

# TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY



January 2023



Happy 2023! Let's resolve to get outdoors more often to enjoy the wonder of birds — whether from our backyards or on one of our guided bird walks! Between January and May alone TAS field guides will lead 17 South Florida birding forays. To venture further afield, RSVP for one of our international trips (scroll down for details) or join our [4-day, 3-night van tour to the Tallahassee](#) area where we'll be on the lookout for birds such as White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet. All TAS-led outings are open to nature and bird enthusiasts of every experience level. Join us — we'd love to help you add more sightings to your birding wish list in 2023!

To view our entire Winter/Spring 2023 trip schedule visit our [website calendar](#). Please note that [REGISTRATION](#) is required for all trips.

See what other birders are posting and share your birding highlights on our [Bird Board](#) and [Facebook Bird Board](#).

***Photo:** White-tailed Kite is the rarest of Florida's four kite species, but at least two pairs are resident in the Lucky Hammock area. Luis Gonzalez will lead a half-day trip there on January 7.  
By Joseph Galkowski*

### RSVP for a January Field Trip

[Lucky Hammock Birding](#) | Saturday, January 7, 7:30-11am

[North Florida Birding](#) | January 13-16

[Tall Cypress Natural Area Birding](#) | Saturday, January 14, 8-11am

[Southern Palm Beach Birding](#) | Saturday, January 21, 7:30am-3pm

[Everglades National Park Birding](#) | Saturday, January 28, 7:30am-4pm

### RSVP for an International Field Trip

[Kenya Birding and Wildlife Tour](#) | May 13 - 28, 2023

[Charm of the Colombian Andes - Birding the Coffee Triangle](#) | July 23 - 31, 2023

[Peru, Spectacles of Nature: Birding Amazonia and the Andes](#) | Sept. 13 - 23, 2023

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## In Memoriam

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**Sallye Jude**

**May 27, 1926 to December 23, 2022**



Our January newsletter is dedicated to the memory of TAS patron Sallye Jude, a generous philanthropist, a staunch Miami preservationist and cofounder of Dade Heritage Trust.

Sallye was a truly extraordinary community activist who helped make our Conservation Mission possible. She will be much missed.

[Read her obituary in The Miami Herald.](#)

*Photo courtesy of the Jude family.*

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## Featured Events

## Tour the Historic Doc Thomas House

### Saturday, January 7, 1 & 3pm



You're invited to tour our historic Doc Thomas House headquarters. The charming 1932 cottage has recently undergone extensive structural repair. Enjoy a captivating, 1-hour guided tour led by a Tropical Audubon docent. Learn about TAS patron and area pioneer Arden Hayes “Doc” Thomas and Robert Fitch Smith, the architect commissioned to design the charming Florida vernacular cottage, distinguished by its native woods and oolitic limestone features.

**Bonus:** Explore our society’s Bird-friendly pollinator gardens and near-native Steinberg Nature Center grounds.

**Directions:** 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143; limited onsite parking via the SW 55 Avenue auto gate. [RSVP HERE](#) .



*Photo: The Doc Thomas House striking limestone fireplace is notable for its asymmetry.*

## Conservation Concert @TAS

Featuring Take Sixx

Saturday, January 28, 7pm



## Get your Tickets Today!

Let the good times roll once again! Join us under the oaks and stars to kick off the much-anticipated 13th annual Conservation Concert series on Saturday, January 28. Fittingly, the event's founding band, **Take Sixx**, will again inaugurate the wildly popular Winter concerts. Their volunteerism has set the tempo for other local bands to follow in their footsteps on the storied Doc Thomas House Keystone Stage. Take Sixx founding band members Dr. Steve Chavoustie (keyboards/harmonica), Harold Norman (drums) and Dr. Ron Sancetta (vocals) have since been joined by Dr. Enrique Hernandez (bass guitar) and Aaron Whitman (lead guitar), with vocalist Gaby Yidi the band's newest member.

*Also on the playbill:* On-site Food Truck TBA. Wash down dinner with wonderful wines and bodacious brews at the RNDC Donation Bird Bar.

Picnic tables available on a first-come basis.

Gates open at 7pm; music begins at 7:30pm

[Get Tickets HERE](#) : \$10 donation p/p, children 12 and under FREE

Proceeds benefit capital improvements to the Steinberg Nature Center grounds and historic buildings.

