



December 2023



For the the past 123 years, enthusiastic birders have teamed up across North America to participate in the annual [Christmas Bird Count](#) (CBC). Coordinated in the U.S. by National Audubon Society, the CBC is the nation's longest-running, bird-related community science project. The early winter bird census spans three weeks, from December 14 to January 5. Area counts of the number of individual birds of each species present within each 15-mile diameter CBC circle are tallied over 24 hours on just one of those calendar dates. Data collected from thousands of CBC circles provides an annual snapshot of the status of wintering bird populations across the U.S. (Access a map of CBC locations [here](#), and RSVP below to participate.) Thanks to LEICA STORE MIAMI for sponsoring our local count!

Before the CBC counts begin, our last 2023 field trip will provide an opportunity to become reacquainted with our region's rich variety of wintering birds. Participants will

also have a chance to spot bird species that can be difficult to find without a guide, including American Flamingo and Bald Eagle on our [Flamingo Area](#) trip.

RSVP for a Field Trip

Flamingo Area Birding
[Saturday, December 9, 7:30am-4pm](#)

RSVP for a Christmas Bird Count

[Miami Christmas Bird Count](#)
Saturday, December 16, 12am-11:59pm

[Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge](#)
Saturday, December 17, 12am-11:59pm

[Homestead Christmas Bird Count](#)
Sunday, December 17, 12am-11:59pm

[Long Pine Key Christmas Bird Count](#)
Tuesday, December 19, 12am-11:59pm

[Kendall Area Christmas Bird Count](#)
Saturday, December 23, 12am-11:59pm

[Coot Bay/Everglades Christmas Bird Count](#)
Saturday, December 30, 12am-11:59pm

[Key Largo - Plantation Key Christmas Bird Count](#)
Thursday, January 4, 12am-11:59pm



RSVP for an International Field Trip

[Ultimate Ecuador: Birding the Amazon and Galapagos Islands](#) | June 12-23, 2024

[Spain - Extremadura, Doñana and Sierra de Gredos](#) | April 28 - May 12, 2025

[Birds and Marsupials of Northern Australia - Darwin, Cairns and Brisbane](#)
August 3 - 16, 2025

***Photo:** Regent Bowerbird. Join our Australia Tour for a chance to see this species.
Photo courtesy of Bellbird Birding Tours*

Conservation News

Protect imperiled Pine Rocklands & Endangered Species

from Theme Park development
Call or Write MDC BCC Now!





TAS members and supporters joined Zoo Miami Ambassador Ron Magill (acting as a private citizen) and hundreds of other protestors at the [November 4 rally](#) to oppose the proposed "Miami Wilds" theme park. This groundswell of opposition to the ill-considered project applied added pressure to our elected officials to do the right thing. But we must continue to urge them to protect endangered species and imperiled habitat.

TAKE ACTION!

On December 12, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners (MDC BCC) will vote to reject or recommit to the lease agreement for the 67-acre theme park, hotel and retail development misleadingly dubbed “Miami Wilds.” The proposed development site is located adjacent to and on Zoo Miami property — land that is considered vital to endangered species and integral to preserving the largest and most biodiverse fragment of Globally Critically Imperiled Pine Rocklands outside of Everglades National Park.

CALL or WRITE the MDC BCC by December 11 and urge them to explore other locations for the Miami Wilds development that are NOT environmentally sensitive! [Click the button below or HERE to send our letter or to personalize your own.](#)

ATTEND the MDC BCC meeting on December 12 and voice your opposition to Miami Wilds theme park! The meeting begins at 9:30am at the Stephen P. Clark Government Center (address: 111 NW 1st St, Miami, FL 33132, 2nd floor Commission Chambers). We recommend that you arrive early and bring your ID for check-in.

Take Action Today

UPDATE: Pelican Nesting Rookery on Biscayne Bay



TAS is working with local conservation groups on a plan to protect a Brown Pelican nesting rookery on Mangrove Island in Biscayne Bay off of Morningside Park. The groups are taking action because on November 16 the City of Miami Commission passed a resolution that fell short of providing the rookery with meaningful protections.

Although the resolution was supposed to protect the marine birds nesting on Mangrove Island, it was stripped of important language that would have established much-needed boating restrictions surrounding the island.

[Read/view the news update by Channel 10 "Don't Trash our Tresasure" reporter Louis Aguirre.](#)

Background: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recently confirmed a nesting rookery of Brown Pelicans on Mangrove Island. Despite FWC posting educational signage to inform the public of the rookery's presence, boats and other recreational watercraft continue to speed very close to the rookery and anchor next

to it to fish. Such actions are highly disruptive to the nesting birds, and can cause nest abandonment. Most alarming, 5 Brown Pelicans and 1 Magnificent Frigatebird were recently found there dead hanging from mangrove trees, entangled in monofilament fishing line with hooks still attached.

Stay tuned for updates and action alerts!

