

Florida – 2013

2/04/13

We left Franklin for the 2013 Florida trip at 3:45AM on 1/29/13. The temperature already exceeded the speed limit by the time we got to I294 in Illinois due to unseasonably warm weather in the midwest. Our drive was pretty uneventful but storms pushed behind us through Tennessee. After our overnight in Dalton, a tornado hit Adairsville, GA, about 60 miles north of Atlanta; an area we had just passed through.

As we approached the Florida welcome center on 1/30/13, I saw what at first looked like a wood duck in a pond. I quickly parked and went to see what it was, being very careful not to look at any other birds in the hope of seeing something other than a sparrow as my first Florida bird. The bird turned out to be a hooded merganser; in fact, a pair of them. Not only was this a new “first bird”, it was a Florida mark – good way to start the trip.



While at the Kascmarek's in New Port Richey, I visited Green Key each morning (1/31/13 & 2/1/13). The birding at Green Key was the best I had experienced there. The tide was low both mornings and I not only saw several shorebirds, skimmers and terns (royal, Caspian and Forsters) but hooded mergansers again. The causeway leading to the key had many herons and egrets including two reddish egrets. Along the causeway I noticed a new open area called Boy Scout Preserve. When I stopped there, I met a fellow by the name of Dave Gagne who indicated that the area had sora rails and marsh wrens – neither was seen. Dave gave me his card, indicating that he led guided tours for birders and suggested that I call him if I get to the area again [(727) 798-5707; opornis77@ yahoo.com].

We arrived at the condo on 2/1/13 and, keeping with tradition, went to the Fakahatchee boardwalk the next morning. Matt and Nicole joined us at the condo and Matt accompanied me to the boardwalk. Few birds were seen at the boardwalk but my Fak-a-habit was again fixed. We then went to the 10K marsh trail. Water levels seem to be high again. Spoonbills and white pelicans abounded and all of the wading birds were plentiful. I birded 10K again the next morning (2/3/13).

Yesterday it occurred to me that I had not been seeing the boat-tailed grackles normally so common at POI. Matt indicated that he might have seen them when he and Nicole went for an airboat ride at Wooten's and, when I took Cooch out this morning, I heard several of them. We all went to Shark Valley later and several were seen both on the way and in the park. Shark Valley had the usual assortment of wading birds and several were photo'd. Ann and I have also noticed that the black vultures don't seem to be as abundant around the condos as in previous years. I don't know if this is just due to normal variation or if some control measures have been used in the area.

2/6/13

I met the Berninger group yesterday and accompanied them on a hike along gate 18 of the Fakahatchee Strand. We hiked from Janes Scenic Drive to the intersection of tram 18 with tram 16. The hike began in an almost prairie like habitat and proceeded through pine flatland before getting into typical strand environment. Among the plants seen

2/6/13

I met the Berninger group yesterday and accompanied them on a hike along gate 18 of the Fakahatchee Strand. We hiked from Janes Scenic Drive to the intersection of tram 18 with tram 16. The hike began in an almost prairie like habitat and proceeded through pine flatland before getting into typical strand environment. Among the plants seen

in bloom were showy milkwort (*Polygala grandiflora*), glades lobelia (*Lobelia grandulosa*), squarestem (*Melanthera parvifolia*) and the four-petaled St. Johnswort (*Hypericum tetrapetalum*). Love vine, in fruit, was abundant. Especially neat were several of the hand ferns we saw along the way. Jack pointed out other ferns including the true marsh fern



(*Thelypteris palustris*) with its pinnales cut through to the base and their lateral veins forked at the tip. The sun showing through a live oak loaded with southern needle leaf (*Tillandsia setacea*) was the subject of some photographic efforts with marginal results. We also saw several butterfly orchids that were not in bloom. These are the same plants that I saw last year along tram 16 but was not able to identify them (see notes for 3/2/12 in the 2012 FloNotes).

Bear scat, seemingly fresh, as well as a large lubber grasshopper was seen along the way. One of the women on the trip was a guide at the Big Cypress Swamp who lives in

the Orchid Cove complex. I exchanged email addresses with another, Penny Pugh [pughp@hotmail.com], who indicated that she would notify me of trips to STA-5 [area #47 of the South Florida Birding Trail], an area especially good for birding. I received an email with a link to a schedule of trips to the area this morning. Not too many birds were seen on this hike but the common yellowthroat was added for the trip and a blue jay was heard. Some members reported a brown-headed nuthatch but I didn't see it.

