
TROPICAL
SOCIETY

AUDUBON

SOUTH FLORIDA'S
VOICE OF CONSERVATION



December 2022



For the past 122 years, teams of enthusiastic birders have joined together every December across North America to participate in the [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. This 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 throughout the country. (A map of CBC locations can be accessed [here](#)). To participate in a local CBC, RSVP below.

RSVP for a Christmas Bird Count

[Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge](#) Friday, December 16,
12am-11:59pm

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

[Key Largo - Plantation Key Christmas Bird Count](#)
Saturday, December 17, 12am-11:59pm

[Homestead Christmas Bird Count](#)

Sunday, December 18, 12am-11:59pm

Long Pine Key Christmas Bird Count | Monday, December 19,
12am-11:59pm

Kendall Area Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 24, 12am-11:59pm

Coot Bay/Everglades Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 31, 12am-11:59pm

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
September 13-23, 2023

Featured Events

Tour the
Historic Doc Thomas House
Sat. December 3, 1 & 3pm



You're invited to tour our historic Doc Thomas House headquarters. Our 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](#) .

Pop-Up Gift Shop @TAS

Give/Get Bird-themed Holiday Gifts,
Cards, Local Honey

Saturday, December 17, 11am-3pm



Looking for unique holiday cards to give or send?! We have

you covered with gorgeous Bird and Nature note cards by Artist Louise Gardner Schwartz starting at \$4. Her lively renderings feature a bevy of indigenous and migrating South Florida birds, including the sexy pink Flamingo and the sensational Roseate Spoonbill!

Stuff stockings with "birdiful" enamel pins featuring fabulous Florida resident birds — Great Blue Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, Brown Pelican, Florida Scrub Jay (pictured above), Snail Kite — \$15 each or score all five for \$60. These unique pins were custom-designed for TAS by artist Kate Dolamore, [The Little Nuthatch](#) blogger.

To sweeten up your Holiday Brunch or surprise your sweetie, procure a bottle of our wild “Tropical Honey” (\$12 each) produced in our on-campus beehives and harvested/bottled by Wildlife Author, Artist, Beekeeper and TAS Board Member [Kirsten Hines](#).

These gorgeous "local" gifts are available for purchase exclusively at our historic Doc Thomas House headquarters, 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, FL 33143, on Saturday, December 17, from 11am-3pm. A portion of all sales benefit Tropical Audubon Society.

Cash or checks are preferred.

Chirping About



We are ever grateful to our supporters who were the wind beneath our wings on Give Miami Day, November 17. We surpassed our previous Give Miami Day record by more than 15 percent, raising \$43,421! 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.

Plants for Birds

Bird-Friendly Gardening Day @TAS!
Dig in Saturday, December 17, 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!*

Conservation News

Update on the South Dade Logistics and Technology District Development



The Miami-Dade County (MDC) Board of County Commissioners (BCC) overrode Mayor Daniella Levine Cava's VETO on November 15 by voting 8-4 to once and for all approve the South Dade Logistics and Technology District Development. As a result, the Urban Development Boundary (UBD) will be expanded to accommodate developers who plan to build an industrial complex in our county's irreplaceable green space.

TAS and our conservation allies were successful in reducing the size of the project from 800 acres to less than 400, but we remain deeply disappointed with the incomprehensible outcome. This project threatens our region's quality of life, Everglades Restoration and Biscayne Bay health, and also

sets a dangerous precedent for further development beyond the established UDB.

The Commissioners who voted to approve this ill-conceived project (Chairman Pepe Diaz, Vice Chair Oliver Gilbert, Commissioners Jean Monestime, Keon Hardemon, Rebeca Sosa, Raquel Regalado, Kionne McGhee and Javier Souto) have put Biscayne Bay, the Everglades and our drinking water supply at risk.

***Photo:** Reddish Egret by Melissa Rowell*

TAS & Partners Sue to Protect Miami Tiger Beetle



TAS and our partner conservation groups [sued](#) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on November 16 to push the agency to protect endangered Miami tiger beetles by designating lifesaving critical habitat. The proposed critical habitat includes areas in Miami's Richmond Pine Rocklands, which are under [imminent threat](#) from development. The Miami tiger beetle is currently known to occur in only two populations, separated by urban development, in Miami-Dade County.

The Service listed the beetle as endangered in 2016, but did not concurrently designate critical habitat as required by the Endangered Species Act. Following [legal action](#) by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Service finally [proposed](#)

critical habitat for the beetle in 2021, but the agency has failed to finalize those protections.

Animals with federally protected critical habitat are more than twice as likely to be moving toward recovery than species without it. The action to sue the Service will hopefully compel it to officially finalize critical habitat for the Miami tiger beetle.

Agency Proposes Critical Habitat for rare Bonneted Bat



Following a court-ordered [agreement](#), on November 22 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [proposed](#) protecting nearly 1.2 million acres of critical habitat for the endangered Florida bonneted bat. The indigenous bat faces devastating habitat loss from climate change and urban sprawl.

