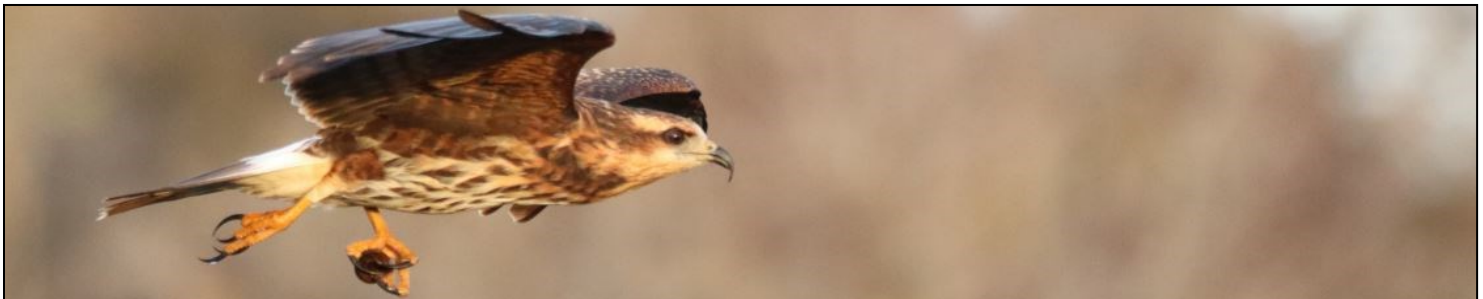


THE SNAIL KITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

www.fosbirds.org



It's Membership Renewal Time!

Renew your FOS membership for 2023 by visiting our website by scrolling over The FOS on the top right of our page and clicking the ***Join the FOS*** button. If you have any questions about your membership, contact Michelle Wilcox at 5mmw5a@gmail.com.

Save the Date for Our Spring Meeting

When: March 31—April 2, 2023

Where: Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center (State Highway 402, Titusville, FL 32796)

See page 3 for more information and a schedule!

50th Anniversary Mugs for Sale

Enjoy your next beverage celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Florida Ornithological Society! We've got a mug for you! Simply send a \$15 check made out to FOS to this address and a mug will be headed your way.



Send \$15 to: 4928 Barnstead Drive, Riverview, FL 33578

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Social Media Coordinator Needed! We are looking for an enthusiastic volunteer interested in helping to manage our social media platforms. Please contact levy.heather789@gmail.com if you are interested in the position.



President's Message by Ann Paul

"The Florida Ornithological Society is a Florida not-for-profit corporation established in 1972 to promote field ornithology in Florida and to facilitate contact between professional and amateur ornithologists and birders in the state."

This statement concisely outlines our goals and history. Here are some updates:

- At this time, our Spring FOS Meeting is in the planning stages – we will meet at the Visitors' Center of the Merritt Island NWR on March 31-April 2. A tentative schedule is on page 3.
- The second Breeding Bird Atlas is in process of an on-line publication by the University of South Florida Library, to be followed by a subscription-based printed version. Please consider submitting a photo for a species account. See more on page 7.
- Today I received Vol. 50, No. 4 of our peer-reviewed scientific publication, *The Florida Field Naturalist*.
- We are evaluating applications to our Helen G. and Allan D. Cruickshank Research Awards and William B. and Mary J. Robertson Fellowship Awards to promote studies in Florida and the Caribbean. The awards will be made at our Spring Meeting.
- Our support of the Florida Young Birders' Club is key to its providing expanding programs for children interested in birds. See more on page 4.
- Facebook and Instagram outreach will continue as soon as we hire a Communications Coordinator.
- Our Records Committee, led by Andy Kratter and the Florida Museum of Natural History, continues to review and document occurrences of birdlife in Florida. This results in the *Official Checklist of Florida's Birds*.

- Our Position Statements, written by our Conservation Committee and approved by the Board and Members of FOS, provide leadership and the scientific bases for important conservation initiatives, useful to our Florida leaders, politicians, and citizens.
- Our Archives are being curated and scanned to be available to all of us by the University of South Florida's Library's Special Collections staff. And we have a special publications series available for purchase.

This is a lot of action for a relatively small organization. I think we are doing well with a lot of our goals, but we need to enlist more of our bird scientists and fellow bird-watchers and bird-enthusiasts to share the success and future of our Society. Learning about the birds of Florida, sharing this knowledge, and working to ensure their future in one of the fastest growing human populations in the United States is going to take all of us, doing our best, doing our part.

