

2/719

We left for the 2019 Florida trip between arctic blasts. When we left Franklin at 5:55 AM on Sunday, 12\27\19 it was -4 degrees. By the time we arrived at Matt's place in Smyrna, about 10 hours later, the temperature had risen to 55 degrees, a swing of 59 degrees. Although I have no numbers to back it up, it seemed that we saw fewer hawks along the road as on other trips. It was only in the southern parts of Illinois that we began to see a few; perhaps they were affected by the arctic blasts as well. We did see a northern mockingbird when we stopped for breakfast in southern Illinois. No tachytherm that first day of driving, unless you count the slowdowns due to road construction.

We enjoyed Matt and Nicole's hospitality for a couple of days and left Tennessee at 8:08AM on 12/29/2019. It was 37 degrees when we left for Tifton, GA, where we spent the night. Within a couple of hours of the time we left Tifton on 12/30/2019, we arrived at the Florida welcoming center. There were few birds at the welcoming center but we were greeted by common grackles and house sparrows. As we drove on to Kaczmarek's, we saw a lot of cattle egrets, as well as American crows, great egrets and anhinga's, mostly along Hy52.

Mallard, little blue heron, muscovy ducks and white ibis were all seen in the pond at Kaczmarek's. On 1\30\19 I noticed that both the American and the fish crow were flying over the pond. We spent two days with the Kaczmarek's. On 1\31\19 we went out the Hudson Beach area and drove around a bit. We saw cormorants and a brown pelican around the beach. We also saw some gulls; I suspect both laughing and ring-billed, although I didn't make any attempts at identifying them.

We drove on to the new condo on the 1st of February. The condo certainly lacks some of the niceties of our last one, but the location on the channel makes it much more interesting, biologically. Viewed from the lanai, the channel had double-crested cormorants, great egrets, great blue heron,



great blue heron, brown pelicans, turkey vultures, anhinga and American crows (I would have figured fish crows). Several large alligators were also seen. They seemed to enjoy basking along the edge of the channel at low tide.

I had my usual Fakahatchee fix on the morning of 2\2\19. Not a bad morning; 25 species. In my opinion, the strand had a fresh feel to it; as if last year's storms renewed it. There seemed to be a lot of fresh active growth. Royal ferns were sporulating and I saw a very interesting foliose type lichen on one of the royal palms. Among the plants in bloom were the lizard's-tail (*Saururus cernuus*) and the blue morning glory (*Ipomoea indica*).

While I was on the boardwalk, Ann texted me to say that I was missing quite a sight back at the condo. Reportedly, hundreds of birds, mostly egrets, had apparently roosted in the mangroves across the channel and were flying out in masses as local boaters disturbed them. Later that morning, as Ann and I were organizing our to-do list, a group of about a dozen white pelicans flew over the channel.

The next morning (2/3/19) I got up before 7:00AM and watched the sunrise over the channel. I expected to see hundreds of birds (mostly egrets) in the mangroves as it got light. To my surprise, there were only 6-10 great egrets in the bushes and several brown

pelicans splashing about in the water. As I watched, though, great egrets began to fly into the area and perch in the mangroves. Before long, there were 50-60 egrets within my peripheral view and many more further down the channel. Apparently, the egrets were not roosting in the mangroves at night but rather gathering there before heading out to their feeding areas. I continued to watch (along with Shelly, Dan and Ann, and finally listed 15 species for the morning. This phenomenon was not repeated on any of the of the mornings to the date of this writing.

Later, Shelly and Dan left to visit one of Shelly's work associates and Ann and I went on the first of our Sunday routines. On the way, I spotted a crested caracara in the usual place it was spotted last year (in a tree along the west side on Hy41 near the intersection with Six L's Farm Road.



I went to the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary with Shelly and Dan on 2/4/18. On the way, we saw a group of a dozen or so limpkins, the first seen this year. They were along the side of Immokalee Road. We also saw a group of wild turkeys in one of the yards near the sanctuary. Water levels were high at Corkscrew and the long-legged waders were conspicuous by their absence. I recorded 20 bird species for the trip but the list was especially notable because it included a great sighting of an American bittern. Dan was actually the first to sight the bittern as it flew into a relatively clear area close to the boardwalk. This was shortly into our walk and I got good, close-up photos of it. When the bittern moved to a new spot, it seemed to pat the vegetation down; either making for a stable foothold or disturbing possible food. Dan also spotted a black racer near the trail. Near the end of the walk, we had nice views of painted buntings near the Audubon center.

Corkscrew was interesting even without a large number of birds. Besides the eastern grey squirrels, we had great looks at several otters as well as a number of raccoons seemingly feeding off of the fruit of the palm trees. We also heard a very loud roar of an alligator near the boardwalk.

I noticed several plants in bloom along the walk and updated the plant database accordingly. Among these were the arrowleaf, grass-leaved (*Sagittaria graminea*), arrowleaf, lance-leaved (*Sagittaria lancifolia*), aster, climbing (*Ampelaster carolineatus*), beggar-ticks (*Bidens alba*), moonflower (*Ipomoea ziba*), string Lily (*Crinum americanum*), water Pepper (*Persicaria hydropiperoides*) and pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*). There was also yellow-flowered orchid in bloom. I think I've seen this orchid in the past that I identifies as dingy-flowered star orchid (*Epidendrum amphistomum*).

The next morning (2/5;19) I sighted a spotted sandpiper across the channel from the condo before we went out for some really good eggs in Everglades City. After breakfast we drove to the area where there had been a nest of great-horned owls last year. The nest was active again this year and there were two young owls in it. I got a couple of fairly good pix but I'd like to go back for better shots. Later in the day, as I was updating these notes, I notice a ring-billed gull outside the condo.

Before dusk, Shelly, Dan and I went to the TenK Marsh Trail to check out the birds and see the sunset. This was my first visit to TenK for the year. Water levels appeared to be pretty high. Hundreds (or tons, according to Dan) of white ibises were seen, apparently coming in to roost for the night. We saw sixteen species during our stay. This brought the trip list thus far to 56 species. This is a bit behind last year but I have yet to see any of the warblers or other song birds. Before their departure today (2/7/19) I accompanied Shelly and Dan for a walk along the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk. It was a relatively quiet morning for birding, but I did add an eastern phoebe as a trip mark.

2/10/19

I met Gisela and Doug Drysdale on the morning of 2/8/19 and we birded Eagle Lakes Park for several hours. Vegetation growth seems to be filling in much of the open water areas and the birds didn't seem to be as numerous as in previous years. I did finally begin to see a few warbler species (4). We saw a total of 37 bird species (including 9 trip marks for me), bringing the trip total to 69 species (including the loggerhead shrike I saw near the condo on the way back).

Later in the day Ann spotted two manatees in the channel outside of the condo. There were also several large alligators in the mudflats produced by the low tide. The huge accumulation of egrets seen earlier has not reoccurred but there is always some activity in the channel. Great blue herons, great egrets, brown pelicans, double-crested cormorants, both vultures and the large alligators are daily sightings.

I usually visit the TenK marsh trail on the second morning of our Florida trips. This year, because of Shelly and Dan's visit, I didn't get there until the morning of 2/9/19



(although Shelly, Dan and I did walk there briefly at sundown on 2/5/19). . On the morning of the 2/9/19, there were lots of great egrets at the observation tower as well as some wood storks and an assortment of other birds. Three roseate spoonbills were also seen in the group as I was leaving the area and a small flock of white pelicans later joined the other waders. I recorded 27 bird species in BD for the morning, including three trip marks. One of the trip marks was the ring-necked duck which was seen swimming

among a group of coot. I had some doubts about the ducks, wondering if they might possibly be scaups, but I met a woman from Ohio who also identified them as ring-necks. Later in the day, Ann and I went to the Everglades Seafood Festival and saw one of the adult great horned owls hunkered down in its nest. I'm not sure it was enjoying all of the commotion of the festival.



Today was a departure from our usual Sunday routine. After breakfast, Ann and I took a short ride through Sugden Park. There was an accumulation of gulls there that included several ring-billed gulls and a number of immature herring gulls. Then we drove down Shell Island Drive and walked the boardwalk of the Briggs nature center. Ann described a bird sound that she was hearing. I immediately thought of the eastern towhee but I, being without my hearing device, could not hear it. On the way back to the parking area, though, I did see a towhee fly into one of the trees nearby.

Then we walked the TenK marsh trail. I was wondering if the large number of wading birds I had seen on the previous morning tended to stay in the area all day. It was going on noon as we approached the observation tower, and few birds were seen. Ann did have an opportunity to see a roseate spoonbill, though. While we were there, I photographed a huge love vine draped over one of the trees near the tower.

2/12/19

I drove down Janes Scenic Drive on the morning of 2/11/19. Two deer crossed the road near Gate 2 (abt. 2.3mi from the 0 mile marker). I stopped and walked a bit at Gate 3. There I noticed a small white-flowering plant in bloom. The flowers had 7, possibly 6, petals, each with a sepal slightly longer behind it. The leaves were opposite and entire and somewhat lance-shaped. This plant remains unidentified at this time but it may be one of the rose-gentians, possibly *Sabatia calycina*. I also saw the floating bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*) and the lance-leaved arrowhead (*Sagittaria lancifolia*) in bloom at this site. A small white-flowering plant with opposite leaves with some development of the axillary buds was also seen. The flowers of this plant were small and clustered in a terminal inflorescence. The plant appeared to be one of the miterworts, perhaps *Mitreola petiolata*, based on its leaf shape.