**Don't miss a gig! Circle these 2023 ConCon Season dates:**

Saturday, January 28

Saturday, February 25

Saturday, March 25

+ Birdstock, Saturday, April 29

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## Plants for Birds

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**Bird-Friendly Gardening Day @TAS!**

**Dig in Saturday, January 21, 9am-12pm**



Help steward our Bird-Friendly Demonstration Garden and near-native Steinberg Nature Center grounds! Get hands-on experience creating wildlife habitat under the expert guidance of our resident Master Gardeners. Learn how to establish a bird-friendly garden in your own yard, patio or balcony, and get familiar with the principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping. Activities include invasive plant removal, planting native species, selective pruning of native shrubs and small trees, and tidying our network of trails.

[Sign Up!](#)

***Photo:** Volunteers help keep our Steinberg Nature Center grounds beautiful! By Federico Acevedo*

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## Chirping About

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Best Chapter — Best Charity





Tropical Audubon was honored to receive [Audubon Florida's "Chapter of the Year" Award 2022](#) on November 2 from Jacqui Sulek, AF's Chapter Conservation Manager. A committee of seven regional directors, nominated by the state's 45 Audubon chapters, voted on the awardees for education, conservation and Chapter of the Year awards.

It was a wonderful way to cap off 2022, which marked our society's 75th Anniversary. Happily it was a milestone year that brought many successes, with record attendance at bird walks, conservation concerts and the Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program.

Being named ["Best Charity in Miami" by The Miami New Times](#) in its annual "Best of Miami" issue was another feather in our 2022 cap. *New Times* called TAS "one of the most important crusaders for the protection and restoration of South Florida's ecosystems."

TAS President José Francisco Barros observed: "Earning these accolades in our 75th Anniversary year was made possible by the efforts of our amazing staff and dedicated board, who tirelessly beat the conservation drum for birds and South Florida's precious natural resources. I can never thank each of them enough."



**Photo:** *TAS Education & Advocacy Director Stephanie Clements discusses the food web with a group of homeschooled students at Tropical Audubon. By Federico Acevedo*

## Two first-ever Sightings brighten MDC Christmas Bird Count results — Leica Store Miami sponsors Post-Count Party!



Forty-three volunteer birdwatchers participated in the 53rd Miami (Dade County) Christmas Bird Count last month. The highly impactful community science event is part of the annual [Christmas Bird Count](#), an annual census of birds in the Western Hemisphere founded in 1900 and administered by National Audubon Society. The data collected enables Audubon researchers, conservation biologists and wildlife agencies to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America.

The Miami component took place on Saturday, December 17. Counters later assembled at our historic Doc Thomas House headquarters to report their findings and enjoy a [Leica Store Miami](#)-sponsored Pasta & Pizza Party. The day's field work revealed 15,019 birds sighted representing 130 species, which amounted to 1,124 fewer birds than in 2021, but 8 more species. Of the 130 documented species, 121 are on the official Florida State Bird List, while 9 are not and are therefore not considered "countable."

Notably, the 2022 CBC tally included two species not previously recorded on any previous MDC count: **Black-legged Kittiwake** and **Least Flycatcher**. The kittiwake was seen in offshore waters within the CBC circle by the Roberto Torres-led team. (Thanks to Captain Torres for his photo (*above*) of the kittiwake.) The flycatcher was spotted at Flamingo Park on Miami Beach by Luis Gonzalez and Brian Rapoza.

Other unusual species encountered include 2 **Red-throated Loons** and 1 **Louisiana Waterthrush**. The loons were sighted offshore by the Roberto Torres-led team, and their presence on December 17 is only second time the species has been recorded on the MDC count; the first time was in 1997. The waterthrush, found at Greynolds Park by the John Boyd-led team, has been recorded there several times in recent count history; if this trend continues, its "unusual" designation will come to an end.

New high counts were recorded for only two species on December 17: **Bonaparte's Gull** and **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**. Twenty-two Bonaparte's were tallied, besting the previous high of 18 in 1980, and all spotted offshore by the Roberto Torres-led team. The 26 documented sapsuckers bested the previous record of 22 in 2011. Ten teams contributed sapsucker sightings to this new high count. [Click HERE for Brian Rapoza's full report](#).

TAS is extremely grateful to all of the volunteers who made our 2022 count possible, and to **Leica Store Miami**, which so generously sponsored the CBC Miami festivities!





## Celebrating a Record Class of 2022 Tropical Audubon Ambassador Graduates







Graduates of our empowering 2022 Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program (TAAP) gathered on our Steinberg Nature Center grounds December 6 to celebrate their recently completed course work. More than 90 students of every age signed up to participate in our society's award-winning three-month environmental education program, which features online classes, field trips, deep dives with local experts and hands-on advocacy campaigns. A record 60+ students completed the full curriculum, coordinated by TAS Education & Advocacy Director Stephanie Clements.