2/7/13

Yesterday Matt and I dropped Ann and Nicole at Marco's South Beach and then went on to Tigertail Beach. Before we entered the beach area we saw one burrowing owl and a gopher turtle at Spinnaker dr. and Blackmore near the beach. At the beach we saw the usual assortment of shorebirds; nothing I hadn't seen before but several new trip marks bringing the trip list to 77.



2/10/13

On the morning of 2/8/13 I went to Kirby Storter in the hopes of seeing a few warblers. Few it was indeed; only a yellow-rumped warbler and a common yellowthroat were seen. I did add an eastern meadowlark and a loggerhead shrike to the trip list, though. In previous years I had seen the shrikes often – they even seemed to perch on the lanterns near

the pool at the condo. I do see them along the road near the parking lot now but they don't seem to be as common as in previous years. Several plants were seen in bloom at Kirby Storter. These included the grass-leaves arrowhead (*Sagittaria graminea*), cardinal air plant (*Tillandsia fasciculata*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), and one of the bladderworts (*Utricularia sp.*).

Later in the day, limpkins were seen along Hy41 toward Naples. They had also been seen along Hy951 north of Hy41 on 2/6/13.

I visited the Big Bend Boardwalk on 2/9/13 and recorded only a few birds for the morning. Of special interest, though, was a Lincoln sparrow seen across the road from the boardwalk. Most of the field marks, including the reddish sides and the streaked sides and belly, were clearly seen. This was both a 2013 trip mark and a Florida mark. What has been identified in previous years as the swamp dogwood (*Cornus foemina*) was seen in bloom along the boardwalk.



Today (2/10/13) Ann spent some time at the pool. On her way back she drew my attention to a snake in the vegetation around the pool area. Judging by its size and color I tentatively id'd the snake as a black racer (*Coluber constrictor*). The id was confirmed with Alden et.al. (1998). The brownish nose and white chin listed as field marks by this reference were clearly visible. Several photos were taken before the snake began to escape. Ann also captured a small insect in the condo. The insect measured about 1cm in length with a distinct narrowing between the thorax and abdomen. The head and tail were black but the thorax was an orange-tan color. The abdomen was distinctly triangular. Two longitudinal stripes projected from the origin of the abdomen on either side of the midline. These ended before the first transverse band. Transverse yellow bands appeared at the edge of each abdominal segment. The first of these was complete through the middle; the others less obviously so. The antennae were straight and simple, not bending or branched. Several attempts were made to id this insect with the internet. It appeared to be some kind of wingless wasp but no positive id was made.



2/11/13

I dropped Ann at the beach this morning and went on to Tigertail. The tide was fairly high and the beach small. By far, the high point of the visit was the sighting of a magnificent frigatebird soaring high over the water. This has been a target for the last couple of years but I haven't actively pursued it. I've been told to expect it over the ABC islands and at fly-over's in Mackle Park but I have not seen the species in those locations. This was not only a trip mark but also a Florida mark. I also thought that I was seeing a new

shorebird at Tigertail, possibly a stilt sandpiper. The bird seemed to have greener legs than I was expecting for the dowitcher. I took multiple photos, most to be discarded later, for help in id'ing this bird. It finally turned out to be a short-billed dowitcher after-all. The characters that finally decided in favor of the dowitcher were heavily barred flanks and the long bill being lighter near its source. Both of these characteristics were clearly shown in Sibley (2003). This was also the first time that I remember seeing shorebirds with bands on their legs. Several of the dunlins had leg bands; one being #119. While I was at the beach I watched a white ibis picking fiddler crabs from their burrows on the shore. Upon catching a crab the ibis would run to the water and drop it in the water, seemingly to wash off the sand, before it ate it. I was able to get a decent photo of the ibis with a crab in its mouth.

When I left Tigertail I went on to Mackle Park in the hopes of seeing purple martins. There is a martin house along the pond at this park and, indeed, the martins were home. I also finally saw and heard fish crows at the park and added them to the trip list. I then drove along Landmark Dr. before picking Ann up from the beach. I saw several owl locations along this road but no owls were out. All told, this trip to Marco Island resulted in four birds being added to the trip list and one new Florida mark.

