



santafeaudubon

<http://www.santafeaudubon.org>



Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

Santa Fe Audubon Society
Melrose, FL
♥♥ FEBRUARY 2026 ♥♥
♥♥ NEWSLETTER ♥♥

SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAM BUTTERFLIES & POLLINATORS

Tuesday, FEBRUARY 10
speaker DR. JARET DANIELS

6:45 PM at Trinity Episcopal 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!



Ruby-throated
Hummingbird



Plasterer Bee



Tiger Swallowtail
Butterfly



Delta Flower Scarab Beetle

The safety of our membership is of upmost importance, we encourage everyone to, please, wear a mask.

Our in-person Speaker Series may be postponed or canceled on short notice due to health related concerns.

FIELD TRIP Saturday FEBRUARY 21

MASTERS TRACT STORMWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

To reduce the agricultural runoff into Deep Creek, various government entities teamed up to purchase and develop the wetlands known as the Masters Tract. Completed in 2006, it has been a huge success, both in reducing the nutrients and attracting a wide variety of birds. Managed by St. Johns County, it draws water directly from nearby farmland and from the adjacent Deep Creek. Efforts to improve and expand are underway. An excellent spot all year, it is known for its variety of birds during the winter. Expect to see our long legged waders, raptors, and water fowl.

After walking the wetland cells, we will stop at the neighboring reservoir and also hope to visit an additional nearby reservoir. These two stops are on level areas and no walking is required.

This trip could be canceled due to low water levels or due to bad weather.

**If you want to be notified of
any last minute changes
email Laura Berkelman at
lberkelman@windstream.net**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL 2
May involve uneven terrain; .5 to 1 mile

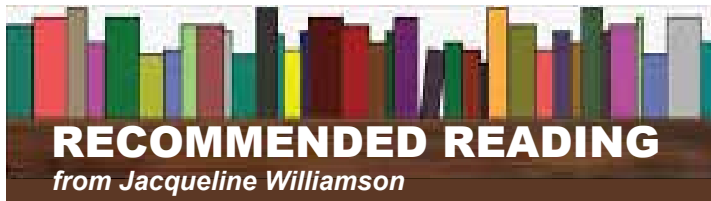
For anyone who doesn't want to walk, there are grassy banks along the unimproved parking lot which has a good view of the first pond.

To caravan from Melrose meet on the west side of
Heritage Park at **7:30 AM**
or Masters Tract at **8:30 AM**
7756 Hub Bailey Rd, Hastings, FL 32145

NO Restrooms at this location!
The closest public restroom is at the
Cora C. Harrison Preserve Trailhead
8965 W. Church St., Hastings

Please be sure to include the field trip name and date along with your name, phone number(s) and e-mail address, in case we need to notify you of any changes.

Field Trip guidelines are on page 4 .

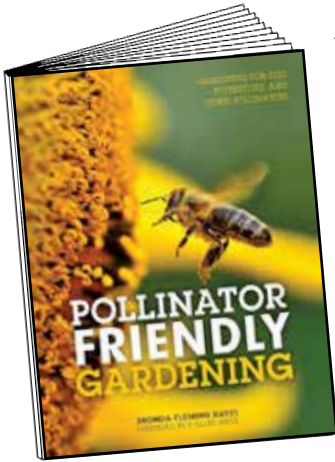


RECOMMENDED READING

from Jacqueline Williamson

POLLINATOR FRIENDLY GARDENING

by Rhonda Fleming Hayes



Are you interested in growing a naturally healthy garden? How about making sure your local environment helps bees, butterflies, and birds survive and thrive?

Pollinators such as monarch butterflies and bees are under threat, and more and more gardeners want to do all they can to create a hospitable space for them. *Pollinator Friendly Gardening* identifies the most visible and beloved pollinators: bees, butterflies,

and hummingbirds, as well as some more unlikely candidates such as ants, wasps, and beetles. It then explains the intriguing synergy between plants and pollinators. This vital information makes it a unique sourcebook to share the ways that anyone can make a yard a more friendly place for pollinators.