Please let me know how you want to help and if you have any questions.

- Ann Paul



Spring 2023 FOS Meeting – March 31-April 2

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Visitors' Center

State Highway 402, Titusville, FL 32796, 321/861-0669



Merritt Island Daily Pass - \$10.00 per vehicle.

Annual Pass - \$25.00 per vehicle. Valid only at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Passes may be purchased from the Visitor Information Center or you can Buy Your Pass Online at [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

Hotels in Titusville:

Fairfield Inn

Holiday Inn

Days Inn (ask for a renovated room or don't stay there)

Friday, March 31

Field Trips - to be announced soon

Suggestions:

Blue Heron Wetlands, 4800 Deep Marsh Rd, Titusville, FL 32780 - note: closes at 3:30 p.m. Paperwork at the office.

Black Point Drive, Merritt Island NWR

Orlando Wetlands Park, 25155 Wheeler Rd, Christmas, FL 32709

Helen and Allan Cruickshank Preserve, 326 Barnes Blvd #300, Rockledge, FL 32955

Board Meeting 2-5 p.m. Merritt Island NWR Visitors' Center Meeting Room

Dinner – on your own

Saturday, April 1

Field Trips:

Leader - Bert Alm

Black Point Drive Merritt Island NWR, 8 – noon; meet at the Merritt Island NWR Visitors' Center at 8 a.m. for car-pooling, bird the parking lot and feeders for songbirds and Painted Buntings

Other sites to be announced - finish by noon

Lunch – picnic at the Merritt Island NWR Visitors' Center – more information later

General Membership Meeting, 1-5 p.m. Merritt Island NWR Visitors' Center Meeting Room

1 – 1:30 Membership Meeting

1:30 – 5, talks/seminars

Mike Legare, Biologist, Merritt Island NWR, Managing the refuge for birds

Kathy Hill or Jesse Wales, Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program

Billy Brooks, USFWS, about Wood Storks

Jessica Lang, Conservation Activities of the Brevard Zoo

Leesa Souto, Marine Resources Council – asked

Speaker from the St. Johns WMD

Eric Stolen, Cape Canaveral National Seashore

Skin Quiz – Spring Warblers and other Songbirds – Andy Kratter, FL State Museum of Natural History

Dinner – on your own

Sunday, April 2 – Jim Eager, Orlando Wetlands, 25155 Wheeler Rd, Christmas, FL 32709. Details to be announced

Florida Young Birders Club Continues to Learn, Grow, and Serve

By Jim McGinity

In the last year, this new state-wide initiative has started to pick up some steam. The monthly “Jay Chat” series has offered quality avian conservation speakers (including our own, Heather Levy) and is building an audience. This program allows the young birders to learn about current bird conservation issues and introduces them to possible careers. The group had its first combined field trip to Orlando Wetlands. Members from all three chapters (Tampa, Orlando, & St. Augustine) were in attendance and all had a good time. The group saw a variety of interesting birds and even had a rare Cassin’s Kingbird flyover and a Red-shouldered Hawk steal a frog from an American Bittern right in front of us!

The members of the club are also starting to learn how to lead bird walks and organize outreach opportunities, like at Circle B Bar Reserve (Lakeland) and Raptor Fest (St. Petersburg).

This is just the beginning for the club and we can’t wait to welcome many more interested young birders into the group. If you would like to help with the effort, donations are welcome through the FOS website and the group could use assistance with a variety of tasks/projects. Contact Jim McGinity at: jmcginity53@gmail.com



Young birders Alex Stern and Archer Woodams co-leading their first bird walk at ‘Raptor Fest’.



A group photo of the first combined outing to Orlando Wetlands.



FYBC member, Charles Law, doing outreach at a Circle B Bar Reserve event.

Brown-headed Nuthatch Updates from Tall Timbers

by Jim Cox

The 22nd year of Brown-headed Nuthatch research is underway on Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy. The steady 5-7 syllable taps of birds excavating new cavities will be heard regularly for the next several weeks. What began as an effort to characterize cooperative breeding behavior in an understudied bird has mushroomed into a long-term data set featuring 14,000+ observations of over 2500 color-marked individuals (top left).