One of the primrose willows (*Ludwigia* sp) was also seen at various locations along the road and one of the goldenrods (*Solidago* sp) was also seen. The flowers of this goldenrod were in a terminal plume. The leaves were opposite and linear with much development of the axillary buds which appeared as a mass of bushy leaflets. There were also larger, longer leaves in a whorl near the base of the plant. The stem of this plant was round and, seemingly, smooth. I attempted to key this plant with Wunderlin & Hansen (2011) but my photos did not show all of the characteristics needed to distinguish the species of *Solidago*. Of the photos shown on the website for the [Institute for Regional Conservation](#) supposedly found in the Fakahatchee Strand, my photos most closely resembled those of *S. laevenworthii* or *S. sempervirens*. It appears that the goldenrods are not only a problem in Wisconsin. A small, yellow-flowered plant of the pea family was also seen. This plant was a vine, twirling around some of the herbaceous plants growing along the roadside. Its leaves were compound, each with three leaflets whose center leaflet had a longer petiole than the other two. Blue porterweed (*Stachytarpheta ja-*



maicensis) was also seen in bloom along the road, as was the string lily (*Crinum americanum*). Janes Scenic Drive was still closed to vehicular traffic beyond the East Main Gate (about 6 mi from the 0 mile marker). I walked the East Tram for a short distance; about to the end of the royal palm stand. There was lots of water and quite a bit of water lettuce growing in it. I don't remember seeing that in the past. Fruiting plants of both marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*) and myrsine (*Myrsine floridana*) were seen along the walk. Few birds and no trip marks were seen on this morning. Those birds seen were recorded in BD.

I went to Kirby-Storter Park on the morning 2/12/19. I was hoping to see a few of the warblers which, thus far, have been illusive. Unfortunately, the only two that I saw (YRWA and PAWA) had already been marked for this trip. It was a pretty good morning, though. In spite of the fact that I got no new tip marks, I did see 22 species for the location and recorded them in BD. I also saw a



few wildflowers in bloom. It appears that I may have lost some of the data in the Florida Plants database last year. I'm not sure how it happened but I will need to check the database after my various trips this year and check to see the "locations" are completed to date. I did this for the plants seen in bloom this morning. I must also review [FloNotes 2018](#) and use it to recover as much of the lost data as possible.

On the way back to the condo, I turned into the Burns Lake camp ground. It's a neater area than I remembered. Several plants were in bloom there as well and I decided to add this location to my database and update it with the morning's findings. One of the plants that I saw in bloom along

the road leading to the campground was a small-flowered plant that was immediately recognized as one of the composites. The flower heads had 9-10 ray flowers, each of which was divided into three sections. The disc flowers were also yellow and the seemingly older ones were somewhat conical. The plant had a crawling habit with widely separated, opposite leaves. These were finely toothed and sparsely hairy on the underside. The stem was reddish-purple with sparse hairs appressed to the stem. The plant was identified with Hammer (2014) as the oppositeleaf spotflower (*Acmella oppositifolia*). The identification was confirmed with the iPhone app on [Florida Wildflowers](#). This plant had previously been seen at the H.P. Williams boardwalk and was the first entry for the Burns Lake area.

2/14/19

It rained heavily during the early morning hours of 2/13/19 and continued, off and on, for most of the day. Ann and I went into Marco Island but found several of our favorite breakfast places closed and the Wednesday market cancelled. I did see a kestrel along the causeway and, curiously, found several of the burrowing owls out in the rain. Perhaps the rain was flooding their burrow? I spent several hours back at the condo, updating the flowering plant database with the [FloNotes 2018](#) file. The lost data has now been recovered as well as I can expect.

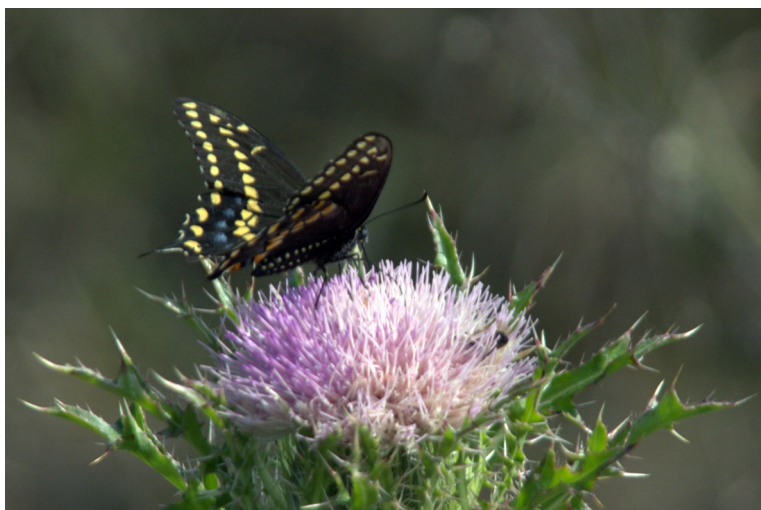
Being low on gas, I was forced to travel west on the morning of 2/14/19. First I went to the Fritchey Road area. As was the case last year, the road was gated before the agricultural property and chain link fencing up to the gate made travel beyond this point impossible on foot as well as by car. I might as well cross this spot off my list of birding areas. In spite of the previous day's rain, the ditches along Fritchey Road had no standing water. There were no accumulations of snowy egrets as I had seen there once before. Then I went on to Serenity Walk Park. Very few plants were in bloom and none were added to the database for the location. There were two target birds for the morning. One was the red-headed woodpecker, which I did see, and the other was the brown-headed nuthatch, which I did not.

On the way back to the condo, I picked up a breakfast sandwich and some coffee and pulled over along Hy41 to look for the caracaras as I had last year. No luck! I'm beginning to think that the caracaras may have moved on and my earlier marks this year may be mistaken. Also, I'm not seeing limpkins along this stretch of Hy41 as I have in previous years. Later in the day, I did spot a northern

harrier just east of this area. I had the usual doubt about this and the snail kite but the tail appeared too long for it to be the kite. Feb. 14 is one of the bird check points to gauge the progress of the birding year. At this point I am two birds short of last year's count. Since I have yet to get to Tigertail Beach this year, though, that is not a big concern.

2/17/19

Well! If I thought Tigertail Beach would bring up the year's bird count, I was seriously mistaken. I went there on 2/15/19 and was not able to add even one bird to the count. Not a single shorebird was to be seen along the near end of the lagoon. No reddish egrets were prancing in the lagoon; no prairie warblers in the mangroves or magnificent frigatebirds flying over. I managed a count of only 11 species for the morning. Most of my time was spent on the observation deck attempting a few more osprey photos.



I drove the Turner River / Birdon Loop on 2/16/19. Again, I experienced the problem of trying to cover it all in a reasonable amount of time and yet stop often enough to see as much as possible. 35 species were recorded for the trip, including three trip marks (eastern bluebird, yellow-shafted flicker and black and white warbler). This brought the trip count to 80 species, with only two more species to count by Feb. 21 to be even with last year. Do I dare be optimistic about Tigertail again?

Several plants were seen in bloom and were added to database for this location. On one of the horrible thistles I saw an eastern black swallowtail and added it to BD. These thistles seem to attract a lot of pollinators. In addition to a few

bees, I had seen a small skipper butterfly on this species when I visited the Burns Lake area on 2/12/19. It appears to my uninitiated eyes that the restoration of sheet flow to this area seems to be having quite an effect. The dammed up areas seem to be causing a lot of lateral flow of water, even to the other side of the road by way of the culverts.



So, where have all the blackbirds gone? Although I have red-winged blackbirds, common grackles and boat-tailed grackles on the trip list for this year, I'm not seeing them in the numbers I had in previous years. Cowbirds have yet to be seen (although that's not unusual). I am reminded, once again, how things down here change from year to year. Also, limpkins seem to be rare sighting this year. I am seeing the crested caracara again, though. My doubts are removed. I saw one yesterday (2/17/19) and another today. These last two sightings (most likely the same bird) were on the north side of the road, where I had originally seen them. To date, though, I'm only seeing one bird at each sighting.

2/22/19

I drove out to the Loop Road on 2/18/19. As I drove up from the west end, I saw a black squirrel just before I got to the bridge marked as 4N. I recall seeing one of these once before, during one of our early visits to Florida. I decided that it was an eastern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), of the Big Cypress population. I took a few pictures of the squirrel. They were better than those I had

taken before but the squirrel was mostly backlit or too far from me to get really good shots. I drove on to the usual routine on the Loop Road; east to about the 8 mile marker and then back, stopping mostly to look for good photoshoots at the various culverts. Most of the photos that I took I had taken many times before. I recorded 17 bird species for the morning, no trip marks.

