multiple platforms. Please contact levy.heather789@gmail.com if you are interested in the position, would like additional details, or have any questions.

Click the icons to link to our social media pages!



Letter from the Editor

Seeing everyone in person at the FOS meeting for the first time in two years was truly something special. My mom, who is outside of the birding world, decided to buy a pair of binoculars the day before and join. We visited Plantation Preserve and Evergreen Cemetery, where nearly every bird was a lifer for her. We enjoyed listening to talks from students, professionals from around the state, and the keynote presentation on the Everglades. I am looking forward to what's in store for our spring meeting!

In the meantime, I hope everyone takes some time this winter to spend time with friends, family, and makes an effort to find quiet and peace outdoors. The holidays can be both a lovely and stressful time, and I find that birding really grounds me. Check your local coordinator to see if a Christmas Bird Count spot might be open. It's a great opportunity to get out and bird, all while contributing to valuable scientific trends.

If you are interested in contributing to the *Snail Kite* Newsletter, or helping with its production, please reach out to me at levy.heather789@gmail.com. I am always open to ideas on how to make the newsletter interesting and engaging.

Happy winter birding!

Heather