Photo: Brown Pelican by Mark Eden

1,903 birds banded at Cape Florida Banding Station during Fall Migration



The Cape Florida Banding Station (CFBS) on Key Biscayne wrapped up its Fall 2023 banding season with 1,909 birds banded. It was a banner season for Ovenbirds with 321 banded. Notably, Black-throated blue Warblers were banded in proportionally fewer

numbers than Fall 2022, while Worm-eating Warblers were more prevalent and persisted much later in the season than usual. On the rare bird front, a La Sagra's Flycatcher was banded on November 2, the first of this Cuban/Bahamian vagrant species to be banded since 2009!

Read the CFBS [blog](#) for more detailed reports and stunning photos.

CFBS is a community science program in its 21st year, The field research its team of skilled volunteers conduct illuminates the importance of protecting native habitat for migrating songbirds, especially within Miami-Dade County's urban core.

***Photo:** La Sagra's Flycatcher banded on November 2nd by Nicole Rita*

Chirping About

TAS wins Audubon Florida Awards for
Best Conservation & Education programs!



Photo, from left: Audubon Florida Chapter Conservation Manager Jacqui Sulek presented the "Best Chapter Conservation Project" Award at the Audubon Assembly to TAS Senior Conservation Director Lauren Jonaitis, and TAS Education & Advocacy Director Stephanie Clements, who holds up a photo of TAS Events & Grounds Director Amy Creekmur, with Audubon Florida and TAS Board Member Kirsten Hines on hand for the ceremony. By Charles Lee

Audubon Florida recognized our chapter for outstanding work this year in Conservation and Education at its 2023 Annual Audubon Florida Assembly in Tampa October 28.

TAS received the "Best Chapter Conservation Project" Award for our annual Go-Native Plant Sale coordinated by Events & Grounds Director Amy Creekmur. At the June sale, nearly 700 indigenous plants purchased from 4 local native plant nurseries were sold, grossing \$10,000 to help support our chapter's conservation initiatives.

TAS also received the Best Chapter Education Project Award for our signature Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program coordinated by TAS Education & Advocacy Director Stephanie Clements. The free environmental education course is designed for South Floridians 18+ who are interested in becoming more educated, effective environmental

advocates. More than 60 participants earned their Ambassador Certificate in 2022! More than 240 aspiring ambassadors registered for our 2023 program, which focuses on Biscayne Bay, Everglades, Pine Rocklands & Hardwood Hammocks, and features interactive Zoom meetings with local experts, immersive field trips and advocacy campaigns.

TAS Soars on Give Miami Day!



We are ever grateful to our supporters who were the wind beneath our wings on Give Miami Day, November 16. We surpassed our previous \$43,421 Give Miami Day record, raising **\$46,741!** More happy news: The Miami Foundation will give us a partial match. These much-needed funds will support our vital Mission work: Conserve and restore natural South Florida ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

We also shattered our previous record of 245 individual donors, tallying **365 donors!** That number is extremely meaningful because we advocate 3-6-5 for the Birds, the Bay and the Glades. All in, our unique donor number landed us in the Top Ten among

nonprofits in our size category, underscoring that it's your powerful grassroots support that sustains our organization.

Plants for Birds

Bird-Friendly Gardening Day @TAS!

Dig in Saturday, December 16, 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: *Native Coral Honeysuckle attracts local pollinators.*