I saw a few plants in bloom along the road. I checked the database to see that each of them was recorded for the Loop Road. A couple of them appeared to be new to me. One of these was a small, seemingly weedy, wiry pea. The plant consisted of multiple stems arising from a common point in the soil. These were slightly hairy. The leaves were alternate and compound, each consisting of three small leaflets. Each of the leaflets, including the center one, was nearly sessile. There was a slight notch at the tip of the leaflets. The yellow flowers were small and pea-like. The larger petal had brownish stripes on the underside. The plant is unidentified at this time.

Another plant that I saw was certainly one of the goldenrods. This plant had a terminal inflorescence appearing like a plume. It had alternate leaves sparsely arranged along the stem. All of the leaves appeared to be along the stem, none of them were basal. The leaves were sparsely toothed along the margin. Another composite was also seen along the roadside. This consisted of mostly basal leaves in a whorl and a naked stalk with small, lettuce-like leaves at the top. All of these plants need further study for identification.



Tuesday, 2/19/19, was a blood-letting day and I drove into Marco Island to have my INR read. It was a very low tide with much of the area under the Stanley Bridge exposed. I parked and walked under the bridge where I saw a number of birds probing the exposed mudflats. Some of these were shorebirds but they were too far off to recognize (except for several killdeer—a trip mark). Several herons as well as roseate spoonbills were also present along with ospreys flying overhead.

I also noticed a profusion of yellow-flowering plants under the bridge. The large flowers each had 5 petals and the leaves were pinnately compound. Using the iPhone app for [Florida Wildflowers](#), I thought this could be the burrnut (*Tribulus cistoides*). The photo in Taylor (2013) seems to support this id but it shows a distinctly orange center to the flower, which I did not see. The photo in Bell & Taylor (1982) are more like the plants I saw. I updated location data in the plant database for this species.

Matt and Nicole joined us on 2/19/19. We went to the TenK marsh trail the next morning. Water levels were perfect for the long-legged waders and the great egrets were there in abundance again. We saw 25 species for the morning including a northern shoveler, which was a trip mark. That brought this year's total to 82, tie with last year's total for February 21.

I went to Marco Island again on 2/21/19. Matt and I dropped the girls at Marco's South Beach and went on to Tigertail. This was the second time that I have gone to Tigertail this year and I have yet to see a shorebird on the near side of the lagoon. We did see a swallow-tailed kite along Hy92 as we approached Marco Island so I went over the Feb. 21st mark of last year. Matt and I also saw several magnificent frigatebirds over the pond at Mackle Park. It was nothing like what I saw last year but it was another trip mark for this year, bringing the trip list to 84 species.

Matt and Nicole's left on 2/23/19. Their visit coincided with this year's Marjorie Stoneman Douglass Festival so I didn't get to any of the talks or activities this year. After they left, I got back into my regular B&B routine.

2/27/19.

I drove part of the Picayune Strand on the morning of 2/25/19. I drove past the Sabal Palm trailhead and, perhaps, a mile or so along the road. Frankly, the drive was somewhat boring. The area was fairly dry and there were only a few plants in bloom along the way, mostly *Coreopsis*. I only recorded 12 species of birds along the way. Groups of wood storks flew from the road as I approached them. On the way back, I stopped briefly at the Sabal Palm Trailhead. I saw a small white-flowered violet growing near the parking area. It had long, narrow leaves with sparse toothing. I remember having seen the plant there once before; it was probably the narrow-leaved violet (*Viola lanceolata*), marked previously for the area.

Later that day, Ann and I saw a manatee in the channel outside our condo. It lingered for quite a while and we could see severe boat scars on its dorsal surface.

I went to the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk on the morning of 2/26/19. As I got there, I met a fellow by the name of Paul Hines (pehines@tds.net) and spent the entire visit with him. We had a pretty good morning, seeing 30 bird species including northern parula, a trip mark. At one point, Paul asked if I was interested in the bromeliads and if I had ever seen a Fuzzy Wuzzy Air Plant. I was pretty excited when he showed me one of them growing on a tree close to the boardwalk (nearly across from the sign for the Pond Apple). Paul pointed out the distinguishing features of the plants, the fuzziness and the somewhat coiled leaves. This was a new addition to the plant database, one I had been looking for for several years. The boardwalk, the focus of much of my Fak-a-Habit, took on a greater significance; my first bird nest fern years ago, my first peperomia (both since buried by Irma) and now my first Fuzzy Wuzzy.



But Paul was not done. He then proceeded to betray the location of three orchid species along the trail:



One was the Florida butterfly orchid (*Encyclia tampensis*). The plant had a single narrow leaf and distinct pseudobulbs at its base. The id was confirmed with Brown (2005).

A second orchid was the jingle bell orchid *Dendrophylax porrectus*. Brown (2005) refers to this species as *Harrisella porecta*. This, according to Paul (and also mentioned in Brown (2005)), is one of only three leafless orchids that grow in Florida. Its dangling seed pods, although small, were clearly seen at two locations along the boardwalk.



The last orchid was the dingy-flowered star orchid (*Epidendrum amphistomum*). I had seen this with much more profuse blooms at the Corkscrew Sanctuary earlier this year but had never noticed it along this boardwalk before. I added the first two to the plant database.

Paul also pointed out that a fourth orchid species, *Polystachya concreta* was located on the far side of the alligator pond but we could not see it, possibly because of it being masked by the other vegetation. Later in the day he emailed to confirm our identifications. He also sent a 2019 updated list of the orchids in the Fakahatchee Swamp and suggested we hike the boardwalk again before he

goes back north (New Hampshire). I looked forward to enjoying that opportunity to improve my search image along the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk.

3/4/19

The next morning (2/28/19) Ann and I took our first trip across the lagoon at Tigertail Beach. Surly, that's where all of the shorebirds have been hiding. One shorebird was all that I could find. Not one species, but a singular ruddy turnstone was seen! The morning was not a complete disaster, though. That turnstone, along with a reddish egret and a black skimmer were added to BD as new trip marks. This brought the 3/1/19 count to 88, one more than the count for that date for last year (and I still only had one shorebird,

discounting the spotted sandpiper and the killdeer seen earlier).

The shelling was as bad as the birding. Ann found only one or two damaged sand dollars and neither of us collected any new shells for the “collection”. It should be mentioned, though, that our tendency is now only to collect new species or select specimen of ones we already have.

I went back to the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk on the morning of 3/2/19 to get better photos of the orchids seen on 2/26/19 with Paul Hines. Needless to say, I had some difficulty finding them without Paul. I did see the jingle bell orchid at the end of the boardwalk and the dingy-flowered star orchid but I could not find the tree with the jingle bell orchid and the Florida butterfly orchid that was, supposedly, near the fuzzy wuzzy air plant. After some effort, though, I did find the air-plant. I used my iPhone compass to fix the position on the boardwalk closest to the plant (25°26'29"N—81°27'57"W). Back at the condo, I reviewed the photos I had taken of the orchids and realized that I was looking for a completely different setting for the orchids than I remembered. One more attempt will surely produce the orchids.

With my new search image from my photographs, I returned to the boardwalk on the morning on 3/4/19. I was hoping to locate the orchids seen earlier with Paul. Unfortunately, I ran into Paul and his wife (Diane Allen) and was too embarrassed to try to locate them. To make things even worse (better), Diane showed me a Tailed Strap Fern (*Compyloneurum costatum*) on one of the trees close to the large cypress trees near the beginning of the boardwalk. Although I did take a few photos, I neglected to fix the location of the plant either with the gps or some visible features nearby. Now I have two plants to locate. My photos are close to those in Nelson (2000) and the description of the plant clearly fits that in that reference. The petiole was clear and the dark green color evident. Its arching growth habit was also obvious. Here was another new plant for me to add to the database.



3/9/19

Ann and I took the tram tour of Shark Valley again on 3/5/19. Although we were in the dry period of the year, the water levels seemed higher than on past trips. We saw most of the long-legged waders and a purple gallinule which was a trip mark. No song birds were seen (except for a mockingbird) and, unfortunately, no snail kite. We only managed a count of 18 species for the morning.

I did notice a few plants in bloom along the road, though. Even as we were waiting for the tram ride to begin, I saw the water dropwort (*Oxypolis filiformis*) and the rosy camphorweed (*Pluchea rosea*) in bloom along the road. Those two as well as the Everglades sunflower (*Helenium pinnatifidum*) were seen at various sites along the way to the observation tower. In areas where the water level was a bit higher, the duck potato (*Sagittaria lancifolia*) was also seen. I updated the plant database with these and a few other the plants seen and identified at this location. There seemed to be an unusual number of baby alligators along the way. Unfortunately, no photos of the babies on the mothers' heads.

So, maybe all of the shorebirds are hanging around the Clam Pass area rather than Tigertail. Ann and I went to check it out on 3/7/19. The only shorebird I could find was the Sand-erling. Ann got a kick out of watching them race back and forth with the waves. Other folks seem to get a kick out of walking into huge flocks of gulls and terns, forcing them all



up into flight. In the photo, one can see sandwich terns, a trip mark, as well as royal terns and black skimmers. Laughing gulls were also seen and were trip marks, making three for the day. It being a bird count day, that brought the trip count to 92, 3 more than last year on this date.

Cooch needed a day out so we drove to the White yard in Alva on 3/8/19. When we arrived, it appeared that no one was at the property. The White's were not there last year either, but the Calusa Bird Club was maintaining the feeders. The feeders were again full at this time. I had two target birds in mind for the trip; the indigo bunting and the white-winged dove. Both were at the feeders when we arrived; one of each. In fact, those were the only birds seen at the feeders as we watched. In spite of a profusion of red-flowering plants in bloom, no hummingbirds were seen.

