



# Hernando Audubon NEWS

A publication of the Hernando Audubon Society

May 2011

## Scholarship Winner Announced

Mikayla Bogulski, a graduating senior at Springstead High in Hernando County, is the winner of this year's Steve Fickett Environmental Scholarship Award. A check for \$1,000 will be presented to Miss Bogulski by scholarship chairman Andy Maywalt at a school ceremony on May 12.

The Hernando Audubon Board chose Miss Bogulski to receive the scholarship because of her high level of academic achievement and her commitment to environmental science. She was the team leader on studies in the Weeki Wachee River, Jenkins Creek and Bayport funded by a Splash! mini-grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

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## Thursday, May 26 Our Annual Picnic at Pine Island

*Time for fun, food and frolicking at the beach!*

We'll gather at Pine Island Park shortly after 5:00 p.m. Hernando Audubon will provide hot dogs. Please bring your favorite covered dish to share, non-alcoholic beverages, and your own place setting. Encourage friends and family to join us: they don't have to be members to attend.

This year, Hernando County Parks and Recreation is charging a very reasonable \$2.00 fee to access the park after 5:00 p.m. If you arrive earlier, the fee is \$5.00.

Be sure to bring a field guide, binoculars and/or a scope. The park is located

at 10840 Pine Island Drive, Spring Hill, FL 34607. Directions: From the intersection of Cortez Boulevard (State Road 50) and Commercial Way (U.S. 19) follow Cortez Boulevard west for approximately 5 miles to where the road forks. Take the right fork onto Pine Island Drive. Continue on Pine Island Drive for approximately 2.5 miles.

In past years we have watched spectacular sunsets from the observation point, and been treated to some birding surprises: one year we saw a Sandwich Tern.

See you there!

## Officers elected to head HAS for 2010-2011 season

At the March 24 meeting, Hernando Audubon Society members elected officers to head the organization for the coming season. They are: Linda Vanderveen, president; Elaine Maywalt, vice president; Lucille Lane, vice president; Bob Keim, secretary; and Kathleen East, treasurer.

A big "thank you" to Eileen Riccio and to Michelle Dachsteiner for their service as vice president and as treasurer respectively during 2010-2011. Eileen also served as chair of the Field Trip committee and will continue on our board in that capacity. Michelle, in addition to having a full-time job, is pursuing an advanced degree at the University of Florida.

## May 21: A special event at the Library

Mary Dowdell, our program chair and a past president, will give a special talk about the life and habits of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker at the East Hernando Public Library (6457 Windmere Road) on Saturday, May 21, at 2:00 p.m. The program is in recognition of the first-ever national Endangered Species Act Day.

The presentation is designed to appeal to all ages, and families with children are particularly encouraged to attend. This will be a fun, hands-on event. Mary will show some of the equipment and tools that she uses to monitor and study these birds so that appropriate conservation plans can be designed and implemented. Please visit our website ([www.hernandoaudubon.org](http://www.hernandoaudubon.org)) for details.

**Hernando Audubon Society  
2010-2011**

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**Do you have a story idea?**

Let us know what it is! E-mail details to [hernandoaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:hernandoaudubon@yahoo.com), with "Newsletter" in the subject line.

**President's message**

Another season has come and almost gone. I never would have anticipated all the changes that have happened over the past months! It has been very disheartening to see the approach taken by some of our elected officials with respect to conservation of Florida's precious natural resources – particularly as relates to our public lands. I hope all of the gains made over the last quarter century to preserve lands for wildlife and future generations of Floridians aren't reversed, and that our legislators realize what is at stake and how much we would lose.

As Audubon members, we already know the value of wildlife, natural systems, and time spent out-of-doors. At the Audubon Assembly held this year, we emphasized "Special Places." What are the special places you love to visit? Maybe it is walking in the nearby state forest, or birding by a lake or river.

One thing we all can do is to take a friend or family member to one of our favorite



places. This doesn't involve a lot of time or money. If all of us take one or two people out to one of Florida's state parks, a state forest, or an Audubon sanctuary, maybe we can instill some love of nature in people who have forgotten what it was like to be happy just watching wildlife hand being at peace.

Our Public Lands: use them or lose them!