2/12/13

I was on my way to the Fritchie Road area this morning when I missed my turn and ended up turning around at an area that was, judging by a building foundation and a number of the plantings, formerly a residential or commercial building site. I had noticed the area because the remains of the building foundation had an abundance of tall Kalanchoe plants in bloom. I have recorded two species of this plant (*K. pinnata* & *K. tubiflora*) in previous years; both in Lee County. This was well before I had accumulated many of the guide books and was based primarily on Bell and Taylor (1982). As I now examine the AFP records for Lee County, one of these, *K. tubiflora*, is not found in Lee County. The atlas lists three species of Kalanchoe (*K. pinnata*, *K. daigremontiana* and *K. delagoensis*) for Collier County. This plant was certainly not *K. pinnata*, leaving *K. daigremontiana* and *K. delagoensis*. Wunderlin & Hansen (2003) distinguish between these two species on the basis of their leaf structure. According to this reference, *K. delagoensis* has subterete (nearly round) leaves while *K. daigremontiana* has flat leaves. Unfortunately, the plants that I examined and photo'd this morning were without leaves and both types of leaves were found on plants in the area that were not currently in bloom. Further observations will be needed to properly id this species. I also looked at an apparent domestic tree in the same lot. This plant had opposite, entire leaves with pinnate veins. The twigs were heavily hairy and the hairs had red tips. The flowers reminded me of the goldenseal that I see back home. Each flower seemed to consist solely of a large number of white stamens. The receptacle appeared to have a waxy substance surrounding the pistil. I couldn't find this tree in any of my references and searches of the internet were unsuccessful for identifying it.



When I finally got to Fritchee Road I was unable to find a possible western flycatcher as has been recorded there in the past. I had passed some cattle egrets on the way, though, and I added a phoebe to the trip list as well. I parked near the powder-puff tree where I saw hummingbirds last year. Two of them came while I was there. This tree seems to attract a lot of pollinators and not a few birds feeding on them. A number of warblers were seen. One warbler, very nondescript, was eventually determined to be a female common yellowthroat. An abundance of flies, bees and dragonflies seemed attracted to the bush. On my way back to the condo I drove into the road leading south of Hy41 where workers seem to be housed. Killdeer were seen there as the fourth trip mark for the morning.

2/13/13

I finally saw an American kestrel on the causeway as we entered Marco Island this morning. I thought I had seen one in Everglades City the other day but I wasn't sure. Following our usual Wednesday schedule, I dropped Ann at South Beach and went on to Tigertail. In addition to the usual shorebirds there, I saw a red knot and a snowy plover. I was able to get pretty good pictures of the snowy plover but the red knot flew away before I captured it on film (digital media?). The snowy plover was id'd primarily on the basis of its leg color and the black patch behind the eye as shown in Peterson. The knot was separated from the other larger shorebirds by its relatively short bill and speckled sides. While at the beach, I had another occasion to observe cleaning behavior; this time as a Wilson's plover captured a crab and took it to the water for cleaning.

Later in the day, I checked the BirdEye app on my iPod and found that all five of the plovers expected for this

area (black-bellied, semipalmated, Wilson's, snowy and piping) were reported at Tigertail today; seemingly, I missed the piping plover but not for lack of trying. The red Knot had been reported three days ago and I remember that Melissa Henneman had mentioned that she saw them there as well.

2/16/13

It was raining yesterday morning (2/15/13) and I wanted to bird somewhere where I could stay close to the car so I decided to drive along Janes Scenic Drive. I drove tram 7 (west main), parked there and walked along the road hoping to see some wildlife. It was pretty quiet; no mink as I had seen last year and no panthers as usual. I did see several deer from the road, though. I also saw a couple of species of *Sagittaria* in bloom, probably *S. graminea* & *S. lancifolia*, as well as blue porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*) and the horrible thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*). Wild coffee was also seen with its berries. Later, in evening, I used a variety of internet sources to make a key for ferns of the genus *Nephrolepis*.

This morning I went to the Big Bend Boardwalk with the idea that I would use the fern key I made yesterday to identify some of the sword ferns of the Fakahatchee Strand. I never got into the ferns, though. Instead I concentrated on birds in the hopes of getting the trip list to 100. I heard a great horned owl as I entered the boardwalk and later saw a hermit thrush to move the list to 97. The boardwalk was like a reunion this morning. First I met woman from Mequon who had failed to connect with her photography class. Then, as I began the return from the observation deck, I met the fellow that I had met last year who played tapes of the birds to draw them. He indicated that Sugden Park was a good place to see indigo and painted buntings without the \$10 Corkscrew fee. According to him, there is a feeder on the far side of the park which practically guarantees these two species. He also suggested a visit to the Bird Rookery Swamp off of Shady Hollow near the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary as a good birding site (CREW Bird Rookery Swamp Trails, 1295 Shady Hollow Blvd W, Naples). Finally, I met up with the Townsend's and compared a few birding notes with them. Fred told me that the reason there are fewer vultures at the condominiums this year is because they hung dead vultures in the area and the vultures moved to Everglades City. I remember reading an article in the Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel about the problems vultures were causing in Everglades City. As I left the boardwalk I identified a myrsine bush (*Myrsine floridana*) with sufficient confidence to add it to the plant list. Immature fruits were abundant below the bunched leaves of most branches.