We then drove on to Harns Marsh in Lehigh Acres. Ann and Cooch stayed in the car while I took a short hike along the marsh. Two birders leaving the area told me that they had just seen two of the grey swamp hens shortly beyond the bend in the drive. I went to the area but was unable to see the birds. I did see an eagle on the ground along the bank of the marsh, though, and a number of limpkins in the marsh itself. I recorded 15 species for the marsh; unfortunately not including a snail kite.

On 3/9/19, I returned to TenK. The water level appeared to be lower than I recalled from my last visit and there was not the concentration of long-legged waders as before. I took quite a few photos of the Great Blue Heron that always appears to be fishing near the first bench along the road. Some of them turned out OK but I was disappointed with the exposure; the white appeared washed out to the critical eye. White birds always seem to be a problem, especially in bright sunlight. I need to go back and try messing with exposure compensation. I also photographed a few other birds. One female anhinga, had an especially bright green eye, signaling that the time is right. I marked a total of 24 birds while at TenK.

As I was going to TenK that morning, I noticed quite a concentration of birds on the north side of the road, in a clearing we have often watched in the past. As I was leaving TenK, I met a guy who referred to that area as the Bad Luck Prairie, part of the Picayune Strand State Forest. He, along with another couple, and I stopped at the area again on my way back to POI and I was able to add two more species to the morning list; the roseate spoonbill and the white pelican, bringing the morning's total to 26. None of my brochures for the natural areas refer to this prairie by name but they do show it on their maps.

Things have been quiet around the condo lately. Never since, have we seen the flurry of bird activity as we did the first two days of our stay. Bird activity has been pretty minimal; even the brown pelicans have largely disappeared. A few great blue herons discuss feeding locations each morning, but that's been about it. I did see a couple of brown thrashers outside the lanai this afternoon (3/9/19) but, otherwise, it's been pretty quiet. Over the last couple of days, one of the caracaras has begun to show up again in the area of 6 L's Farm Road. I saw one yesterday on a billboard on the north side of the road and Ann saw one today in a tree on the south side.



3/15/19

On the morning of 3/10/19, a Sunday, Ann and I took off for our usual Sunday routine. On our way to Naples, we noticed that the shoulder along Hy41 in the area of the 6 L's Farm Road had been mowed. Then we noticed that there were several Limpkins in the short grass. This is more like we are used to seeing in previous years. On several of the following days, the limpkins were seen again.

One more trip to Tigertail on 3/11/19 — one more shorebird on the trip list, this time a black-bellied plover. Shelling was a little better. I found a nice alphabet cone (*Conus spurius*) and a few

other shells, including rose petal tellin (*Tellina lineata*) but none of them were new to the collection. Ann and I each found small, somewhat damaged, sand dollars.

I decided to attempt to find the new orchids and ferns along the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk again on 3/12/19. After recording 20 bird species for the morning (no new marks), I finally located the Florida butterfly orchid that Paul had shown me. It was a bit further from the fuzzy wuzzy air plant than I remembered; about 14 paces from the Royal Palm sign (25°56'36"N 81°28'5W). I still could not relocate the stemmed strap fern or the jingle bell orchid, though.

Ann and I signed up for a nature cruise out of the Rookery Bay Estuarine Research Center for 3/12/19. We met our tour guide (Randy) at the boat launch near the end of Shell Island Road at 2:00PM that afternoon for a 3 hour ride into the mangroves. To both Ann and my disappointment, though, most of the trip was taken up by a walk along the beach at Keewaydin Island. We did pick up a few nice shells including another alphabet cone and several nice atlantic fig snails (*Ficus papyratia*) as well as a few others, but we were hoping to learn more about the estuarine ecology. Randy did describe the feeding habits of some of the shells and the role of the oyster beds in supporting the mangroves but that was about it; certainly not worth the \$109/person fee.

Because I agreed to lead the Berninger group (in Jack & Elaine's absence) to the Dan House Prairie on 4/26/19, I decided to go there on 3/13/19 to scout it out. Most of the prairie was fairly dry; certainly it will be by late April. I did see an eastern meadow-lark which was trip mark number 96 for the year, dropping me one below last year's count for March 14th. . Few plants were in bloom at this time. I only saw one grass Pink (*Calopogon tuberosus*) in bloom. Many batchlor's buttons (*Polygala balduinii*) were in bloom. The composites were represented by the everglades sunflower, (*Helenium pinnatifolium*), yellow-Top (*Flaveria linearis*) and the marsh fleabane (*Pluchia rosea*) but nothing new to the area was noted. I did notice, on the way back to the car, the creeping cucumber (*Melothria pendula*) growing along the bend of Union Road. I added that plant to the database for that location.

The Marco Island Shell Club's annual shell show was held on March 14-16 this year. We went on Friday, March 15 and were somewhat surprised by the few people that were there. Foolishly, I bought a few shells for the collection but none of them were species we had not found at the beach before.



3/17/19

I drove the Turner River/Birdon Loop again on Ann's birthday (March 16). I noticed the pine-pink (*Bletia purpurea*) growing and in bloom at several locations along Turner River Road. I also noted other plants in bloom and checked the plant database to be sure they were marked for this location. One of the bladderworts was in bloom in one of the culverts but I didn't id it to species. 23 bird species were marked for the morning. I wanted to see if I could find Deep Lake, so this time I followed the Upper Birdon Road out to Hy29. Along the way, I did find a culvert with blueflag (*Iris hexagona*) growing as an emergent. I also did find an area which could be the entrance to Deep Lake. There was a gated drive leading from Birdon Road but it didn't seem to go very far before it reached an apparently abandoned cabin and a coupe of out-buildings. I noticed a few familiar plants along the drive, including the showy milkwort (*Polygala grandiflora*), southern beeblossom (*Gaura angustifolia*) and, possibly the black medic (*Medicago lupulina*). This last plant is not shown for Collier County by the AFP but is included in the IRC for the Big Cypress Swamp. I had previously included it in the plant database but without any documentation so I noted it for the Big Cypress Swamp in the database. I also added this as a new location in the plant database and tentatively marked a few of the species seen for Deep Lake. I didn't follow the trail past the buildings.

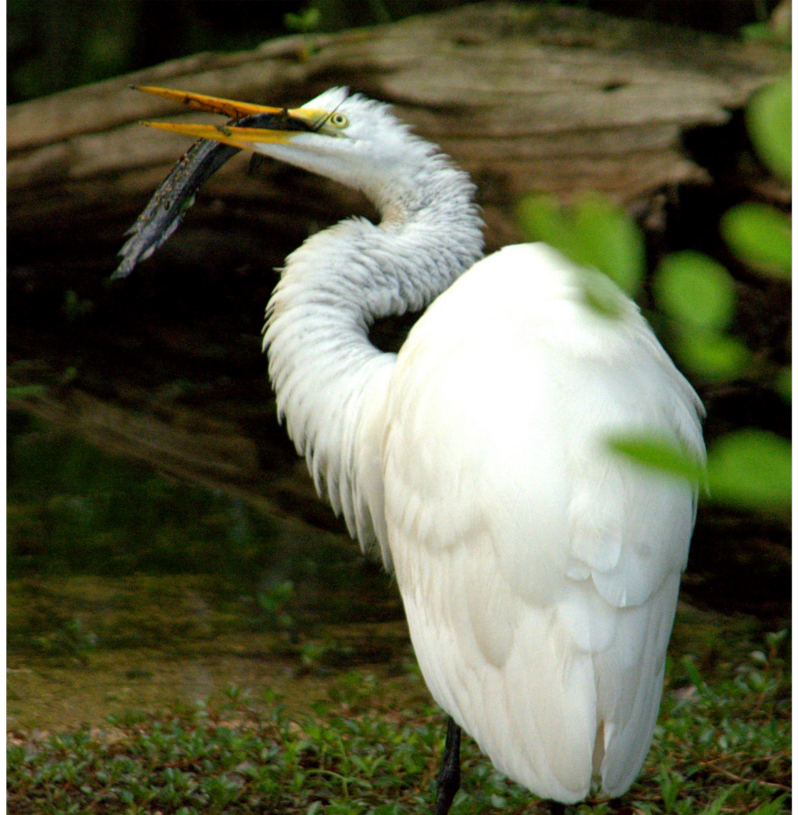


3/24/19

I've had a hard time finding cowbirds for this year's count. Remembering that Eagle Lakes sometimes produces not only brown-headed cowbirds but also shiny and bronzed cowbirds, I went there on the morning of 3/18/19 for a chance to see any of them. Unfortunately, the starlings that often accompany them along the fences between the baseball fields were there alone. I did manage a count of 33 species for the morning, but no trip marks. As I rounded the last bend of the lakes, I saw a great egret, cattle egrets and a great blue heron along the edge of the lake. Remembering how difficult it is for me to get good exposures of birds with a lot of white in their plumage, I played around with the exposure compensation setting and got fairly decent photos of some of these birds. The best shots were with exposure compensation set at -3 and -6.

