



February 2024

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In the Field

Mid-winter in South Florida means it's time to look out for two early-arriving spring migrants alighting in our area: Purple Martin, one of the largest members of the swallow

family, and Swallow-tailed Kite, the stunningly beautiful raptor whose silhouette illustrates the Tropical Audubon Society logo. Both species winter in South America and then breed in Florida. Join us on a free February bird walk to look for these species and more!

You can also count birds for science February 16-19 by joining the global [Great Backyard Bird Count](#). Launched in 1988 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the annual event encourages bird enthusiasts of all levels to count as many birds as they can spot and identify in their backyard or favorite birding locale.

Do you know a curious young birder/naturalist? Bring them to [BIRD DAY](#) on February 17. This ideal family event is filled with live wildlife interactions, games and prizes.

Sign up for February Field Trips below. To view our complete Winter/Spring 2024 schedule visit our [website calendar](#). Please note that [REGISTRATION](#) is required for all field trips.

Share your bird sightings on our [Bird Board](#) and [Facebook Bird Board](#).

***Banner Photo, above:** Swallow-tailed Kite by Jack Vanden Huevel, Getty Images*

RSVP for a Field Trip

[L31-W Canal Birding](#) | Saturday, February 3, 7:30-11am

[Shark Valley and Big Cypress Birding](#) | Saturday, February 10, 8am-2pm

[Kendall Indian Hammocks Park Birding with Phoebes Birding](#)
Saturday, February 10, 7:30-10:30am

[Miami Exotics Tour](#) | Saturday, February 24, all day

RSVP for an International Field Trip



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

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

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

Photo: Galápagos Flamingos by Laurie McLaughlin

Featured Events

Tour the Historic Doc Thomas House
Saturday, February 3, 1 & 3pm



You're invited to tour our historic Doc Thomas House headquarters. Enjoy a captivating, 1-hour guided tour of the charming 1932 home led by a Tropical Audubon docent. Hear about ongoing restoration efforts and learn about TAS patron and area pioneer Arden Hayes “Doc” Thomas and Robert Fitch Smith, the architect who designed the Florida vernacular cottage, which is distinguished by native woods and limestone features.

In addition to the indoor talk and tour, your visit will include an outdoor walk to view the home's unique exterior features.

Tours are FREE and open to the public. Donations are welcome [HERE.](#)

Bonus: Explore our Bird-Friendly pollinator gardens and near-native Steinberg Nature Center grounds.