*Linda*

**LINDA VANDERVEEN  
CHAPTER PRESIDENT**



**MORE THAN A SNACK.** The concealing plumage on this American Bittern no doubt helped him snag the snake in this wetland at Circle B Bar Reserve in Polk County. See page 4 for a report on the HAS field trip to the reserve. Photo: Myrna Erler-Bradshaw

# Centralia: A brief chapter in Hernando County history

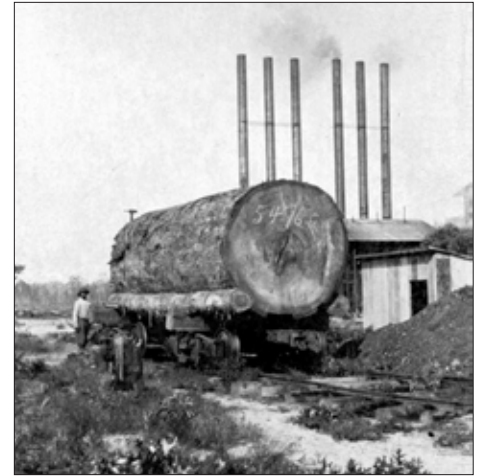
BY SID TAYLOR

Hernando Audubon celebrated St. Patrick's Day with a tour of the old Centralia sawmill site in Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area. Centralia was a short-lived logging town established to harvest 15,000 acres of monster red Tidewater Cypress trees from the Gulf's edge. To drive to Centralia, take U.S. 19 to C.R. 476 (Centralia Road) That intersection is "downtown" Centralia (June 1910 till the Post office closed December 11, 1922).

Known locally as the Central Cypress Company, (J. C.) Turner Lumber Company moved here from Michigan by way of Donna, Louisiana, and Coleman, Florida, where they owned previous mills. About 1200 laborers and their families and support staff, numbering another 300, occupied the "boom town." Loggers, sawyers, skidders, 36 millwrights, blacksmiths, planers, mechanics, expert builders, surveyors, foremen, quarter bosses, trail-cutters, lumber inspectors, and craftsman of many specialties came and left with the mill. Workers hailed from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, Finland, Canada and most U.S. states. Fifty sponge-diving Greeks moved up from Tarpon Springs and were superb lumber stackers.

One thousand board feet of cut cypress contains 309 gallons of water that had to be sun-dried over two or more years before heading to the planing mill to become shingles, laths and construction lumber and/or onto the Northern Tampa Railroad for shipping to Irvington, New York, from Port Tampa. The drying yard was 160 acres with stacks to 15 feet high. Powered by four large steam boilers, two band saws cut 40- foot timber on one line and shorter logs on a second. Narrow-gauged railroad trams were built into the swamps to the west and northwest of the mill. Steam skidders moved the cut logs to the railroad cars; the logs were dumped into a mill pond 155 feet from the double band saws. Cypress logs were pulled up out of a mill pond by steam power and chains. After being cut at the saws, they were moved onto the "green chain" where they progressed towards the drying area via the same mechanism. The final leg was fueled by mule power and wagons on a board runway.

Town amenities included Flicker Palace, the picture show; Hungry None Restaurant; Mrs. George Varn's Hotel; a bakery; Dr. Johnson, M. D., on-site; Dr. Heddick, visiting dentist from



**GIANT CYPRESS.** Mill workers are left in the photo are dwarfed by the size of this log. Within a brief period of about 10 years, trees that had taken dozens of decades to grow were felled, and in turn the community of Centralia itself did not survive.

Historical photo by courtesy of Sid Taylor

Brooksville; and one church for both Protestants and Catholics, which also served as the school. Fresh vegetables and beef from local Annutaliga growers were bought by George Gamble, who ran a Commissary/General Store. Gamble's was stocked with the volume of four railroad cars of merchandise. His first building was 100 feet long by 50 feet wide, and he soon expanded the store with an additional 100 foot by 40 foot space. Both structures were 17 feet high. Merchandise was packed on shelves to the ceiling and rolling ladders were incorporated to pull down goods, both food stuffs and dry goods, and the most current clothing fashions. His store fed and clothed communities from miles around. Gamble's was open for business 15 hours a day and supplied the cracker barrels for the evening get-to-gathers for the men to "chew the fat" over the day's lumber output, which had the capacity to number 100,000 board feet from the double-banded raw timber sawmill operation. The largest cypress taken had to be dynamite blasted to reduce the stump end to manageable size. It provided 5,476 board feet in 1912. The top 20-foot log was displayed on a railroad car for several weeks and is now a favorite photo to depict days gone by in Hernando County.