2/18/13

The area has been inundated with tree swallows lately. Yesterday (2/18/13), I went to Sugden Park to look for the feeder with painted and indigo buntings that I had been told about. I think I found the feeder that had been described but, it being mid-day, there were no birds around it. The park did have lots of tree swallows, though, and I noticed a lot of them again around the condo yesterday afternoon and early evening. This morning I stopped at TenK and the area, with water much higher after two days of rain, had an abundance of the swallows and few of the wading birds seen there regularly.

Before TenK, though, I went to the Shell Island Road of Rookery Bay in the hopes of adding an eastern Towhee to the trip list. I had seen one there last year but, apparently due to a recent prescribed burn, none could be found this



morning. I did see a few interesting plants at the boardwalk and along the road. At the boardwalk, a species of PawPaw was in bloom. The taxonomy was made easy by a sign identifying the plant as *Asimina reticulata*. I have seen PawPaw plants in bloom in various places over the last several years and had added it to the plant list without a specific epithet. I will now add this scientific name without the presumption that all of the PawPaw's seen were the same species. Another shrub was identified by the signage as the rusty lyonia or stagger bush (*Lyonia ferruginea*) because of the rusty underside of the young leaves. This plant won't be added to the plant list unless I identify it again. Another one of the signs indicated that, in an oak scrub area, one could expect Chapman's, myrtle and sand live oaks. No attempts to id these were made but I did review several references regarding oak identification. I have been wondering about the difference between live and laurel oaks and it appears, by a number of references that the underside of the live oak leaves are hairy while those of the laurel oak are not.

A herbaceous plant was seen in bloom near the beginning of the boardwalk. The plant was about 1ft tall with most of the bottom leaves missing. Those near the top were opposite with a prominent central vein. A single terminal flower was seen on the two plants in bloom. The bloom was long-stalked with five white, fan-shaped petals joined in the middle at a somewhat raised, yellow center. The plant immediately reminded me of the periwinkles used back home in gardens. A photo in Hammer (2002) appeared to confirm the id as a Madagascar periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*) except that, consistent with the name, the flower in this photo is rosy-pink. The description does allude to possible white flowered plants with pink centers, though. The photo in Bell & Taylor (1982) is similar to that in Hammer (2002). This species was added to the plant list.



Along the boardwalk I got the best comparison of the two leather ferns that I can remember. I identified a large number of the coast leather fern (*Acrostichum aureum*) near the observation platform overlooking the pond. The giant leather fern (*Acrostichum danaeifolium*) was also seen along the walk. The much more widely spaced pinnae of the former species was evident.

Coral bean was seen about to bloom along Shell Island Road. Large flower buds, not quite open, were seen on a plant not yet leafed out. The twigs of this bush were light green with small thorns. The trunk was grey. Myrsine, with fruits along the branches, was also recognized nearby. I also examined a small herbaceous plant in bloom along the roadside. At first, the plant reminded me of the Mexican clover (*Richardia grandiflora*) except that the plant was somewhat spreading along the ground. The leaves were opposite and joined the somewhat brown-red stem in noticeably reddish nodes. The flowers were arranged in a terminal inflorescence with two to four flowers in bloom at a time. The flower consisted of what appeared to be a calyx tube with six, pinkish lobes free at the distal end. There appeared to be two stamens attached to each division of the calyx and there was a single style divided into three stigmas. Hammer (2002) suggests that this is, indeed the Mexican clover and I think I'm just not used to seeing it allowed to get this big.

2/20/13

Somehow I missed the Berninger group on the morning of 2/19/13 According to recent emails, we were supposed to meet at McDonalds this morning and then go on to Serenity Walk Park and locate two target birds; the brown-headed nuthatch and the red-headed woodpecker. I showed up at McDonalds but couldn't find the group. After a short wait, I went on to the park without them. The park consisted of a looping trail, about 1 mile long, going through two types of pine flatlands. The upland pine flatlands had an understory of saw palmetto and the hydric pine flatlands had an understory of grasses sedges, etc. The birding was not easy. Most of the birds were high in the slash pines that dominated both environments. At several locations along the trail, though, I heard and saw pine warblers and I also finally saw a robin overhead. I was also able to see five red-headed woodpeckers at widely separate locations (or else I saw one very active woodpecker). These three birds finally moved the trip count to 100. I never did see the brown-headed nuthatch, though.