I talked with Fred Thompson on 3/18/19 and he, also, is seeing relatively few birds thus far this year. We commiserated over the lack of shorebirds at Tigertail this year. When I checked ebird in the afternoon of 3/19/19, I noticed that most of the common species are being reported but they don't seem to be showing up in large numbers. On 3/20/19, though, I went for easier prey. Ann and I went to Tin City where I saw about a dozed rock pigeons, mark # 97 for the trip.

I drove Janes Scenic Drive in the Fakahatchee Strand to Gate 12 and back on the morning of 3/21/19. As usual, I stopped at each of the major culverts to see if there were any interesting photos to be had. Because the water levels are still high this year, helped by heavy recent rains, water is not restricted to the culverts but is plentiful all along the roadside. I did find a great Egret feeding on a fish at one of the first culverts, though, and spent some time trying for the National Geographic cover photo. It took the egret quite a while to position the fish just right, but it finally swallowed it. After it had finished with the fish the bird moved to deeper water and took several swallows of water to wash it down.



The photos don't show this clearly, but I think the fish was one of the walking catfish (*Clarias batrachus*). It clearly had a long dorsal fin, was seemingly somewhat speckled and had definite barbell-like feelers. This species is included on the Fakahatchee species list that Mike Owen gave me several years ago.

I noted several of the plants growing along the roadside, especially those in bloom. I checked to be sure that these species, Camphorweed or saltmarsh fleabane (*Pluchea odorata*), among them, were shown in the database for this location. I also included the giant wild pine (*Tillandsia utriculata*) which, at first, I thought might be a species of *Guzmania*. Back in 2015, on a fern walk with the Berninger's, Elaine Berninger pointed out both of these and I documented the species with photographs (see FloNotes 2015; notes of 2/26/15). The sighting of *T. utriculata* caused me to review the species description in Luther & Benzing ((200) and learn that is the only *Tillandsia* species native to Florida that is monocarpic, producing no "pup's" and therefore dying after it blooms.). That explains why I could never find the one at the end of the boardwalk at Kirby-Storter after the first year that I identified it; it was in bloom at the time. I went back to the notes for FloNotes 2015; notes of 2/26/19 and recorded all of the plants documented during that walk for the FAK-Gate12 (East Main Gate) location in the plant database.

I also saw a small, densely growing fern along the edge of the road. I remembered seeing this plant once before, I believe along the East Main Gate. It consisted of a dense growth of fronds ranging up to about 6-8" tall. It was growing in the ground. It was a light green color with green, hairy petioles. The fronds were pinnate-pinnatifid with the leaflets not stalked. No sori were found, so

the key in Nelson (2000) couldn't be followed very far. The fern remains unidentified at this time.

I headed out to Kirby-Storter on 3/23/19 only to find that the area was closed, apparently due to recent prescribed burns. Because of the dense mixture of smoke and heavy fog, I decided not to travel further east and turned around at the Monument Lake campground and drove back to the Burns Lake campground. I parked near the entrance for off-road vehicles and hiked down the trail for a bit. Unfortunately, I shortly found the trail flooded and was turned back. I saw few bird species and didn't bother to record them in BD.

In spite of the fact that I didn't get very far, I found the trail, even the part along the parking area to be rich in wildflowers. Several of them had been seen on my previous visit but some of them were added to the plant database for this location. I also drove along the road to the west of the camp area to Cypress Tower Road and back and recorded the plants seen there as part of the same location. Several of the plants seen were worthy of special note:

The *Pluchea* species seen appeared different from *P. rosea* seen in the past. The flowers were pink and the foliage was distinctly woolly, although not nearly to the extent of the *P. rosea*. Although the broken leaves had a distinct odor, the leaves were not petioled as in *P. odorata*. From what I could tell from looking at the AFP and the IRC, this was probably a variation of the *P. rosea*, more correctly *P. baccharis*.

The plant recorded as the snow squarestem (*Melanthera nivea*) had very red flower stalks. The opposite leaves were distinctly arrow-like with broad expanses near the short petiole. The flower stalk was rough (rugose).

One of the plants seen appeared to be one of the ladies-tresses (*Spiranthes sp.*). It has very long, spiraling flower stalks and was clearly not the species I had seen before.

One of the sedges in the white-top group was seen but I have never adequately distinguished between these species.

One of the plants was later recognized as the procession flower (*Polygala incarnata*) of the milkwort family. Hammer (2014) along with Taylor (2013) was used to identify it. The plant had an almost grey-green color although that could have been because the morning dew. The leaves were scale-like. This plant was not in the plant database and was added.

Another plant appeared to be the axilflower (*Mecardonis acuminata*) of Schmeltz & Stacell (2009). The plant appeared to have a weakly, spreading habit among other vegetation. It had very small (1/2") narrow pointed leaves that were opposite. Flowers arose singly from the leaf axils on long stalks. The flowers had five tubular petals with the terminal 1/3 of their length free. There were pink stripes on the petals (most prominent on the bottom one) that were more visible on the interior surface. The id was conformed with Hammer (2014).

3/27/19

I checked ebird on the evening of 3/24/18 and found that the shorebirds were beginning to show up at Tigertail Beach. A report by a Chris Bennett for 3/24/18 listed a total of 37 species, of which 11 would be considered shorebirds. Ann and I went there on 3/25/19 and I recorded 21 species, of which 7 were shorebirds. That was 4 trip marks for the day, bringing the year's count to 101. I seem to be trying for a new low year. It was a good day, though. Besides the trip marks the birds seen included 2 magnificent frigate birds and a white morph reddish egret. Ann and I have gotten much more selective in our shelling. Neither of us collected any shells on this trip but Ann did find one nice sand dollar. We also saw a couple of jellyfish on the beach.

I met with the Berninger group (without Jack & Elaine) for a walk to the Dan House Prairie on 3/26/19. Elaine was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and they had to return north for her treatments. As we walked along the Union Road, I saw a prairie warbler at the bend along the way. We found some dung along the drive which we thought might be from a panther. When we returned, about an hour later, a dung beetle was on the dung. We also saw a couple of snake skeletons that were picked pretty clean, but we couldn't identify them. We saw a nice sampling of prairie plants but I had recoded most of them previously. One plant, one of

the miterwort's, had to be added to the list. Of the two species known to be in the area, this most resembled the *Mitreola petiolata* and was added to the list for the location. I also saw a showy milkwort (*Polygala grandiflora*) and sleepy morning (*Waltheria indica*) growing along the drive and added them to the list for Union Road. Although we heard meadowlarks while we were in the prairie, we could not locate them.

On the morning of 3/27/19, Ann and I headed into Everglades City for some really good eggs. After breakfast, I drove along the Barron River and saw several purple martins in a martin house along the shore. I also saw what appeared to be an immature spotted sandpiper on the dock. Later that morning we walked the TenK marsh train up to and a bit past the observation tower. Much to our delight, we saw several roseate spoonbills; a seemingly difficult bird to find this year relative to others years. I was actually interested in seeing what the water level was like so I could decide if it would likely attract yellowlegs and stilts. Again to our delight, we saw the first black-necked stilt for the year. We didn't walk very far along the trail but managed a count of 14 birds to record in BD.



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A 6L's Farm Road update: Since the shoulder of the road was cut a short while ago, limpkins have been a common sight in the area. The crested caracara has been less so. As we were driving west along Hy41 on the morning of 3/27/19, Ann thought she saw one in a tree on the north side of the road. On our return, I pulled off the road (where I had had breakfast on a few occasions) and we confirmed the sighting.

3/29/19

As Ann attempted to win back all of our expenses at the Immokalee casino on 3/28/19, I visited C.R.E.W. First I went to the cypress dome trail but I decided not to leave the car there because of a group of black vultures eyeing up my windshield wipers. Instead, I drove back to the marsh trail for the usual walk along the flatwoods trail. I recognized many of the plants I had seen there in previous years but a few plants were new to the list for the location. Included among them were the cudweed (*Gamochaeta antilliana*), everglades squarestem (*Melanthera nivea*), bluemink (*Ageratum houstonianum*), tasselflower (*Emilia fosbergii*), yellow stargrass (*Hypoxis curtissii*) and opposite spotflower (*Acmella oppositifolia*). Some of the plants seen, though require further comment:

I noticed several of the white-topped sedges along the trail. None of them appeared to be cespitose but some of them had only 3 or 4 white bracts below the flowers while others had as many as 6 or 7 (or more). Those with the fewer bracts could well have been the starrush whitetop (*Rhynchospora colorata*) of Hammer (2014) while those with more bracts were possibly the sandswamp whitetop (*R. latifolia*). I've always been confused about the distinction between these two species and have not previously listed *S. latifolia* in the plant database in spite of the fact that I'm quite sure I've seen it at many locations. Both are shown for the C.R.E.W. area by the IRC, though, and I added *R. latifolia* to the database at this time. The location field for this species needs some serious attention.

I also noticed some ladies'-tresses growing at several locations along the trail. These had very long flower stalks with the flowers relatively sparsely spaced. The range maps in Brown (2005) show 7 species of *Spiranthes* for Collier County, but only 3 are shown by the IRC for the C.R.E.W. area. Both lists include *Spiranthes vernalis*, the only ladies'-tresses species I have included in the plant database to date. Photos in Brown (2005) suggest *S. vernalis* for this plant also, but I realize that this is not competent taxonomy.