Insights include:

Helpers occur in about 25% of the territories monitored annually but may be found in over 70% of the territories monitored in some years.

Males and females can be distinguished reliably based on their calls ([link](#)).

About 40% of the nests exhibit evidence of extra-pair fertilization where adults mate with individuals in neighboring territories or incestuously with parents. The behavior yields nestmates with a mix of different parents and relationships.

Egg dumping also occurs regularly but comes with deadly penalties if a female is caught in the act ([link](#)).

Males infrequently live for more than a decade while females rarely live more than 4 years. Female mortality is highest during the nesting season when they

are taken by predatory snakes and mammals. Collectively, snakes and mammals account for 60% of nest depredation events (bottom right).

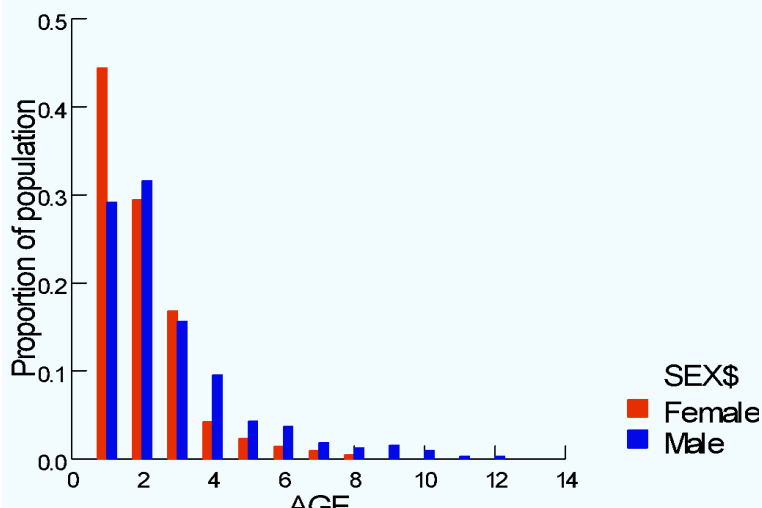
Early literature suggested the shortage of mates that high female mortality creates could be one reason young males stay and help dominant breeders. This was supported by a 5-year experiment we completed in 2017 ([link](#)), but factors such as the improved nesting success that cooperative groups experience, the resources cooperative groups may control, the affiliative acts group members perform (bottom left), and other factors could play important roles as well. Additional field experiments are needed to assess the role that these factors might play as we try to peel back the curtain on this complex behavior.



Color-marked male nuthatch on Tall Timbers (Hot pink over green left). Photo by Tara Tanaka.



Adults with fledged young engaging in social grooming.



Proportion of individuals in different age classes in the TTRS population. Females are red and males are blue.

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)
 GRAY PLOVER, 12± (B)
 STONE, 15+ (B)
 W. LEGS, 1, (B)
 YELLOWNECKS, 1, (C)

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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

Florida BBA II—We Need Your Photos!

The Florida Ornithological Society is excited to announce the upcoming publication of the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II. A beta of the atlas will be available in spring 2023 in both printable PDF and online versions.

Be part of this exciting new publication and your Florida ornithological community by submitting your color photographs of Florida's breeding birds for consideration to be used in the atlas. Only images taken ethically will be considered for inclusion. We are soliciting photos to illustrate the individual species accounts and include them in the species photo galleries; photographs of breeding behavior (courtship, nesting, fledging, etc.) are particularly useful.

If your image(s) are selected, we will notify you to sign a materials release form that allows the use of your image in the Breeding

Bird Atlas II in print and online. The Breeding Bird Atlas II is a product of the Florida Ornithological Society and will be hosted by the University of South Florida Libraries.

Please forward any questions to Dr. Amanda Boczar, amandaboczar@usf.edu, USF Libraries' Curator of Digital Collections, or Dr. Ann Hodgson, ahodgsonphd@gmail.com, Florida Ornithological Society BBA II Editor.

FOS Breeding Bird Atlas II: Photo Submissions
<https://forms.gle/fAfEqP1qQp3sVi2X6>

Thank you for your help!

Amanda & Ann



Bachman's Sparrow (*Peucaea aestivalis*). Photo by Adam Kent.