GOOD NEWS

The Great Backyard
Bird Count



FEBRUARY 13 to 16

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was the first online citizen science project (sometimes referred to as "community science") to collect data on wild birds and display results in near real time. Birds Canada joined the project in 2009 to better support participation in Canada. In 2013, the GBBC became a global project when it started using the app eBird (world's largest biology related citizen science project) for data entry.

For complete details and rules for participation, go to the website: <https://www.birdcount.org>



4TH ANNUAL RALLY FOR LAND CONSERVATION IN NORTHCENTRAL FLORIDA

HOSTED BY
PUTNAM LAND CONSERVANCY, INC.



Saturday, February 21, 2026

2:00PM to 6:00PM

First Magnitude Brewing Company

1220 SE Veitch St, Gainesville, FL 32601



SOME OF THE LOCAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS ATTENDING:

Alachua Audubon Society
Alachua Conservation Trust
Alachua County Forever & Wild Spaces Public Places
Florida Defenders of the Environment
Florida Native Plant Society, Paynes Prairie Chapter
Florida Trail Association
Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of Little Orange Creek Nature Park
North Florida Land Trust
Santa Fe Audubon Society
and more

For more information contact:
alan.w.hodges@gmail.com

or
plc@putnamlandconservancy.org

BIRD OF THE MONTH

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) band code "SNEG"

Among the most elegant of the herons, the slender Snowy Egret sets off immaculate white plumage with black legs and brilliant yellow feet. Those feet seem to play a role in stirring up or herding small aquatic animals as the egret forages. Breeding Snowy Egrets grow filmy, curving plumes that once fetched astronomical prices in the fashion industry, endangering the species. Early conservationists rallied to protect egrets by the early twentieth century, and this species is once again a common sight in shallow coastal wetlands.



COOL FACTS:

Adult Snowy Egrets have greenish-yellow feet for most of the year, but at the height of the breeding season their feet take on a much richer, orange-yellow hue. The bare skin on their face also changes color, from yellow to reddish.

The oldest Snowy Egret on record was at least 17 years, 7 months old. It was banded in Colorado in 1970 and found in Mexico in 1988.

For more information about Snowy Egrets go to:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Snowy_Egret/overview

Fun Fact: A group of egrets has many collective nouns including a "congregation", "heronry", "RSVP", "skewer" and "wedge" of egrets.



BIRDING ETHICS (including photography)

Practical guidelines that aim to mitigate the stress birds and their habitats face when humans intrude.

- Leave pets home
- Bring binoculars
- Mute cell phones
- Gently close vehicle doors
- Talk softly/whisper
- Keep bird call playback and pishing to a minimum.
- Walk quietly in woods (pick up feet)
- Avoid using a flash when taking photographs
- Keep your distance
- DO NOT flush or disturb birds (especially during spring nesting season)
- Stay on established trails
- Be alert for bird sounds/movements
- Coughing/sneezing? Stay away from group or, if possible, in vehicle or stay home
- Respect other birders
- Wear earth tone color clothing, when possible

SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAMS 2026

March 10..... **SFAS Conservationist of the Year, Election of Officers & Photo Show**

April 14..... **HORSESHOE CRABS** - speaker Dr. Jane Brockmann

May 12..... **FROGS & AMPHIBIANS** - speaker Dr. Jon Johnson

*You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs. All are welcome!
Program topics and speakers are subject to change at the last minute for various reasons.*

FIELD TRIPS 2026

Reservations will be required. Field trips are subject to date change or cancellation due to weather, etc.

Saturday, March 21 Satsuma Springs Easement Property - Satsuma

Saturday, April 18 Orange Lake Overlook - Micanopy

FRIDAY, May 22..... Anastasia Island Beach Bird Nesting - St. Augustine

ABOUT FIELD TRIPS

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED FOR ALL FIELD TRIPS

So we may contact you in case of last minute change or cancelation. Please be sure to include your name, phone number, email and the number of participants.

Please see contact info on page 1, to make your reservation.



- **BRING:** Water, binoculars, hat, sunscreen, rain gear and face covering.
- **WEAR STURDY WALKING SHOES.**
- **STAY HYDRATED, be safe and have FUN!**

SFAS has sanitized binoculars to loan. We all must remember to maintain safe personal distancing. We suggest you bring your face mask just in case it is needed. It is easy to forget during the excitement of bird watching.