



Santa Fe Audubon Society

Melrose, FL

AUGUST 2026 NEWSLETTER



santafeaudubon

<http://www.santafeaudubon.org>



Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

SFAS NEWS



Please watch for our letter and membership form to arrive in the mail mid September.

Our first program of the season will be ***INSECT ID: WHEN BUG IS NOT THERE*** with speaker Lee Bloomcamp on Tuesday, October 13, 2024 6:45 PM at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall, 204 State Road 26 in downtown Melrose.

You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs. All are welcome!

Complete details of each month's program and field trip will be on page 1 of that month's Kite, starting in October. The Kite will be emailed approximately 1 week before the each program.

Florida Wildlife Care 24-hr. Help line:
(352) 371-4400

FIELD TRIPS 2026 - 2027

Reservations will be required so we can notify you on the event of a date change or cancellation due to weather, etc.

Saturday, October 17, 2026
ORDWAY-SWISHER - Melrose

Saturday, November 14, 2026
SWEETWATER WETLANDS PARK - Gainesville

Saturday, January 9, 2027
ORANGE LAKE OVERLOOK - Micanopy

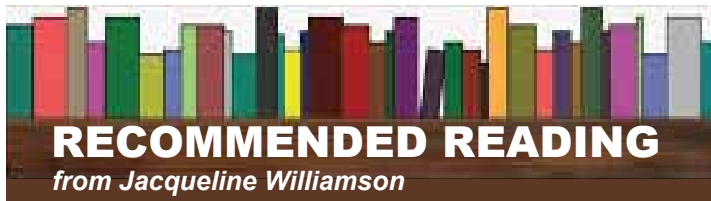
Saturday, February 20, 2027
PLC - OCKLAWAHA TRACT

Saturday, March 20, 2027
CEDAR KEY BOAT TRIP
DETAILS IN EARLY 2027

Saturday, April 24, 2027
MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS
HOUSE TOUR AND HIKE - Cross Creek

Saturday, May 22, 2027
PRAIRIE CREEK PRESERVE - Gainesville

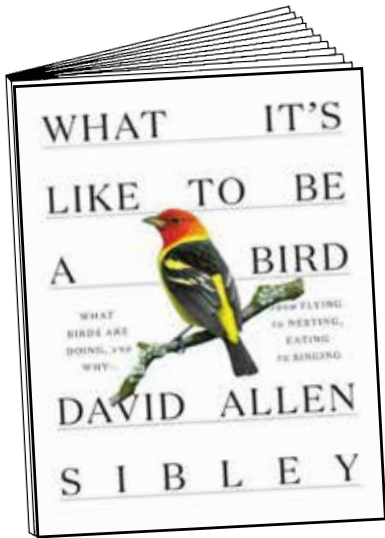
**SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAMS FOR
2026 - 2027 ARE LISTED ON PAGE 7**



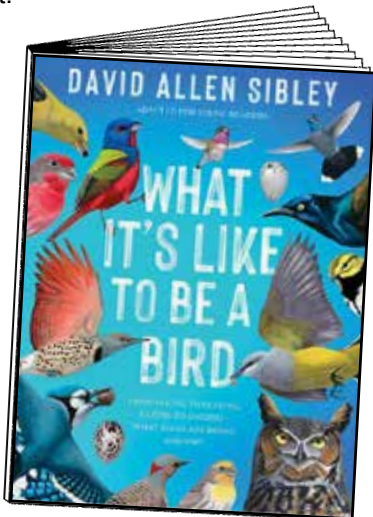
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A BIRD

by David Allen Sibley

In "What It's Like To Be A Bird", David Sibley answers frequently asked questions about the birds we see most often. This informative book is geared for both the novice birder and the bird obsessed. It includes over 200 species with 330 illustrations by the author.



In this new edition, adapted for young readers, David Sibley combines fascinating facts about birds with amazing illustrations- some in full size. This book will delight your budding naturalist.



BIRD OF THE MONTH

FLORIDA GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum* subspecies *floridanus*)



Photo from Audubon Florida website

The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow is a federally endangered bird found nowhere else in the world.

The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow is restricted to the dry prairie ecosystem of central and south Florida. One of four subspecies of Grasshopper Sparrows in North America, the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow does not migrate, living here year-round (endemic). Perhaps the most endangered bird in the continental US, few people have seen or even heard it.

COOL FACTS:

The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow nests in spring (April-July) on the ground, under palmettos or in grass clumps. The female lays 3-5 eggs, and young fledge within 9 to 10 days. The male sings from a low perch to defend territory—about the only time they are readily visible—and helps raise the young. Diet includes seeds and invertebrates. It is thought that most individuals live their entire lives within a few miles of their birthplace.

For more information about the FLORIDA Grasshopper Sparrow go to:

<https://fl.audubon.org/birds/florida-grasshopper-sparrow>

Fun Fact: A group of Grasshopper Sparrows are collectively known as a "plague" of sparrows.