I also noticed a clearly recognizable Penstemon at C.R.E.W. Only one species, the manyflower beardtongue (*Penstemon*

multiflorus), is shown by the IRC for the area; in fact, only one is shown by the AFP for Collier County. Although not in bloom (but in bud) at the time, the obvious opposite leaves were sufficient for clear identification. The plant was added to the database.

I didn't keep track of the birds seen at the marsh trail but a crested caracara did fly over the car shortly after I turned off of Hy82. I also saw an interesting fungus growing on a log along the trail. It had round fruiting bodies that looked like they would be easy to identify but I couldn't find anything conclusive on the "net".

Tree swallows were seen flying over the channel from lanai on 3/29/19. Although this was a trip mark for the year, I believe I had seen them along the Turner River/Birdon Road loop earlier in the trip and, possibly, over the lanai once before.

4/2/19

I got my 106th trip mark, the greater yellowlegs, at the TenK marsh trail on 3/30/19. That bird was among the 30 birds recorded in BD for the morning, leaving me three days to get three more species to tie last year's dismal record of 109 for April 1. The water levels along the trail are starting to drop, low enough for the yellowlegs and one black-necked stilt to feed. Several roseate spoonbills were seen flying over head but only a couple were in the water. One white pelican was also seen overhead.

There has been some confusion in my mind regarding the distinction between the blue mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) and the bluemink (*Ageratum houstonianum*). I added the mistflower to the database after Mike Owen identified it on 3/20/13 in the Fakahatchee Strand. I readily admit that I have been somewhat indiscriminately marking these two plants for a variety of locations in spite of the fact that the AFP does not show the bluemink for Collier County. Consequently, I decided to review their botanical differences.



I used Wunderlin & Hansen (2011) and reduced their key for the genera of the aster family (p.280) to three genera (*Conoclinium*, *Eupatorium* and *Ageratum*), based on the fact that *Eupatorium coelestinum* was found as a synonym for the blue mistflower (Taylor, 1992). This key can be found in the notes for the aster family. To the extent that such a key is valid, it appears that the nature of the pappus can be used to distinguish between *Conoclinium* and *Eupatorium* on the one hand, and *Ageratum* on the other. In the first two, the pappus consists of capillary or plumose bristles while in *Ageratum* it is made up of scales. According to this key, the receptacle in *Conoclinium* is conspicuously concave while it is flat or merely convex in *Eupatorium*.

Given that the blue mistflower has a synonym in each of these genera, that distinction is, perhaps, less important to me. Based on this information, I will examine these plants more carefully in the future and consider modifying their records in the plant database.

I finally met up with the Thompsons at the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk on the morning of 4/1/19. We had very close-up photos of a barred owl and I thought I heard a young one calling from further away. We also heard two alligators roaring back and forth. One (the larger one) was in the alligator hole at the end of the boardwalk while the other was in the smaller pond before you get to the end. When I first came to the smaller one, the gator floated high in the water with both its tail and head raised and then smashed its mouth on the surface of the water and descended. Shortly later, it raised itself higher in the water again but never repeated the behavior. I wondered if it was possibly warning me.

Fred mentioned that he was again hearing the chuck-wills widow from his condo at about 9:00P.M. I listened for a while that night but it might have been an April Fools joke; I didn't hear anybody's widow.

4/5/19

After a breakfast on Marco Island on 4/3/19, Ann and I visited the Marco Island Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary at 655 Tigertail Ct. There was a pair of nesting eagles there in a nest that was clearly visible except for the multitude of photographers. The pair reportedly had two eaglets in the nest but they were not visible at the time of our visit. Unfortunately, I did not have my camera with me at the time but Ann



took a nice photo with her cell phone. Back at the condo I viewed the organization's web site (<https://marcoislandnaturepreserve.org/>) where they had a live webcam on the nest. Both eaglets were clearly visible at the time.

After dropping Ann at Marco's South Beach on 4/5/19, I went back to see if I could get some photos of the eagle family. I spent a couple of hours at the nature preserve but the adults never came to the nest. The young were active at times but no family photos. I met R.J. Wiley, a professional photographer, there and he indicated that the feeding routine had recently changed and that the adults were feeding the young at greater intervals. He allowed me to view the eagles through his lens; mine will never look the same. He gave me his card and I later visited his web site (www.rjwileyphoto.com) to view some of his photos. This is the same photographer I had seen in Everglades City photographing the nesting great horned owls earlier in the trip.

Before picking Ann up from the beach, I went to Mackle Park to kill a little time. While I was there, I noticed that the new martin house was in use by several purple martins. No frigatebirds were seen over the pond.



4/8/19

I visited the Ten Thousand Islands marsh trail in the morning of 4/6/19. Recent rains have kept the water levels fairly high for this time of the year. When I got there I found a large concentration of wading birds near the observation deck. The group consisted mostly of great egrets but mixed in were several snowy egrets, tricolored herons, white pelicans and later, 6-8 roseate spoonbills joined the group. There were also a few coot, moorhen, and little blue herons. Far off, I could see possible greater yellowlegs in the more shallow areas.

Between the observation deck and the first bench, I found a yellow-orange flowered bush

growing along the trail. I recognized it as a legume because of its distinct pod-like fruit. Later, back at the condo, I was unable to find photos of the plant in any of my references. Internet searches eventually led me to *Senna bicapularis* which, according to Wunderlin & Hansen (2011), is a name misapplied in Florida for *S. pendula*. *Var glabrata*. That species is shown for Collier County by the AFP but not in the IRC for TenK. Three other species of *Senna* are shown, though (all of which are found in Collier County) but my photos of this plant appears most like the *S. pendula* shown in the AFP. Nelson (1996) describes this species but does not have any photos or illustrations. I entered this species in the plant database as *S. pendula*.

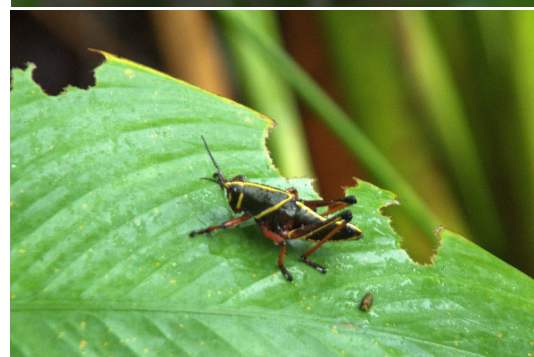
I ran into Susan (bird-watching friend) on Sunday (4/7/19). She had recently reported, through Ann and Heide, that she had seen a gray kingbird near the resort on Friday (4/5/19). She told me where she had seen the bird but that she had not seen it since then. She also mentioned that prairie warblers were being seen along the mangrove edges of the preserve behind the condos. I decided to walk the areas Susan had mentioned on the morning of 4/8/19 but did not see any of the birds she had mentioned.

I did see a butterfly pea (*Centrosema virginianum*) growing at the apparent boat launch area near the POI, though. I recognized it immediately, having once identified it at the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. I also recognized the three-parted compound leaf and moved it aside to get better photos. Then I realized that the three part leaf was from the poison ivy that the plant was growing on. I quickly wiped my hands with an alcohol wipe that I had for cleaning the camera lens.

I also hiked along Union Road, around the bend to the open gate near the first large culvert. I didn't see many birds but I did add several plants to the database for that location. I cannot remember a year when I have seen as many of the lubber grasshoppers as I have this year. Much of the vegetation along the road (wild coffee, poison ivy, buttonbush, etc) were loaded with them. I had noticed their unusual abundance several times this year.

4/13/19

The plague of lubbers has also been evident at the boardwalk at Big Cypress Bend this year. On several occasions that I've been there I've noticed many of them along the path leading to the boardwalk. On the morning of 4/10/18, I noticed several of them apparently feeding on the alligator flag at the alligator hole at the end. Although I recorded only 21 bird species for that morning, it was probably the best warbler count so far this year. Northern parula, yellow-throated warbler, black and white warbler, common yellowthroat and, prothonotary warbler were all in the count. I have long awaited my first Florida prothonotary. Although my only photo of it was rather poor, the event deserved documentation in these notes. The yellow-throated warbler and prothonotary warbler were both trip marks for the year, bringing the total to 108. Myrsine (*Myrsine floridana*) was in bloom at this time. The small, white, 4-petaled flowers were conspicuous where they had been shed at several locations. Dahoon holly (*Ilex cassine*) was also in bloom.



I made another attempt at shore-birding at Tigertail on 4/11/19. It was very windy with strong wave action when Ann and I got to the beach. I wasn't able to add any shorebirds to my 2019 trip list but I did see several least terns in flight. This was trip mark #109 for the year; 11 more needed to tie the worst year ever. Ann and I had a good day with sand dollars, though. Between the two of us, we found 20 of them. All of them were small, though. The largest was only 5.7 cm in diameter. The smallest measured 2.9cm. I cannot explain why we only found small ones. Also, I can't figure out why there were so few gastropods brought ashore by the waves. I find it interesting that things vary in the sea as much as they do on land. Other than

the sand dollars, few other shells were collected.