**MARCH 17 FIELD TRIP PARTICIPANTS** stand where Central Cypress Company mill laborers once worked the huge cypress logs felled in swamps nearby. Little evidence remains of the once thriving mill community known as Centralia. Photo: Sid Taylor

## February, March and April Field Trip Reports

Our season is almost over, and what a great one it has been. We've revisited some favorite birding spots and explored fascinating new ones. We owe a big "Thank you" to our Field Trips Chair, Eileen Riccio. Eileen is an enthusiastic birder, she's always upbeat, and she welcomes suggestions for improving our trips. Eileen is looking for input from members right now to help her put the schedule together for the 2011-2012 season. If there's a birding trip you would like included, please let Eileen know. The best way to reach her is by e-mail: [elriccio@yahoo.com](mailto:elriccio@yahoo.com).

### Feb. 8 – Mosaic Mines by Bev Hansen

When the field trip to Mosaic mines in Polk County was rescheduled on Feb. 8, 15 people participated, including two from Pasco Audubon, two from Oklawaha Valley Audubon, and Chris Allin on one of his regular trips from England.

Paul Fellers ably led the group as he scanned the far corners of ponds to find elusive birds. Collectively we saw 98 species of birds, including 14 species of ducks. The best bird of the day was the female Common Goldeneye spotted by Chris Allin. It is unusual to see this bird so far from salt water.

### Feb. 19 – Circle B Bar Reserve by Wally Handeland

It was a beautiful day for the 33 members and friends to walk the nature trails and be absorbed in the beauty of the marsh environment. We saw 58 species, often many at the same time, all around us. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks filled the sky when a young Bald Eagle approached. A King Rail walked toward the group, out of the reeds onto the road bank in plain view, six feet away, posing for photos. We spotted four American Bitterns (up close) along Shady Oak trail, many egrets and herons, including two Black-crowned Night-Herons, Wood Storks, Northern Shovelers, Blue-winged Teals, Osprey, American Kestrel, Purple Gallinules, Common Moorhens, Limpkins, Sandhill Cranes, an otter, and multiple turtles and alligators. Looking forward to next year's trip!



Kristin Wood, at right, joins Bev and Al Hansen in the search for birds at a Mosaic Mines settling pond. Photo: Vera Huckaby



Snowy Plovers walk the beach at Honeymoon Island.

Photo: Bev Hansen

### Feb. 28 – Honeymoon Island by Bev Hansen

The last day of February we had beautiful weather on the field trip to Honeymoon Island. Thirteen participants saw 52 species. Among the highlights were a close look at five Snowy Plovers, scope views of distant Northern Gannets flying and diving, three Whimbrels on oyster beds, a Reddish Egret dancing and chasing prey in the bay, and two nine-week-old Bald Eagle chicks in a nest.



Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, startled by a young Bald Eagle, make a fast getaway.

Photo: Wally Handeland

**March 17 - Tour of Centralia and trip to Eagle's Nest Spring in the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area by Elaine and Andy Maywalt**



The visit to Eagle's Nest Spring. Photo: Andy Maywalt

Sid Taylor, park naturalist and resident ranger at Tillis Hill in the Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest, led a group of 20 of us on an adventurous and educational tour of the ruins of the sawmill town of Centralia (please see the separate item on page 3 by Sid about this historic site). The hike through the woods to the ruins was followed by a drive to Eagle's Nest Spring, led by Jenny Roberts, a biologist with the Florida FWC. The weather was perfect weather. At the spring, we saw a pair of Swallow-tailed Kites carrying materials for a nest. We guessed that it was moss.

**April 2- Red-cockaded Woodpecker Trip by Bev Hansen**

Thirteen participants observed several very cooperative Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and had a long view of a singing Bachman's Sparrow during the field trip to the Croom Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest on April 2. Other highlights included sightings of a singing Yellow-throated Vireo, a serenading Summer Tanager, and vocalizing Great Crested Flycatcher. A few in the group spotted a Swallow-tailed Kite before it soared out of sight. A bonus on the trip was the participation of Vince Morris, ecology unit supervisor of the Withlacoochee State Forest, who supplied many details about Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and the role of controlled burns in the forest, and pointed out many native plants.