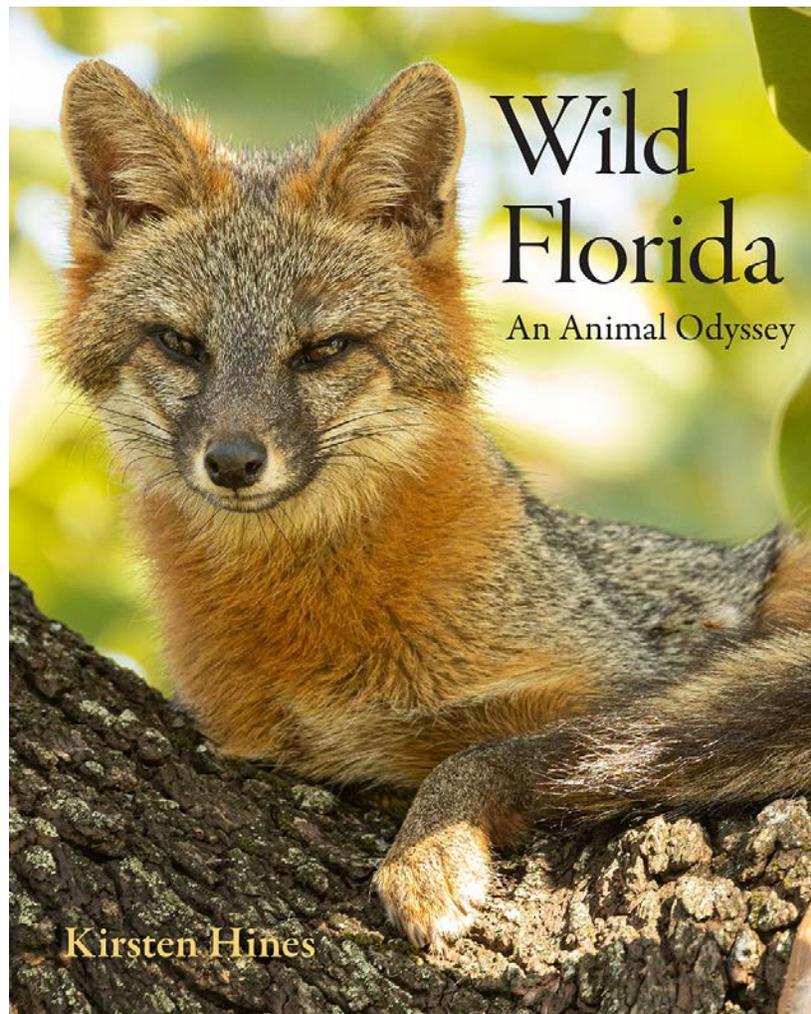
Green Things to Do

Book Talks:

Wild Florida: An Animal Odyssey by Kirsten Hines

December 6, 7pm @Books & Books, Coral Gables

December 14, 6:30pm @Zoo Miami



Florida is widely known for its alligators, panthers, pythons and pesky mosquitoes, but did you know it also has crocodiles, bears, scarlet-striped snakes and more species of fireflies than any other state? Join Tropical Audubon Board Member, author, wildlife photographer and conservationist Kirsten Hines for a visual and descriptive journey deep into Florida's wilds to explore the state's impressive array of animals as captured in her latest book [Wild Florida: An Animal Odyssey](#). From salamanders in the temperate Panhandle, to endemic red widow spiders in Central Florida's scrub, and tropical nesting birds in the Florida Keys, Kirsten will take you through Florida's myriad habitats, as well as closer to home to meet the endangered Miami Tiger Beetle and Florida Bonneted Bat.

[RSVP HERE](#) for Kirsten's talk at Books & Books, Coral Gables, December 6, 7pm

[RSVP HERE](#) for Kirsten's talk at Zoo Miami, December 14, 6:30pm

About the Author:

Kirsten Hines aims to inspire nature appreciation and conservation action through wildlife photography and writing. Florida-based and globally travelled, she lectures, leads photography workshops, and guides wildlife experiences, sharing insights from her years as a biologist and environmental educator. Her writing and photography have appeared in numerous publications and exhibitions. Her previous books on Florida's nature and history include three on South Florida's national parks and the award-winning gardening reference, *Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens*.

Century-old Gables homes to anchor
The Villagers Holiday House Tour
Saturday, December 9, 10am-3pm



2023



Holiday House Tour

"100 Years of History"
Coral Gables' Homes of 1923
Saturday, December 9, 2023
Tour: 10 am - 3 pm
Boutique: 10 am - 4 pm

Tickets: \$65
Available at:
www.thevillagersinc.org
or scan QR for Eventbrite

Proceeds go toward preservation & protection of Miami-Dade historic sites.

“100 Years of History” will showcase a curated selection of Coral Gables homes built in 1923 and beautifully decorated for Christmas during The Villagers Annual Holiday House Tour. Villagers members will serve as docents to share each home’s distinctive history and features.

Notable among the homes celebrating their centennials is the historic Merrick House, the residence of visionary City Beautiful founder George Merrick. A Gift Boutique at the historic Coral Gables Woman’s Club (1001 East Ponce de Leon Blvd) will showcase the unique works of artisan makers, vintage jewelry, hand-made angels and a quilt raffle. The boutique will be open 10am to 4pm, and tickets are not required for entry. A Rita Tennyson Pop-up café will offer food for purchase.

Tickets are \$65 and are available from Villagers members via Eventbrite [here](#).

Proceeds support the preservation and protection of historic sites in Miami-Dade County, including the historic Doc Thomas House. The Villagers work to preserve the cultural and architectural heritage of historic sites and neighborhoods through educating, advocating, fundraising, restoration, and documentation.

Gift a TAS Membership



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Set your favorite bird enthusiast's heart aflutter with a Membership to Tropical Audubon Society, voted Best Miami-Dade charity by *New Times*. Your gift recipient will be joining our grassroots community of advocates who help keep “South Florida's Voice of Conservation” clear and strong. By giving a Gift Membership, you will directly support

our Mission: “Conserve and restore South Florida ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats.”

Choose from our adorable electronic gift cards when you click [HERE](#) .

Gift a TAS Membership to Someone Special

The Birds Thank ...



The Birds Thank ... The Everglades Foundation for its generous support in 2023. Its significant contributions helped fund our Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program, communications outreach and other programming that fuel our Mission: Conserve and restore South Florida ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats. The Everglades Foundation is dedicated to restoring America's Everglades through science, advocacy and education.

Support Birds

Become a Member

www.tropicalaudubon.org



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