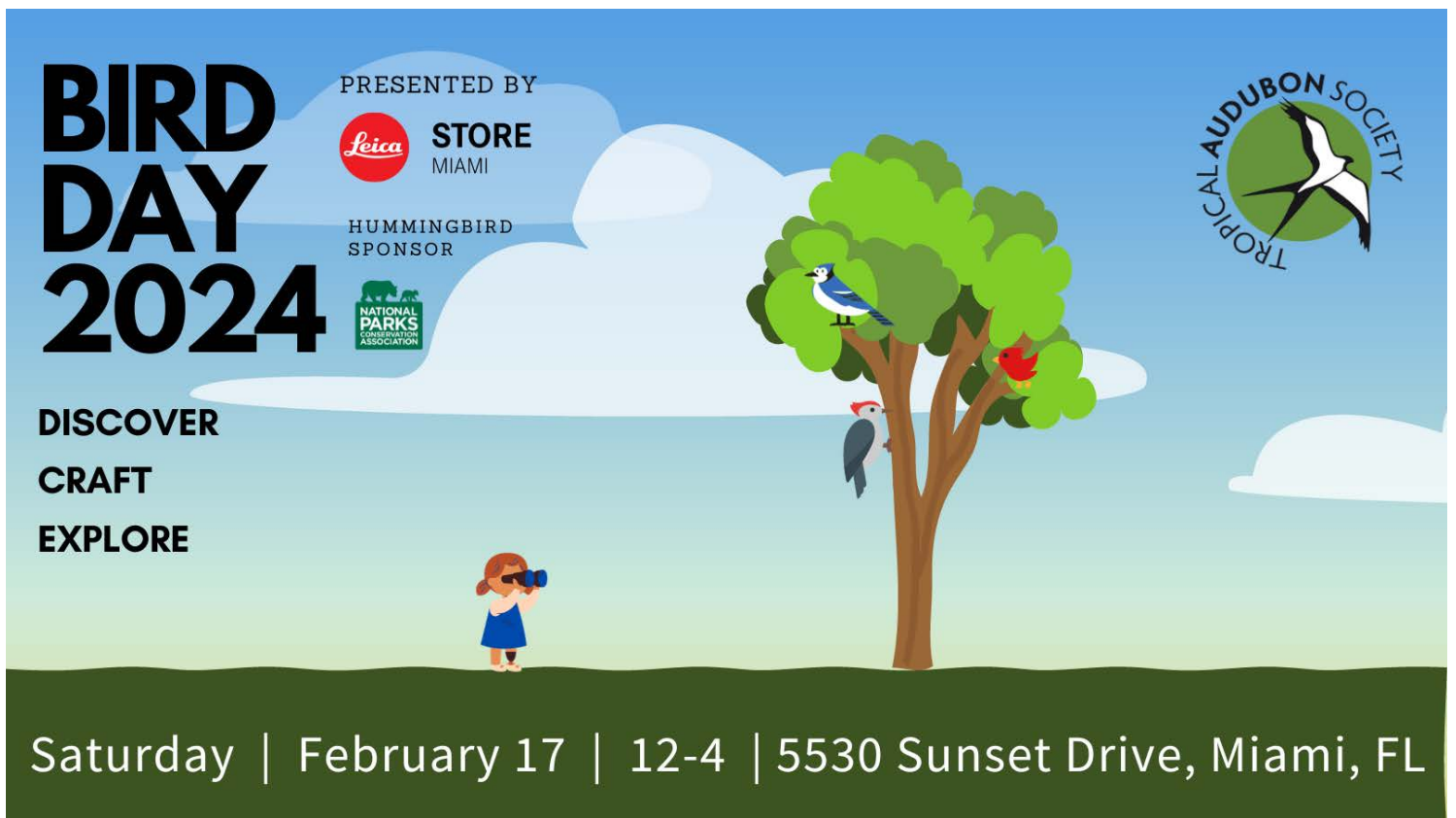
Location: 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143; limited onsite parking via the SW 55 Avenue auto gate.

RSVP HERE

BIRD DAY 2024

Saturday, February 17, 2024, 12-4pm

Presented by Leica STORE Miami

A colorful illustration for Bird Day 2024. On the left, the text 'BIRD DAY 2024' is written in large, bold, black letters. To its right, it says 'PRESENTED BY' above the Leica logo and 'STORE MIAMI'. Below that, it says 'HUMMINGBIRD SPONSOR' above the National Parks Conservation Association logo. In the center, a large green tree stands on a grassy field. A blue and white bird is perched on a branch, a red cardinal is on another, and a woodpecker is on the trunk. A small girl in a blue dress is standing on the grass, looking through binoculars. The background is a blue sky with white clouds. In the top right corner, the Tropic Audubon Society logo is visible, featuring a white bird in flight within a green circle. At the bottom, a dark green banner contains the event details: 'Saturday | February 17 | 12-4 | 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL' in white text.

BIRD DAY 2024

PRESENTED BY
Leica STORE MIAMI

HUMMINGBIRD SPONSOR
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

DISCOVER
CRAFT
EXPLORE

TROPIC AUDUBON SOCIETY

Saturday | February 17 | 12-4 | 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL

Calling budding birders and junior naturalists! Miami youth and their parents are invited to attend our free annual BIRD DAY festival featuring an engaging afternoon of games, prizes, exploration and educational activities on our 2.2-acre Steinberg Nature Center grounds. BIRD DAY is the perfect venue for school ecology clubs, scout troops and young children seeking an outdoor adventure. “Meet” rehabilitated wildlife rescued by the

Pelican Harbor Seabird Station and Wildlife Rescue of Dade County. Dissect Owl Pellets.
Craft Piping Plover “chicks.” Hone your binocular skills.