There was not a single warbler on the list of 20 birds entered into BD for the morning of 4/12/19. The morning was spent at the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk. After seeing the prothonotary warbler there two days ago, I had the feeling that I was getting the benefit of the spring's migrations. That still might be the case; not too far along the boardwalk, I heard the distinct call of a yellow-billed cuckoo. Then it flew into plain view in a tree almost directly ahead me. I got a good look at all of its field marks and added it as trip mark #100 for the year. Along with the prothonotary, this was a Florida mark as well. The lubber grasshoppers continue to show up everywhere. Among the many seen on this morning, I disturbed one having its morning wild coffee.

While exiting from the boardwalk, I met a woman who had just come from the TenK marsh trail. She indicated that among the many birds she had seen there were avocets. I hurriedly drove there and found, for the first time, that I was the only person there. Almost all of the birds were also gone. I added 9 more birds to the list for the morning; unfortunately no avocets among them.

Later, back at the condo, I worked on updating the location list for the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk in the plant database. Many of the plants seen there have never been added to the list. They do appear for the Fakahatchee location but since this location has been broken into more subdivisions, the lists need to be updated.

Predictably, I went to the TenK marsh trail on the morning of 4/13/19 to look for avocets. I arrived just after dawn and there was a bunch (20-30) of white egrets in the deeper water at the observation tower; not even close to what I had seen in previous recent mornings. However, there were thousands (tons) of white ibises in the mangroves beyond the tower and quite a few photographers there to capture the images. Unfortunately, there were no avocets to add to the trip list for the year. In fact, the bird list for the morning was pretty short. I recorded only 15 birds for the morning but, among them, was an indigo bunting. That might be the first one I've seen in the wild; not at one of White's feeders or those at the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. I walked the trail for a while and found that some of the senna found earlier had blooms closer to the trail, so I got better photos than I had previously. I also photographed several other plants, including the southern beeblossom (*Gaura angustifolia*) along the trail.



Among the plants were several vines. Vines seem to comprise a large portion of the southern Florida flora and I have had some problems identifying several of them. Among those seen on this morning was a likely pepper-vine (*Ampelopsis arborea*) of the grape family. I'm quite sure that I've identified this plant before but, apparently, never added it to the plant database. The IRC does not show this species for the Ten Thousand Islands but the AFP's map shows it to be widely distributed throughout the area. I added it to the database at this time. Another vine had small, green flowers with 5 petals each. Its leaves were opposite and stiff with shallow but distinct teeth. Older portions of the stem were red but the newer growth had green stems. Photos (2019_04_13_012-014) of this plant were taken but it remains unidentified at this time in spite of several internet searches.

4/17/19

When Ann and I were returning from our usual Sunday routine on 4/14/19, a group of about 100 white pelicans flew over our car as we drove Hy41.

Ann and I went to the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary on 4/15/19. We found the water levels high for this time of the year; even the higher areas had some water. As we began our walk along the boardwalk, I noticed that someone had posted the sighting of a prothonotary warbler. Unfortunately, I was unable to find it or any other warbler. Probably as a result of the high water, most of the long-legged waders were not to be seen. In fact, I recorded only 13 species of birds for the three hours we were there. I did add a

hummingbird and house wren to the trip list for the year, though, bringing the total to date to 12.

Much of my attention was directed toward updating the plant database for this location. I noticed a lot of an apparent *Rumex* species growing, especially in the area of the feeders at the first turn of the boardwalk. Some of these appeared to be in bloom at this time. According to the IRC, the only *Rumex* found at the Corkscrew Swamp is the swamp dock (*Rumex verticillatus*). Photos of this plant on the AFP suggest that that was what I was seeing and it was added to the plant database. I also saw what I recognized as one of the meadowbeauties in bloom. Three meadowbeauties are shown for the swamp by the IRC (*Rhexia mariana*, *R. nashii* and *R. nuttallii*). Judging from photos on the AFP and my recollection of the species seen at the Sabal Palm trail, I recorded it as *R. mariana*.

I also noticed several orchid plants growing as epiphytes. These were not in bloom at the time and I did not recognize what the species were. Among the ferns were at least one of the marsh ferns, the hottentot (*Thelypteris interrupta*). Other ferns of the *Thelypteris* group were also suspected. Of the Polypody group, I believe I saw my second tailed strap fern (*Campyloneurum costatum*). Many of the ferns had to be updated in the species list for the Corkscrew Swamp.

I had never walked along tram 3 of the Fakahatchee Strand, so on 4/16/19 I parked at the gate and walked in. I followed the tram for a short distance, just past an abandoned, dilapidated shack and two plastic chairs. I noticed several depressed areas, now mostly drying up, that might be good locations for wading birds at wetter times of the year. No such birds were to be seen on this day, though — especially no yellow-crowned night herons. Actually, few birds of any kind were seen.

I added Tran 03 as a location in the plant database and began to check off a few of the plants that I saw. The blue mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) was checked off as well as a few of the bromeliads seen along the path. I also saw one of the marsh-pinks (*Sabatia calycera*). There was also numerous lax hornpods, identified with Hammer (2014) and Taylor (1992). In Taylor (1992) these are referred to as miterworts (*Mitreola petiolaria*). The plants seen along the tram had distinct, although short petioles as opposed to its close relative *Mitreola sessilifolia* which has sessile leaves. I believe now, that it is the latter species (*M. sessilifolia*) that was seen in the Dan House Prairie when I hiked with the Berninger group on 3/26/19. The photos of that day (2019_03_26_001 & 002), when compared with those taken this day along the tram (2019_04_16_019-025), seem to show a distinct difference. There was also one of the false button-weeds in bloom along the tram. Although my identification of these is questionable, it appeared to be *Spermacoce assurgens* according to Taylor (1992).

When Ann and I were leaving the market on Marco Island this morning, I thought I saw an eastern kingbird in a field across the street. After dropping Ann at the beach, I went back but I could not find any sign of the kingbird. Later, My friend Susan again indicated (through texts to Heide and Ann) that she was seeing 2 gray kingbirds near the tennis courts at the hotel. I went to check it



out this afternoon and did see one of them on the electric wires behind the courts. It flew into a tree closer to the hotel but then flew across the highway when I approached for a better view.

4/22/19

I birded the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk again on 4/18/19 in the hopes of finding a few migrating warblers to add to the trip list. I didn't have any luck with that but I did see the young eagles out of the nest. Only 15 birds were recorded for the morning. On the way back to the condo, I detoured into the hotel parking lot and found the two gray kingbirds that Susan had found earlier. They seemed a bit camera shy; I managed only one shot before they flew.

Six L's Farm Road update (4/22/19): Limpkins; 2-6 regularly — Caracaras; 1 occasionally

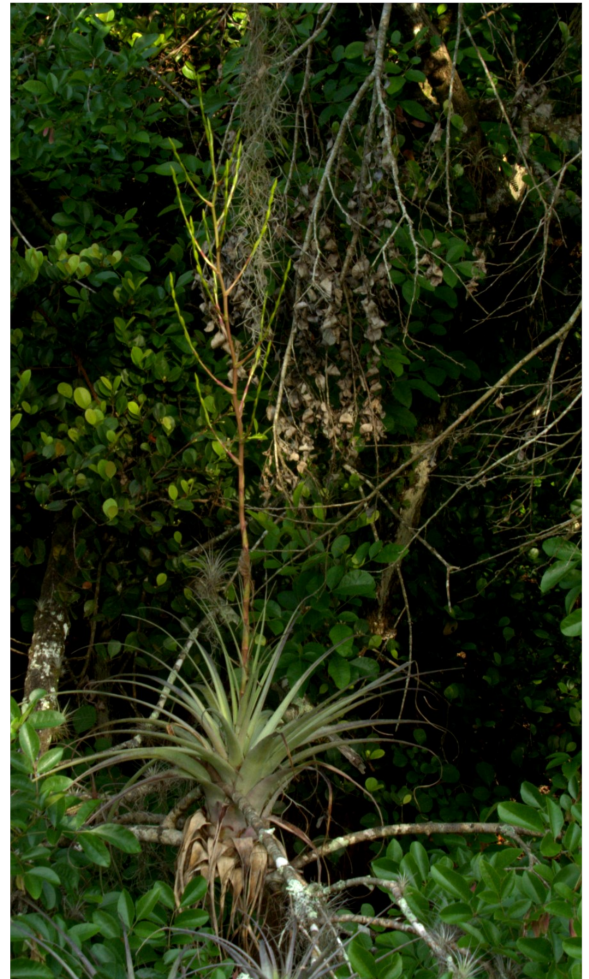
I drove all of the way from Wisconsin so that I could take photos of American crows at Kirby Storter on 4/22/19. There were few other birds to photograph! I only recorded 7 birds at the park, although I did see a wild turkey on the way back to the condo. I did add quite a few plants in the database for that location, though. Even several of the trees and bushes had not been checked for the

park. Apparent pond apples (*Annona glabra*) were in bloom along the boardwalk. These were identified with Schmeltz & Stacell (2009) and confirmed with photos on the AFP.