Florida Field Naturalist

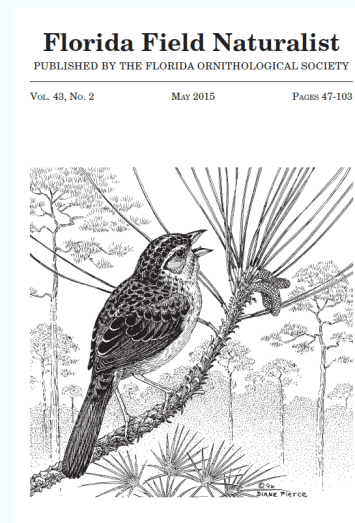
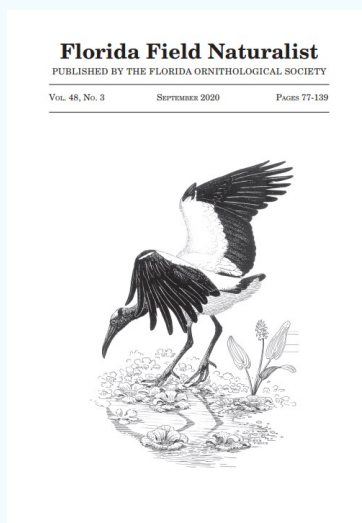
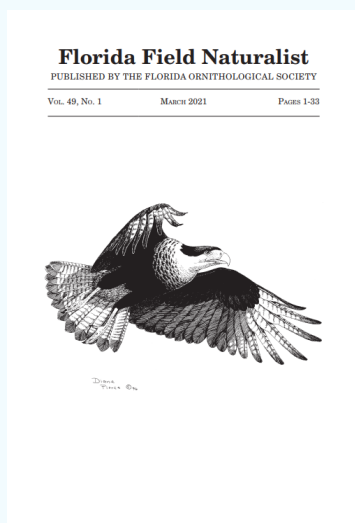
There are 2 new articles featured in the newest issue of the Florida Field Naturalist. (51:1). Below the article titles, authors, and a brief description.

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.



Volunteer Opportunities

JayWatch

[The following is taken directly from the Audubon Florida website.]

Audubon Florida coordinates the Jay Watch community science program statewide. We train and support volunteers to conduct scientific surveys that measure annual nesting success and count the total number of Florida Scrub-Jays at more than 46 sites in 19 counties. The success of the Jay Watch program, and the program's contributions to the recovery of Florida Scrub-Jays, depends upon dedicated volunteer community scientists like you, your family, and your friends.



Get involved!

Attend one of our onsite training sessions held annually across the Florida peninsula. Contact Audubon's Jacqui Sulek for more information about our trainings.

Watch our presentations on Florida Scrub-Jay Ecology and monitoring protocols.

Join a Jay Watch survey team: contact Audubon's Audrey DeRose-Wilson

Sponsors of this program help us train volunteers, support our survey teams, and analyze and compile statewide survey data for use by site managers, wildlife agencies, and researchers.

For more information, check out the website [here](#).

Florida's Breeding Bird Survey

Attention birders! The Florida Breeding Bird Survey is in need of volunteers to complete survey routes this Spring. Each route consists of 50, 3-minute point counts. Of the 81 state-wide BBS routes in Florida, 23 are currently unassigned for 2023. Our goal is to fill as many survey routes as possible by mid-April.

Requirements for participation are:

1. Access to suitable transportation to complete a survey.
2. Good hearing and eyesight.
3. The ability to identify all breeding birds in the area by sight and sound. Knowledge of bird songs is extremely important because most birds counted on these surveys are singing males.
4. New BBS participants must also successfully complete the ***BBS Methodology Training Program*** before their data will be used in any BBS analyses. The training program is available from the national BBS offices and the state, provincial, and territorial coordinators.

Interested in volunteering for a BBS point count in Florida? Please contact our state coordinator, Rob Mulligan, at Robert.Mulligan@myfwc.com for more information.

Photography Submissions



Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*), Flint Pen Strand, Bonita Springs, 2022. Photo by Payton DeMay of Adventurers Design.



American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Bahia Honda Key, Long Pine Key, 2023. Photo by Payton DeMay of Adventurers Design.



Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*), Harns Marsh, Fort Myers, 2023. Photo by Payton DeMay of Adventurers Design.



Burrowing Owls (*Athene cucularia*), NW Cape Coral, 2023. Photo by Payton DeMay of Adventurers Design.