One plant along the trail attracted my attention. It was a trailing vine winding around a seemingly dead bush. The

stem was brown and the scattered leaves arrow-like with a palmate arrangement of veins. The flowers were in terminal umbels and had a slightly pink tinge. There was one short bract at the base of the inflorescence. Each of the open flowers was five parted and had a distinctly two parted stigma. I thought I had a new plant for the list and was able to id it as the climbing hempvine (*Mikania scandens*) with Hammer (2002). Checking the database for this species, though, revealed that I had id'd it once before; near the end of last year's stay.

Today, I went to the Margorie Stoneman Douglass festival and heard a talk on the "Dinosaurs of the Everglades" by Jack Berninger. Before the talk I asked him what had happened on the previous morning regarding the trip to Serenity Walk Park and TenK. He indicated that the group did, indeed, meet in the lot behind McDonalds but that they went to TenK first and then to Serenity Walk Park. He also reported that they did see the brown-headed nuthatch but that it was called in by a recording played by another bird watcher that was there. I couldn't help but wonder if that was the same fellow that I have run into at the Big Bend Boardwalk.

I targeted the four small belted plovers of the genus *Charadrius* this morning at Tigertail beach. I can't remember ever seeing as many shorebirds there as I did this morning but I still couldn't find the piping plover or the snowy plover. I think I may have to walk through the water to the other side of the lagoon to find them. I did manage, though, to get reasonable photos of the red knot.

2/22/13

I attended a talk by Mike Owen ([Epiphytes of the Fakahatchee Strand, the Water Connection](#)) at the MST festival this morning. As usual, Mike gave an informative and enthusiastic presentation. In it, he suggested that the strangler fig actually be called the "out compete the host for sunlight fig" but he realized that that would not catch on. According to Mike, the area got over three inches of rain last week. I find that believable judging by the water levels along the marsh trail at TenK. I've been there a couple of times since the rain and have noticed the change relative to earlier this year. I birded there yesterday morning (2/21/13). The number of species was consistent with earlier mornings but there were fewer individuals; many of the birds counted being seen overhead. As a result the opportunities for bird photography have been fewer than normal.. I did finally begin seeing a few warblers, though, and that continued this morning at the Big Bend Boardwalk where a black and white warbler became species #103 for the trip.

I found an apparent goldenrod in bloom at the end of the marsh trail yesterday. The leaves were noticeably large near the bottom of the plant and got regularly smaller toward the top. These leaves were entire and grasped the stem but were not perfoliate. Most of the leaves, especially those toward the top of the plant were ascending. The stem was somewhat red-speckled. The flowers were in wand-like inflorescences, each with eight ligules. The plant seemed to be most consistent with what I have earlier id'd as *Solidago stricta*. I compared this species with *S. sempivirens* on the AFP and found that the plant much more resembled the latter. Other plants in bloom nearby were the showy milkwort (*Polygala grandiflora*) and the apparent marsh fleabane (*Pluchea rosea*).

At the Big Bend Boardwalk this morning I noticed the buttonbush in bloom for the first time. Dogwood was also still in bloom.

2/26/13

After a breakfast of the greatest eggs, at the Island Café in Everglades City, I went once more to the MSD festival on Saturday (2/23/13). I looked at a few displays about orchids and then bought one of the Paphiopedilum group. It was labeled "Supersuk x Raisin Pie". I didn't attend any of the talks on that day ; most of them being about orchid culture and care.

Sunday morning (2/24/13) I walked about a mile along the west main gate (tram 7) of the Fakahatchee Strand. I started out trying to distinguish between the various species of sword ferns (genus, *Nephrolepis*) but couldn't get into the discipline. I walked the tram until I got to the two cottages (about half way to the Four Stakes Prairie) and then headed back to my car. As I've noticed in previous years, orange trees are found along this tram at several, apparently disturbed, locations. The fragrance of the oranges was very strong at those locations. I actually collected one of the oranges near the walk to one of the cottages. Later I found that it peeled like a tangerine and was extremely sour. I recognized Caesar weed (*Urena lobata*) in bloom at one of these seemingly old home sites. I also saw what I believe to be Canada moonseed (*Menispermum canadense*) but this plant was not in bloom. It seems to me that I have seen this in the past but I have never added it to the plant list. This plant is shown by the AFP for Collier County so I added it to the list.

Zebra longwings (*Heliconius charitonius*) were in flight along the tram. I thought I heard a northern waterthrush but it turned out to be an ovenbird. This, along with goldfinches seen picking down from horrible thistles, were

new trip marks for the year. I also saw a ring-necked snake (*Diadophis punctatus*) on the return walk. Unfortunately, it appeared to be freshly killed; perhaps dropped by a bird.