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

BIRD DAY participants can opt to join TAS Field Trip Coordinator Brian Rapoza for a primer on the 2024 Great Backyard Bird Count, a community science initiative that enables birdwatchers of all ages to count birds and help create a real-time snapshot of where birds are located. Learn how your family can participate in the February 16-19 event!

Tropical Audubon Society: 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, FL, 33143

RSVP

Conservation Concert @TAS
Featuring Plan B
Saturday, February 24, 7pm



Fans of Classic and Contemporary Rock can make a February 24 date with Plan B! The enduringly popular band returns to the Keystone Stage this month with a playbill of favorites led by founder Scott Kenward (guitar, vocals) together with Al Roque (drums), Alex Leeds (vocals, percussion, guitar), Al Larcada (bass) and Alvaro Gomez (keyboards, guitar, vocals). They'll rock the Doc Thomas stage with their signature high energy and authenticity. Wear your dancing shoes!

Also on the playbill: Nacho Bizness Food Truck. Wash down your tacos with bodacious brews and wonderful wines at the RNDC Donation Bird Bar.

Bring a Blanket, bring a Friend!

A limited # of picnic tables and folding chairs are available on a first-come basis.

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

\$10 Donation p/p, children 12 and under FREE

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

Parking: Limited free parking via our 55th Avenue auto gate and along 56th Avenue; metered parking on Sunset Drive; various garage and valet parking options within 1-3 blocks; Metrorail service to South Miami Station.

Don't miss a gig!

Circle these 2024 ConCon Season dates:

Saturday, February 24

Saturday, March 23

Saturday, April 27

Tickets

Conservation News

Protect Biscayne Bay Nesting Rookery!

Urge City of Miami to implement Non-Motorized Vessel Zone or Critical Wildlife Area & increase Enforcement!



Tropical Audubon Society and other conservation groups have come together to help better protect a Biscayne Bay marine bird nesting rookery lying off of Morningside Park. What's at stake: The City of Miami has failed to adequately protect the birds. While well intentioned, the City Commission's November 16 resolution to protect the rookery from "harm caused by humans" did not specify exactly *how* the City will ensure the rookery's protection.

Please urge the City of Miami Commission to enact a "Non-Motorized Vessel Zone" or work with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to designate a Critical Wildlife Area (CWA) around the nesting rookery to prevent nest abandonment caused by detrimental human disturbances.

The City must also be urged to enact immediate enforcement of the "Slow Speed Manatee Protection Zone" currently posted around the spoil islands off of Morningside Park and the "No Anchoring/Docking" legislation along City park shorelines.

TAKE ACTION!

CALL or WRITE the City of Miami Commissioners and urge them to implement a “Non-Motorized Vessel Zone” or CWA around Mangrove Island and request **immediate enforcement** of the “Slow Speed Manatee Protection Zone” and “No Anchoring/Docking” legislation along City park shorelines. Click the button below to email a letter to your commissioner.

Photo: Magnificent Frigatebird by Brian Rapoza

Take Action

Miami-Dade County *rescinds* Miami Wilds lease — sinks plan to build a water theme park on environmentally sensitive land



Miami-Dade County has officially rescinded its lease agreement with Miami Wilds LLC, finally sinking the controversial water theme park and retail development plan that would have threatened endangered species living near Zoo Miami.

[A letter](#) to Miami Wilds Managing Principal Paul Lambert from the office of Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava stated: "This letter shall serve as official notice that Miami-Dade County (the "County") hereby rescinds the Development Lease Agreement ("Lease") dated June 23, 2022 between the County, as Landlord, and Miami Wilds, LLC ("Miami Wilds"), as Tenant ..."