These newly minted Ambassadors came away with an in-depth knowledge of our region's cornerstone ecosystems: The Everglades, Biscayne Bay, Pine Rocklands and Tropical Hardwood Hammocks. The program's end goal is to empower participants to activate their "Tropical Audubon Ambassador" education on behalf of South Florida's wild places and the indigenous wildlife who inhabit them.

Dozens of full-fledged Ambassadors enjoyed an evening under the stars and oaks, nibbling delicious appetizers provided by [Deli Lane Cafe & Tavern](#), our near-neighbor and TAAP community sponsor. Fellow TAAP Ambassador and legendary Florida folk artist Grant Livingston kindly offered up his signature acoustic guitar performance.

**Would you like to become a more engaged, educated and effective advocate? [Join our waitlist for the 2023 TAAP season HERE!](#)**



## Save the Date



**STORE**  
MIAMI PRESENTS

# BIRD DAY

**February 18, 2023**

Noon-4pm



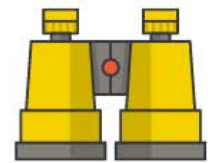
Discover



Craft



Explore



Learn

### Take Flight with Family & Friends

**This event is FREE & open to the Public | Bike or Ride the Metrorail**

Calling budding birders and junior naturalists! Miami youth and their parents are invited to attend our free annual Bird Day festival featuring an engaging afternoon of games, prizes, exploration and educational activities on our near-native Steinberg Nature Center grounds. Bird Day is the perfect venue for school ecology clubs, scout troops and young children seeking an outdoor adventure. “Meet” rehabilitated wild birds rescued by the Pelican Harbor Seabird Station. Take part in Owl Pellet dissection. Craft Piping Plover “chicks.” Hone your binocular skills. Hear author Marta Magellan read her new children’s book: *Flying Jewels, a Hummingbird Story*.

The mid-winter event also celebrates the annual migration of nearly 350 bird species that stop in South Florida to refuel and recharge on their return flight from non-breeding grounds in the Caribbean, South America and Mexico on their way to nesting habitats in North America.

Bird Day participants can also join TAS Field Trip Coordinator Brian Rapoza for a primer on the 2023 Great Backyard Bird Count, a community science initiative that enables birdwatchers of all ages to count birds and help create a real-time snapshot of where birds are located. Learn how your family can participate in the February 17-20 event!

*Additionally:* Nature lovers can explore the trails that thread the restored Tropical Hardwood Hammock and Pine Rockland habitats that comprise the Steinberg Nature Center. History buffs can tour the 1932 Doc Thomas House, which serves as TAS headquarters and is a designated Florida Heritage Site.

[Click HERE to RSVP.](#)

[Tropical Audubon Society: 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, FL, 33143](#)

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## The Birds Thank ...

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**The Birds Thank ...** Republic National Distributing Company, whose kindnesses throughout 2022 made it possible to once again stage a full slate of live events on our Steinberg Nature Center campus. Most recently RNDC provided Bird Bar libations for November's "**Members Gratitude Concert**" — generously stocking the Bird Bar with **Unibroue, Predator, Four Virtues** and more for an extremely appreciative crowd.

RNDC amps up the vino vibe on January 28 for the opening night of the 13th annual **Winter Conservation Concert** season (followed by February 25 and March 25 concert dates).

With the distributor's continued support, our April 12 Spring edition of "**Walk in the Woods with Wine & Whisk**" will feature New World wines from its distinguished portfolio. (**Champagne Taittinger, Albert Bichot Chablis, Château La Nerthe** and **Maison Nicolas** starred at the WWWW 2022 Fall edition.)

Learn more about this foremost U.S. distributor of premium wine and spirits by visiting [www.rndc-usa.com](http://www.rndc-usa.com)

***Photos:** (second row from left) TAS Events Director Amy Creekmur pours for patron and neighbor Roberta; TAS President Joe Barros, pictured with Board Member Marc Kramer, enjoys a cold one from sponsor Unibroue.*



Support TAS while you shop on Amazon! Amazon will donate 5% of the price of eligible purchases to TAS whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. Click here for a direct link. Thank you for supporting South Florida's Voice of Conservation. [Click HERE to use AmazonSmile.](#)

# Support Birds

## Become a Member

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[www.tropicalaudubon.org](http://www.tropicalaudubon.org)



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