Although we are pleased that the Service is moving to protect more than 1 million acres of critical habitat for the bat, it excluded crucial areas threatened by imminent development and certain disturbed or otherwise human-modified areas that are known to support the survival of the bat.

Read more in the [press release](#) by the Center for Biological Diversity.

***Photo:** Florida Bonneted Bat by Dr. Melquisedec Gamba-Rios*

2,365 birds banded during Fall
Migration

@Cape Florida Banding Station



The Cape Florida Banding Station (CFBS) on Key Biscayne wrapped up its Fall 2022 banding season with 2,365 birds banded. It was a huge season for American Redstarts, with 464 banded, one of which was a returnee from spring; the total was nearly 100 more than the previous record of 368 banded in 2020. Black-throated Blue warblers and

Ovenbirds were also banded in large numbers this year. On the rare bird front, a Bell's Vireo was banded, only the second of its species in 20 years!

Read Michelle Davis's [blog](#) for more detailed reports and stunning photos.

CFBS is a community science program under Tropical Audubon Society's wing since 2020! The field research conducted by CFBS and its team of skilled volunteers illuminates the importance of protecting native habitat for migrating songbirds, especially within Miami-Dade County's urban core.

***Photo:** Bell's Vireo by Miriam Avello.*

Green Things to Do

Villagers' Holiday House Tour Returns

Quilt honoring Tropical Audubon up for Raffle!

Saturday, December 10, 10am-4pm



The City Beautiful's 1920s residences will be center-stage during the Villagers' Annual Holiday House Tour on Saturday, December

10. ***Gables Gems from the Roaring '20s*** tour will offer patrons a peek inside a few of George Merrick's iconic themed Villages, as well as tours of homes built in the Mediterranean Revival style that defined the then-new city. [Click here to purchase tickets.](#)

After a two-year, pandemic hiatus, the return of the House Tour marks the 37th year The Villagers have hosted the popular event.

The group has also brought back its holiday Quilt Raffle tradition. This year's one-of-a-kind quilt is titled "*Birds of a Feather,*" (pictured above with quilter Joan Bounds (right) and Villager Marlin Ebbert) a nod to our conservation mission and historic Doc Thomas House (DTH) headquarters. The pattern of birds sitting in a tree is a symbolic of the long-time support The Villagers have given TAS for various DTH repair and restoration projects.

Raffle Tickets can be purchased from Villagers members for \$5 each in advance of the Holiday House Tour.

Don't know a Villager? You may purchase Raffle Tickets by mail by December 6. Remit **\$5 per ticket** (*checks only, no cash*) to:

***Alexis Ehrenhaft
2221 Country Club Prado
Coral Gables, FL 33134***

CHECKS should be made out to The Villagers, Inc. Please indicate the number of tickets on the memo line and be sure to include phone and email contact information in case you are the lucky winner!

Raffle ticket holders will not need to be present at the drawing to win.

Curated vendors, hand-made Angels, and food trucks will also be staged along the route.

Gift a TAS Membership



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Make your favorite bird enthusiast's heart flutter with a 1-year membership to Tropical Audubon Society, our region's original grassroots conservation organization. They will be joining our growing community of advocates working together to 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 cards when you click [HERE](#) .

Gift a TAS Membership to
Someone Special

The Birds Thank ...



The Birds Thank ... Austin Matheson for rescuing and carefully reconstructing our seriously degraded vintage Beverage Service Bar, which once again serves as a staging station for special events held under the chickee.

But by no means does the roughly hewn service bar reflect his furniture-making mastery.

The High Pines resident and TAS patron is an esteemed Fine Furniture Maker who has also served as an adjunct furniture design professor in the School of Architecture at University of Miami.

Austin's exquisite pieces range from Traditional American, Colonial West Indian, Shaker and Arts and Crafts to Mid-Century and Modern styles. His formal training in 18th-Century furniture armed him with the carving, veneering and turning skills needed to craft tomorrow's heirlooms. From simple to ornate, every museum-caliber piece is built to the client's precise specifications using the highest quality material, joinery and finishes.



Write austin@finehandmadefurniture.com or visit the [Website](#) to commission that perfect piece you've long been seeking.

Supporting those vendors who support TAS is an easy way to contribute to our Mission. The Birds will thank you!

Furniture Photo: *Water Table, Dutch West Indian Sideboard Mahogany, Crotch Mahogany veneer, Holly, Poplar 60"L X 40"H X 24"W. This is a reproduction of a sideboard built in the early 19th Century in Curacao, Netherlands Antilles. Combining early European design and island motifs, this piece is a wonderful example of the unique style of furniture coming from the Caribbean in the 18th and 19th centuries.*



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.](#)

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Become a
Member

www.tropicalaudubon.org



Tropical Audubon Society
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Miami, FL 33143
United States

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