Yesterday (2/25/13) Ann found an activity about as rewarding as searching for morels at the Kickapoo. She had been talking to one of the women at the condo who had noticed her shells drying in the lanai. According to this woman, sand dollars could regularly be found at Tigertail Beach. So, off we went to the beach. We actually walked across the lagoon to the gulf shore and walked for quite a distance, I believe to and beyond the area they call Sand Dollar Spit.. One woman coming from our direction of travel had a bag with numerous sand dollars and soon we began to find parts of the sand dollars ourselves. Try as we did, though, we never found a complete specimen. We did collect a few nice shells, though, and when added to the others that Ann has collected there is the start of a nice collection. One of these days I will have to begin id'ing some of them and add them to these notes.



I had better luck with the birds than Ann did with the sand dollars, though. Our walk took us well beyond the origin of the lagoon and there were lots of shorebirds and gulls as well as terns. I was able to get pretty good pictures of royal terns as well as a lifer, a lesser black backed gull. I also finally saw the piping plover on the return walk but I was not able to get close enough for any decent pictures. Now I have seen all of the five plovers common at Tigertail but I have yet to see all of them on the same day.

Beside the alligators, a few other interesting herps have joined us at the condo. Ann woke me the other evening (2/24/13) because a large tree frog had gotten into the condo and was croaking loudly. As I chased it out the door I thought it was probably one of the large Cuban tree frogs supposedly common here. Last night there was an interesting lizard outside of our entry. Unlike the day lizards we see on occasion, this was a very light colored lizard with very small, dark eyes. Its head seemed to be more flattened and wide compared to those of other lizards I've seen in Florida. It easily walked the vertical walls of the condo, hugging closely to the surface. This lizard did not resemble any of those shown in Alden et al (1998). The closest I can find on the internet is the Indo-Pacific gecko (*Hemidactylus garnoti*) [<http://srelherp.uga.edu/lizards/hemgar.htm>]. It was present in about the same area tonight.

This morning (2/26/13) I went to TenK. The water level seems to be receding somewhat and the megawading birds beginning to accumulate again. The count for the morning was 30 without spoonbills. Although still being seen, the tree swallows are not as numerous as they were a week or so ago. While I was there I met a guy who was fishing near the observation tower. After we talked and I moved on, I heard a large splash and the man scream. He had hooked a gar and, as he was pulling it in, a large alligator jumped up and took his fish and bait. Needless to say, it scared the guy out of his mind. Another birder, from Michigan, reported that he had seen swallow-tailed kites yesterday in Chokoloski; I have yet to see them.

At the end of the marsh trail I double checked the goldenrod I saw a couple of days ago. The stem of this plant was not grooved. The rays numbered from five to eight with eight to ten disc flowers. The lack of a grooved stem seems to eliminate *S. stricta* and support the id as *S. sempervirens* (see notes of 2/22/13). Another plant growing nearby was also in bloom. This was a small woody shrub about eighteen inches tall. It had alternate, simple leaves with pinnate venation and the leaves were toothed. Both the stems and the leaves were hairy, almost woolly. Flower clusters were in the axils of those leaves toward the tips of the branches. The individual flowers were about 3/8 of an inch in diameter and had five petals somewhat spreading near the tip. The sepals were thin and pointed and were in line with the petals. The plant reminded me of the sleepy morning (*Waltheria indica*) I had id'd last year. Hammer (2002) confirmed the id when I got back to the condo.

A large grasshopper was seen near the beginning of the marsh trail. This did not appear to be the lubber grasshopper. I saw an adult lubber along the Fakahatchee tram 16 when I was with Jack Berninger and his group. I have also seen the young of this species in several locations this year. Lubber grasshoppers, according to Alden et al (1998) are flightless but this one flew a short distance when I disturbed it. Of the grasshoppers shown in Alden et al (1998) it most closely resembled the American Bird Grasshopper (*Schistocerca Americana*). The gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanilla*) and white peacock (*Anartia jatrophae*) were among the butterflies seen on this walk.

2/27/13

Another day in rainy Florida; perfect for sorting through Ann's shell collection and doing a little molluscan taxonomy. We paged through Witherington & Witherington (2009) and identified what we could of the shells collected to date. Those identified were listed in a new appendix V of FloNotes: [Gulf Coast Shells](#). Our initial efforts listed 19 taxa from 14 families. Hopefully, we can add to this in future trips to the beach.