Kestrel Corner

by Bill Chitty

August, 2026

Our last visit of the Kestrel nesting season was July 23rd when we went out and banded two more nestling Kestrels about to leave the nest. Only one of them weighs enough to be outfitted with a GPS tracker that includes the GPS, a battery, a solar recharging system, a cell phone, an antenna, and a harness to keep it all together. The reason this outfit is so expensive is that all together it only weighs three grams (1/10TH ounce). The phone calls in about once a day and gives the GPS coordinates. The Avian Research and Conservation Institute is tracking the young Kestrels' travels. So far, our kestrels have visited every surrounding county. Some have stayed away and others returned to very close to their natal boxes. Our survival rate from egg to fledge was the poorest yet with 32 eggs laid and only 12 hatching and surviving to fledge from the nest. The single most serious problem was rat snakes invading the boxes. In prior years, this has not been a serious problem. For next year, we will be experimenting with different predator guards.

We have started construction of new boxes for next year. Seven boxes will be replaced because they simply deteriorated with age (11 years old) and weather (non-treated lumber) beyond repair. Another six are being replaced a year or two prematurely to put out boxes with camera mounting equipment through the roof. All new boxes will be an extra two inches deep to both discourage raccoons from reaching in for the eggs and possibly be out of range of splatter that has obscured camera lenses in the past. With motion triggered cameras, researchers will be able to more accurately access both diet and predation.

With the rising cost of lumber, screws, wood glue, bolts, and other hardware, a new box and pole costs about \$120. GPS tracking phone tags vary in price around \$1,500. So far, all the labor in construction, placement, monitoring, banding, tagging and tracking has been volunteered. The next nine boxes will have to be replaced in one to three years.



Again, thank you to Dr. Ken Meyer and all the volunteers from the Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) for their collaboration on banding and attaching radio telemetry devices on our Kestrels.

To learn more about ARCI and to donate to the kestrel project visit their website:

www.arcinst.org



Audubon Florida Assembly

The 2026 Audubon Assembly will take place October 15-17 in St. Pete Beach.

Black Skimmer with chicks, Photo: Jean Hall

Join us in St. Pete Beach for Florida's premier conservation gathering, where grassroots leaders from around the state join Audubon's professional staff and partners to grow their knowledge and skills to protect Florida's precious natural resources.

For this year's event, held October 15-17, 2026, at the TradeWinds Resort on St. Pete Beach, our theme is "Protecting What Connects Us — Water, Wildlife, and Community."

2026 Audubon Florida Assembly INFORMATION link

<https://www.audubon.org/florida/get-involved/audubon-florida-assembly>

2026 Audubon Florida Assembly REGISTRATION link

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-audubon-assembly-tickets-1986899263182?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



FALL Horticultural Expo

EDIBLE BY NATURE

PLANT FOR PEOPLE, POLLINATORS & OUR PLANET

Fall Plant Market
Bugs, Birds & More
UF/IFAS Fang Fest
KIDS ZONE
Demonstrations
Food Trucks
Live Music
Free Entry & Parking

October 17, 2026

9 AM - 4 PM

**Alachua County Ag &
Equestrian Center
Newberry, FL**



Featuring Brie Arthur
Author of
Foodscape Revolution



www.ggcfl.org/fallexpo

No Pets Allowed, Service Animals Permitted
An Equal Opportunity Institution

SAVE THE DATE

Flatwoods Fire & Nature Festival Saturday, January 23rd, 2027 - 10 am to 4 pm



Tabling questionnaires will be sent to those on our current list of participants, late October 2026.

The goal of this festival is to educate attendees on the role of fire in our pyrogenic ecosystems and introduce guests to many of the outstanding environmental organizations in this area.

Sponsored by: University of Florida, Florida Forest Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Alachua Conservation Trust, and Partners

Austin Cary Forest -
Roland T. Stern Learning Center
10625 NE Waldo Rd Gainesville, FL 32609

Ally Drake
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
863-273-0629
Alexandra.Drake@MyFWC.com
Joe Vaughn
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
Joseph.Vaughn@MyFWC.com



SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAMS 2026 - 2027

Our programs are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month (October 2026 to May 2027) beginning at **6:45 PM** in Trinity Episcopal's Parish Hall, 204 SR 26 downtown Melrose. You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs. **All are welcome!**

October 13.....INSECT ID: WHEN BUG IS NOT THERE- speaker Lee Bloomcamp

November 10NATIVE PLANTS - speaker Susan Carr

December 8ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLES - speaker Kevin Enge

January 12.....WILDLIFE CORRIDOR - speaker Reed Noss

February 9WOODPECKERS OF NORTH AMERICA - speaker Deb Kainauskas

March 9SFAS Conservationist of the Year, Election of Directors & Photo Show

April 13WILDLIFE RESCUE - speaker Shawn McMahon

May 11.....SPRINGS - speaker Jim Gross

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Sign up for
**The Advocate
Newsletter**

Stay up-to-date on the
legislative session to learn
when you can use your
voice for birds!

Visit fl.audubon.org/advocate to sign up

Audubon | FLORIDA

SCAN TO SIGN UP