**March 26 - Rainbow Springs State Park by Eileen Riccio**

Eleven birdeers enjoyed this beautiful state park in brisk but perfect weather. The group managed to observe 41 species of birds and one entertaining otter. We no sooner started walking up the sidewalk to the entrance when a Hermit Thrush dropped down to the sidewalk for all to see. Almost as soon as we finished watching the thrush, a Brown Thrasher flew down the sidewalk

*(continued in column at right)*

**April 9- Goethe State Forest for Birds, Butterflies and Carnivorous Plants by Lucille Lane**

Clay Black guided members of Citrus and Hernando Audubon Societies on a fascinating trip through Goethe State Forest in Levy County that gave many of us a "life bird" – the Brown-headed Nuthatch. We saw several bands of these tiny and very active birds flitting quickly through the tops of tall pines. What a sight! We visited a pine where a Red-cockaded Woodpecker had made its cavity, and Mary Dowdell shared information and insights about the habits of this endangered species. Clay showed us four species of carnivorous plants, and before we left the forest we stopped to admire a large patch of Blue-flag Iris that were growing in a roadside ditch. Thank you, Clay, for a great trip!

and landed by the parking lot. Wow, what a start, and we hadn't even gotten to the gate!

The bird of the day was a Louisiana Waterthrush. For a good 10 minutes we watched and photographed it on the sidewalk, turning over leaves searching for caterpillars. We walked back about 15 minutes later and watched him doing the leaf-turning tail-pumping maneuver for another 10 minutes. Very cooperative and entertaining.

Here is the list of the birds seen on this field trip: Great Crested Flycatcher; Eastern Towhee, Carolina Wren, American and Fish Crows, Little Blue Heron (a flock of six with one immature), Northern Cardinal, Hermit Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Pied-billed Grebe, Red-winged Blackbird, Gray Catbird, about 25 Cedar Waxwings, Tufted Titmouse, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, 6 Red-headed Woodpeckers, White-eyed, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, Swallow-tailed Kite, Carolina Chickadee, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Duck with eight ducklings plus another pair, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown-headed Cowbird, Turkey Vulture, Purple Martin, Mourning Dove and Anhinga.



This Louisiana Waterthrush at Rainbow Springs State Park did a leaf-turning, tail-pumping maneuver while the HAS group watched in awe. Photo: Ray Wells



## Our Special Places

BY BOB KEIM, CONSERVATION CHAIR

When the state of Florida recently announced that either: (a) golf courses were going to be built in six state parks, or (b) a number of these gems of our landscape were going to be closed due to budget woes, Floridians got angry and spoke up. And Audubon of Florida created a new category of writings that began appearing both on their website and their blog: Special Places.

Actually, the concept of Special Places was part of the Audubon of Florida 2011 Conservation Action Agenda created in October of 2010 at Audubon Assembly in St. Petersburg. As the original concept put it: “Florida is made a special place by its unique and diverse ecological communities and habitats. The state’s distinctive lands and waters deserve extraordinary protection and stewardship. Florida’s land and water conservation efforts are unique among states by our focus on designating, protecting and restoring habitat and natural communities... and our citizens and visitors are proud of the state’s unique natural heritage and supportive of conservation.”

You are invited to take part in the Conservation Action by identifying your Special Place or Places in this part of the world. Think of those parts of this area that are signature ecosystems, important bird areas or places where you and others have observed or

experienced nature in unique or special ways. How about the wetlands east of Pine Island just before sunrise? Or Jenkins Creek after a soaking summer thunderstorm? And what about the Withlacoochee River basin, when some of our wintering Sandhill Cranes are gathering to start their spring migration homeward?

What is it that makes this part of the world unique? That makes life here special? That reminds us that we live in the middle of an extraordinary part of the world? We’d like to help create a network of conservationists dedicated to protecting the land that makes our part of the world unique and diverse, and one of the best ways of doing so is by inviting folks to name and describe their special places.

If you have such a place, go to Audubon of Florida’s website, and join the Facebook page about our Special Places. That means to visit

<http://fl.audubon.org/specialplaces.html>, follow the directions on how to join the group, and then upload pictures, videos and stories that show why you care about your part of this glorious land. Isn’t it time that being a conservationist was enjoyable, time that we got to tell our own stories about this place we call home? We hope that you’ll take this invitation seriously and join a growing movement that will help us all know Florida a little better.

You know, there’s a stand of longleaf pine just off Old Crystal River Road that hummed with the gentlest of voices while a pair of Swallow-tailed Kites circled round and round overhead. Maybe you’ve seen them; I found them extraordinary last March. And then, there’s this spot on the river...