2/28/13

Being only two marks away from 110 birds before the end of February, I checked ebird to see where my best chances of breaking the mark would be. I decided that the greatest concentration of birds would most likely be at Eagle Lakes Park so I went there this morning. It was a great morning. I saw forty-six species including four trip marks bringing my total to 112. I met a birder there who indicated that he has seen female painted buntings there and that another birder has brought them out with recordings — this fellow really seems to get around.



3/5/13

The Friends of Tigertail held an event "Discover Tigertail" at the beach on Saturday, 3/2/13. It consisted of several displays scattered along the beach and the area near the changing rooms. The displays included birding, butterfly garden, manatees, sea turtles, live creatures from the lagoon and shells. Many of the presenters were from the Rookery Bay Preserve. I especially liked the one showing egg cases of various of the gastropods. I didn't realize that the gastropods laid eggs in cases while the Pelyceps shed egg and sperm into the water. Many shells were on display by members of the Marco Island Shell Club. A volunteer at one of them suggested a good web site for identifying shells of southwest Florida: (<http://shellmuseum.org/index.cfm>). Walking on the beach I noticed Opuntia and dune sunflower were in bloom at the time. There are nine species of Opuntia shown in the AFP for Collier County; the species of this plant was not determined.

In the afternoon (3/2/13) we went to the Big Bend board walk of the Fakahatchee Strand. At this time of the day, little was seen but several small lizards and a water moccasin were photographed..

We've been in a bit of a cool spell lately so I was looking for a place to bird from the car this morning (3/4/13). I decided to drive the loop between Turner River and Birdon Roads in the Big Cypress Swamp. My idea was to likely add at least a bluebird to the trip list; I added that as well as a Cooper's hawk. Although not too many other birds were seen, I did see quite a few of the wildflowers and had an interesting review. Pine-Pink (*Bletia purpurea*) was seen in bloom at quite a few locations along both roads. I looked more closely at the Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) and compared it with those I find back home. These plants were about 18" tall with most of their leaves basal. The stem and leaves were very hairy (strigose). One main vein was seen on the leaves examined. There were about 12-13 ray flowers evident. I also looked at one of the goldenrods that was in bloom. In stature, it reminded me of the grey goldenrod. It was short, had a single flower stalk and tipped slightly at the top. Most of the leaves were basal. The cauline leaves, though, were very much reduced, almost scale-like, and sharply ascending and hugging the stem. The flowers were secund. This appears to be the Wand Goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*) described in Hammer (2002). Among the other plants seen in bloom were Tickseed (*Coreopsis leaenworthii*), the Horrible thistle (*Cirsium horridulus*), Beggarticks (*Bidens alba*), Everglades Squarestem (*Melanthera parvifolia*) and Small's Flax (*Linum carteri*).

Later in the afternoon, I tried, once again in vain, to add an eastern towhee to the trip list by walking along the boardwalk at the Briggs Nature Center. Driving along Shell Island road I did see the Sea Oxeye (*Borrchia frutescens*) in bloom as well as an apparent species of rattlebox which later was id'd as the Showy Rattlebox (*Crotolaria spectabilis*).

3/6/13

I failed to meet the Berninger group at a site called the Prairie Pines Preserve a while ago. According to its web site the preserve consists of "a mosaic of several native plant communities, including wet and mesic flatwoods, depression marshes, wet prairies, and prairie hammocks, marshes, and a small area of abandoned pasture". A bonus was that dogs were allowed as long as they were leashed. So, Yesterday (3/5/13) Ann, Cooch and I went to see it. At first we were really disappointed. We walked a small birding trail and found little of interest. Then, Ann talked to one of the Lee County workers at the site and he indicated that there were about 21 miles more to be seen if we followed the equestrian trail. We walked in about a mile; mostly through what I'd call pine flatwoods and began to see a few plants in bloom. Common Nightshade (*Solanum americanum*) was one of them. I've seen this in Florida before but never added it to the plant list. I did so as a result of this sighting. It appears, Bell & Taylor (1982), that this is a different species than the one called common Nightshade at home. One of the Hat Pin type of plants (Eriocaulaceae) was not id'd to species. I also saw a possible rabbit's foot clover but did not id it with certainty. Tickseed (*Coreopsis leaenworthii*), Pineland Heliotrope (*Heliotropium polyphyllum*), Swamp Pimpernel (*Samolus ebracteatus*) and burnweed (*Erechtides hieracifolia*) were also in bloom at this time. Interestingly, the wildlife list for this site included a hairy woodpecker and I was able to add one of these to the trip list while we were there. Few other birds were seen.