I also found a plant that reminded me of the germander that I see back in Wisconsin. The flowers were lavender although my photos (2019_04_22_009-12) make them appear more white. They were in a conical cluster at the top of the stem. The inflorescence appeared to be blooming from the bottom; terminal ones still in bud. The leaves were opposite with young leaves forming in the axils. The main leaves were finely toothed and sessile. The plant appeared generally hairy but I was only able to view it from the boardwalk and I was not as close as I would have liked. The plant appears to be the wood sage or wood germander (*Teucrium canadense*) identified at Gator Hook on 4/17/12. Photos (2012_04_17_053-057) taken on that day are superior to those taken today.

One of the shrubs also remains unidentified (photos 2019_04_22_017-019). The bush had opposite leaves with one main vein. The floescence consisted of a round ball of small white flowers all arising from a central point. This ball developed from a long stalk originating from a leaf axil. Another plant (photos 2019_04_22_029-03) was probably one of the Agalinis species. Four species of Agalinis are shown by the IR to be in the Big Cypress Swamp but I was not close enough to clearly identify the plant. An apparent fern (photos 2019_04_22_024-28) also remains unidentified.

What was identified was a giant wild pine (*Tillandsia utriculata*). One of these plants was seen in bloom at the end of the boardwalk several years ago. (see Flonotes 2015; 3/17/15). In later years, I could not find the plant. The reason is discussed on page 12 of these notes. This morning (4/22/19) several of these plants were seen at the end of the boardwalk, right below where I had seen the original in bloom in 2015. It is unlikely that these have developed from seeds of that plant. According to Luther & Benzing ((200), it may take 10-20 years for these seeds to develop into flowering plants. Flower stalks seem to be developing on at least one of these plants. It will be interesting to see if any of these plants will be seen next year.



4/26/19

Water levels were still pretty high when I visited the TenK marsh trail on 4/23/19. Usually, by this time of our Florida stay (most, if not all) of the water is gone and one can see the alligator tracks in the mud. Huge flocks of mostly white ibises still roost there at night but, once they fly out in the morning (pretty close to dawn), there are relatively few birds to be seen. I only walked to the second bench, recording only 16 bird species for the morning. I did examine several plants along the way, though, resulting in the following notes:

One of the plants (photos 2019_04_23_005-011) was a small shrub with 5-parted small white flowers. Its leaves were opposite, small and glossy. They were ovate, rounded at the distal end and tapered to the stem with a very short petiole (if any). These leaves were 1-1&1/2" long. The fresh green bu stems were green but older sections of the stem were more greyish. The plant had the general appearance of coco plumb but its flowers were more spreading and none of the leaves were notched at the end. Apparently, I have identified this plant before as the white indigoberry (*Randia aculeata*). Although Taylor (2013) suggests that this plant has pairs of spines, I did not observe them.

Two distinct species of shrubby oaks were also noticed. One of these (photos 2019_04_23_012-013) had mostly very small leaves (1" x 1/4-1/2"), some of which showed very short terminal teeth. The bark of this bush was grey. The other species (photo 2019_-4_23_014) had larger leaves (1&1/2-2" x 1/2") with a few even larger. No terminal teeth were noticed on these.

While sitting at the second bench from the observation tower, I noticed a small herbaceous vine at the base of the bench. It had clusters of small white flowers. The flowers were seemingly tubular and 5-parted. Apparent stigmas protruded from the end of them. The leaves were generally triangular in outline and deeply notched. This was likely the climbing hemipvine (*Mikania scandens*) of Hammer (2014) which I had earlier identified at this location.

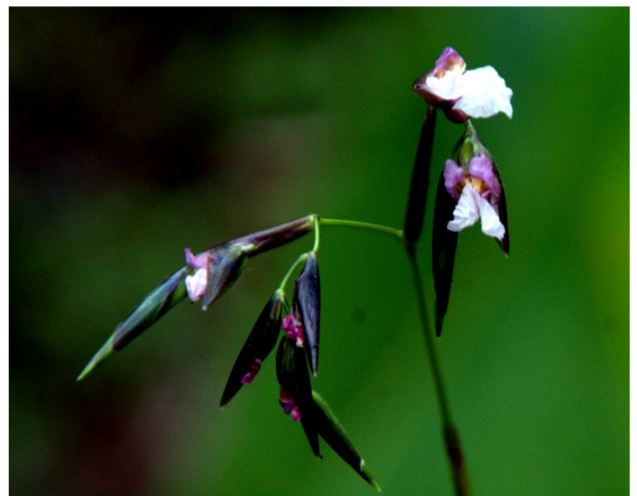
Another vine was seen trailing through the red mangrove (photos 2019_04_23_15-17). Its leaves reminded me of the bamboo-vine in Nelson (1996) but the fruit appeared to be in pairs hanging from leaf axils. The older fruit appeared to be blue to black while the younger were green.

It's that part of the trip where we begin enjoying the lasts. So, on 4/24/19, Ann and I took our last trip to Tigertail; my last chance for several of the shorebirds and Ann's last search for sand dollars. We both failed in our efforts; Ann did not find a single sand dollar and I did not see a single shorebird. We did not even collect any new shells. When we crossed the lagoon at Tigertail, we found that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Service had closed most of the beach to the north. It seems that they were shooting crows that threatened to eat the eggs of the breeding shorebirds and terns. I was encouraged! Certainly, if they were protecting the shorebird nests from the crows, there had to be shorebirds. So I waited about 45 minutes until they were finished for the day and opened the beach again. I then proceeded to walk the entire length of the roped-off "critical wildlife area", which was quite a bit longer than it had been in previous years. The only birds I saw in that area were 3 fish crows, that they must have missed, and 1 osprey; none of them eating bird eggs.. I did see 1 least tern fly over the Gulf shore but not one of them in the roped-off nesting area and not one shorebird. A few long-legged waders, including a reddish egret, were recorded for the day along with a few other birds, but no shorebirds. My chances of catching up to last year's trip count (or even the count of the worst year) appears hopeless.

I drove the Turner River / Birdon loop again on the morning of 4/25/19. It appears that most of the birds have possibly gone north for the summer. An occasional great blue heron or other wader was found but very few birds were seen. I hiked about 1/2 mile of the Concho Billie trail and recorded plants that I saw along the way. Although most of the area was relatively dry, I could hear alligators roaring in the distance. The plague of lubber grasshoppers there was the greatest I had seen yet and they are getting larger. Although I've only been there twice, this is becoming one of my favorite trails. I saw a few birds along the way but they were included in BD as part of the Turner River / Birdon loop. One of these was probably one of the Empidonax flycatchers, but I could not identify the call.

4/29/19

The final fix of my faka-habit for 2019 was this morning at the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk. Actually, I had been there on 4/27/19 also and had noticed that the alligator flag (*Thalia geniculata*) was beginning to bloom. This morning, the bloom was a bit more extensive and I took a few photos of several flowers. The boardwalk is amazingly quiet these days. There are few birds to be seen and few plants in bloom. Also, there are few people; I pretty much had it all to myself this morning. I also photographed one of the grapes long the way. The rusty hairs on the underside of the leaves suggested the Calusa grape (*Vitis shuttleworthii*). I noticed that its tendrils were forked as suggested in Nelson (1996). There is still plenty of water in the strand, although it appears that it may be beginning to dry out a bit.



5/8/19

We left the condo, as per contract on the last day of April although we had been offered a free additional week's stay. Several limpkins were at their usual Hy41 location to see us off but no caracaras were seen. As usual, we stopped to spend a couple of days with the Kaczmarek's.

On May 1st I visited Green Key for some possible shorebirds. The tide was high and there were no shorebirds to be seen. I recorded several birds along the causeway where I did see a few long-legged waders. Several of these were little blue herons with the most

brilliant blue beaks that I ever recall seeing. Unfortunately, the lighting was so poor that I discarded all of the photos of these birds. On the way out of the causeway I stopped at the Boy Scout Preserve and added a few more birds. I also saw a small brown snake which jumped several inches into the air when I disturbed it. That is also where I saw several patches of a small, yellow-flowered plant in bloom. The flowers were in a round terminal inflorescence and its leaves were compound with pinnate leaflets. I identified the plant as the tropical puff (*Neptunia pubescens*) of Hammer (2014). The identification of this plant was confirmed with the AFP and its location in Pasco County was verified.



We left the Kaczmarek's on May 2nd and overnighted in Locust, GA. While we were there I noticed several plants in boom in the parking area of the motel (photos 2019_05_02_001-007). One of them looked like one of the hawkweeds but no positive id's were made. The next morning we left for Matt' and stayed there for two nights before leaving for home on May 5th. We arrived home on that day.

Summary

The location of our new condo on the channel made this year's stay somewhat different than those of the past, although no new condo birds were seen. It was an unusually wet period in southern Florida for the time of our stay. We had more rain than we could ever recall in the past and, even at the time that we left, there was abundant water in the fields along Hy41. TenK never dried up as it has in all of the previous years. Other than a few prescribed burns, we were not aware of any fires such as were common in recent years. As for birding, this was the worst year among all of our annual trips to Florida; I saw only 113 bird species. The fact that I had two Florida marks, though, (yellow-billed cuckoo and prothonotary warbler) compensates for the poor numbers. In fact, the prothonotary, alone, makes it a good year in my mind. I worked quite a bit to update the locations field of the plant database and was able to add 9 new plants to the list. As is always the case, our 3 month stay in Florida was a great alternative to the Wisconsin winter.