The mayor's action follows a December 12 vote by the Miami-Dade County commissioners to withdraw a proposal that would have amended the lease agreement. A majority of the commissioners voiced their opposition to the project, with one calling the plan "a dead horse."

Their vote followed a [federal court victory](#) for TAS and partner plaintiffs, which resulted in an order that reinstates land-use restrictions of environmentally sensitive land adjacent to Zoo Miami held by the National Park Service.

The theme park and retail development as proposed threatened the endangered Florida bonneted bat, endangered Miami tiger beetle, endangered Bartram's scrub-hairstreak, several endangered plants, proposed endangered Rim Rock crowned snake and globally critically imperiled Pine Rocklands.

The proposed development plan generated strident public opposition, which included a massive rally and letter-writing campaigns.

["It's a classic example of when the people lead, the leaders will follow,"](#) said [Ron Magill, the Zoo Miami Ambassador](#) who spoke out publicly against the project as a private citizen, and inspired environmental advocates to mobilize.

Thanks to the nearly 10,000 TAS members, friends and ambassadors who wrote e-letters to commissioners — your voice made the difference!

Photo: Endangered Bartram's scrub-hairstreak Butterfly

Plants for Birds

Bird-Friendly Gardening Day @TAS
Dig in Saturday, February 17, 9am-Noon



Help steward our Bird-Friendly Demonstration Garden and 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, or on your patio or balcony, and get familiar with the principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping.

Volunteers are needed to help remove invasive plants and tidy the grounds (rake leaves, wrangle fallen branches and clear our network of trails).

Photo: Native Florida Tickseed by Federico Acevedo

RSVP for Bird-friendly Gardening Day

Chirping About

Terrence "Rock" Salt
Receives Everglades Hall of Fame Award



Pictured from left: TAS Senior Conservation Director Lauren Jonaitis, TAS Board Member and award recipient Terrence "Rock" Salt, Everglades Coalition Board of Directors Co-chairs Mark

Tropical Audubon Society Board of Directors Vice Chair Terrence "Rock" Salt received the Everglades Coalition "Everglades Hall of Fame" award on January 26 for his lifetime commitment to Everglades restoration. Salt was honored by his colleagues at the Everglades Coalition's annual awards ceremony held at Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa in Naples.

Salt led the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers effort to attain Congressional Authorization and funding for the Kissimmee River Restoration project, setting the course for the start of Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). He remained part of CERP's planning process via his role with the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida. He's been active in Everglades restoration ever since and now serves as Vice President and Chair of the Conservation Committee for TAS.

Eagle Scouts beautify Steinberg Nature Center



Troop 457 EAGLE SCOUTS, their family members and leaders made significant improvements to our Steinberg Nature Center grounds on December 16. The ambitious volunteer project to remove invasive plants from the Hardwood Hammock and mulch and tend the trails that thread our 2.2 campus was led by Eagle Scout Julia Alayo-Matos (*pictured above fourth from left*) and supervised by TAS Events/Grounds Director Amy Creekmur and volunteer Susan McGrath.

Alayo-Matos also constructed and installed much-needed new wood directional signs for the trail, restrooms and parking lot. “The outcome of the project exceeded my expectations and I am really happy with the [results],” she said.

Our staff and board are extremely grateful to the troop members for their hard work, and to the parents and leaders who facilitated the project. We applaud their collective community service ethos!

The Birds Thank





The Birds Thank ...

The 11 University of Miami students who volunteered to groom our Steinberg Nature Center grounds for UM's Miami Day of Service project on January 20. They put some serious elbow grease into mulching the picnic grove where events such as Conservation Concerts are staged. Our Bird-friendly Demonstration Garden that faces Sunset Drive also received their love.

Previously known as National Gandhi Day of Service, Miami Day of Service is University of Miami's largest service day, pairing hundreds of student volunteer with community partners to work on issues such as poverty, environmentalism and education.

Support Birds

Become a Member

www.tropicalaudubon.org



{{Disclaimer}}

Tropical Audubon Society
5530 Sunset Drive
Miami, FL 33143
United States

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