**Bob**

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PINEWOODS, one of Bob’s favorite places. Share images and information about your favorite place with Audubon of Florida by going to <http://fl.audubon.org/specialplaces.html>

Photo: Bob Keim



STARTING OUT ON A 5000-MILE JOURNEY John Davis paddles through the Everglades. Photo by courtesy of Wildlands Network

## Wilderness adventurer/writer John Davis passes through Nature Coast on TrekEast for Wildlands Network

BY CHRISTINE COCK

You might remember our monthly membership meeting last September when Margo McKnight, executive director of The Wildlands Network, gave a stirring talk about that organization's role in issues of wildlife connectivity and corridors, their accomplishments in creating this connectivity along the Rocky Mountain spine of the continent, and the upcoming TrekEast event.

John Davis, wilderness adventurer and writer, began the first leg of his TrekEast adventure Feb. 3 at Key Largo. When he came through the Nature Coast in early March, he had already logged more than a fifth of his 5,000-mile Wildlands Network-sponsored journey through the eastern United States.

In about eight weeks, Davis had paddled and slogged through swamps, hiked through forests and wildlife refuges, biked through prairielands, and visited with conservationists along the way. In the process, he has been documenting the actions needed to secure landscape connectivity between wildlife habitats – connections that will result in the creation of an “Eastern Wildway” for wildlife. His mission will end late this year on Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula.

When he reached the Nature Coast, some Audubon members met with John and provided information about several issues of great concern, including Hernando County Environmentally Sensitive Lands properties, USDA properties along U.S. 41

and Lake Lindsey Road and the concern about not getting federal funding, water quality concerns (e.g. nutrient uploading, septic systems and effects on the aquifer, rivers, etc), concerns about upland species such as Swallow-tailed Kites, Burrowing Owls, gopher tortoises, among others, and the lack of funding for the Office of Recreational Services (which includes Chinsegut Nature Center and its surrounding property). He was provided with a map of the Withlacoochee State Forest, a HAS newsletter and county bird-finding guide, a Citrus bird-finding guide, and contact information for the Gulf Coast Conservancy.

Spending time with John Davis showed us that he is an incredibly committed individual who is giving eight months of his life to essential work that should result in local conservation group connectivity along the entire East Coast. This will be a strong foundation for wildlands corridor protection. So far, every group along the way has shown him that full funding of Florida Forever is a top priority for us all. Davis is documenting his journey daily through various means designed to make his trek accessible to a growing number of virtual trekkers. Follow him on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/trekeast](http://www.twitter.com/trekeast)); Facebook (“Like” Wildlands Network on Facebook); blogs ([www.wildlandsnetwork.org/trekeast/blog](http://www.wildlandsnetwork.org/trekeast/blog)) and through updating websites ([www.wildlandsnetwork.org](http://www.wildlandsnetwork.org)) and Islands Press, to learn how you can get involved.

## Where do I report the sighting of a banded bird?

BY BEV HANSEN

Researchers who are doing studies on various birds frequently band them with aluminum leg bands with a unique identification number, as well as with colored leg bands. They also sometimes mark the birds in other ways, such as with a tag on the bird's wing, a dye on its feathers, or with a satellite antenna. The hope is that other people will see these marked birds and report the information, including time and place (with GPS coordinates, if possible) where the bird was seen. These reports to researchers will provide valuable information that aids the bird study. Usually, the person submitting the report will receive a response indicating where and when the bird was banded, as well as its age and sex, if known.

Later this summer, please visit the Conservation page on our website ([www.hernandoaudubon.org](http://www.hernandoaudubon.org)) for links to sites where you can report sightings of banded birds.

## Online checklist program provides critical data

BY MARY DOWDELL

eBird is an online program developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society in 2002. It provides a simple way to keep track of birds seen anywhere in the world. The website stores the data, and the result is a huge citizen-science database. eBird's Chris Wood, who spoke at the Florida Ornithological Society meeting held in New Port Richey in March, said that the eBird database currently receives two million entries per month. When science, conservation and birding meet with this technology, it becomes a very good tool for science, education and conservation. Check out their website and play around with it. You can see graphs, maps and more, and you can search by species and location.

What has been seen in your area lately? Find out at <http://ebird.org/content/ebird>



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awareness and  
appreciation of nature;  
to preserve and protect  
wildlife and natural  
ecosystems; and to  
encourage responsible  
environmental  
stewardship.



OSPREY WITH CATCH

Photo: Wally Handeland

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(\*) The September/October issue and Annual Schedule of Events are published in late August.

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