Today, we went to Tigertail beach. Ann wanted to cross the lagoon and do some shelling while I went on a guided walk with one of the volunteers, Fran Huxley. Frankly, I was disappointed in the walk. I was hoping to get a handle on some of the herbaceous plants (grasses and herbs) along the beach but little was said about them. Fran pointed out the Sea Grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) and Coco Plum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*) and indicated that they both produced edible fruit. She also pointed out the Coinvine (*Dalbergia ecastaphyllum*) and showed some of the fruit by which it is named. I recognized this as a plant I had seen and photographed last year but was never able to id (see notes and photos for 4/25/12). The plant has now been added to the plant list. Later in the walk she identified various mangroves and described some of their adaptations for living on the beach. While examining the mangroves I

noticed quite a few snails on mangrove stems and leaves. Fran id'd these as periwinkle snails.

Birding started out pretty good. A pair of ospreys were at the nest but they seemed to be pestered by a third osprey. Fran indicated that they had not nested yet this year but that there were signs that they might yet do so. She also talked about some of their adaptations; carrying fish head first for aerodynamics and being able to move one of their fingers from the front to the back. We also saw a magnificent frigatebird overhead. This is the third time, now, that I've seen a frigatebird at Tigertail. It appears that I may have missed them in previous years. When it came to shorebirds, Fran was a bit indecisive. We did see quite a few (all recorded for the day in BD) but her id's were a bit tentative; I relied more on my own abilities. Of interest were her comments about the red knot eating only the eggs of horseshoe crab and, thus, being somewhat in peril.

While I was on the walk, Ann was busy finding her first sand dollars and the egg case of a welk as well as several interesting shells. When we got home, she cleaned the shells. It seems apparent that, when they are examined later, we will add several new species to our growing appendix V.

3/8/13

I went to TenK yesterday morning (3/7/13) and added the blue-headed vireo and the Louisiana waterthrush to the trip list. I immediately thought the waterthrush was a Louisiana rather than a northern but it disappeared quickly. Although I don't generally bird electronically, I played the song of the Louisiana waterthrush with the Peterson warbler guide app on my iPod and a bird flew from the area I had seen it and almost flew into me. I thought I heard it then call but a white-eyed vireo was also calling and I couldn't be sure which I was hearing. I went on to the end of the marsh trail and, on the way back, played the song again. The bird immediately flew up into a bare tree in plain view. The "bold white rear supercilium" and the "buffy rear flanks" described in Sibley (2000) were clearly visible. Tree swallows were pretty active again over the marsh. Later in the day, on a drive along Hy41 going toward Naples, I finally saw my first swallowtail kites for the year.

Later in the day I used Witherington & Witherington (2009) to identify some of the shells Ann collected on 3/6/13. Six new species of mollusks in addition to her sand dollar (Echinoderm) were added to Appendix V. In the evening I went to the March seminar of the Marco Island Shell Club. The meeting featured the Rookery Bay educational specialist, Dave Graff, talking on: "Life in the Lagoon... A Sampling of Survival Strategies at Tigertail". It was a pretty interesting talk. His slide presentation showed many of the animals that you might expect to find in the Tigertail lagoon while stressing their adaptations for life there.

Inspired by last night's talk I was glad to go shelling at Tigertail this morning (3/8/13). Another swallowtail kite was seen over the causeway to Marco Island on the way to the beach. Ann and I collected a large number of shells; several of which will be new additions to our collection. Although some of them are not wonderful specimens, they will have to do until replaced by better ones. I also collected several sponges, barnacles, coral and other specimens that will need to be identified. I found an apparent plumed worm (Onuphidae) but, unfortunately not knowing what it was at the time, didn't keep it. Included with those shells collected were a number showing interactions with other organisms. Witherington & Witherington (2009) helped me identify bore-holes of both gastropods and pelyceps, boring sponge perforations and polychaete worm grooves on several of the shells. Finding such evidence of interaction adds a new dimension to shelling.

Very few plants along the beach were flowering although I did see *Gailardia* in bloom. I also saw a shrub with somewhat glossy leaves seemingly clustered near the end of the twigs. It appeared similar to the Beach Naupaka (*Scaevola taccada*) pictured in Witherington & Witherington (2009) but the AFP does not show this species for Collier County. It does show *Scaevola plumier*, though. Unfortunately, Nelson (2011) relies entirely on floral characteristics to distinguish between these two species and this plant was not in bloom at this time. A positive id was not made.



3/9/13

I drove out to the Loop Road this morning. The condition of the road, as far as I drove, was much improved over previous years. When I got to the Sweetwater Strand, I saw an apparent yellow-crowned night heron and got sever-



al fairly close photos. As I examined the photos and available references [primarily Peterson ()], I changed my mind and called it a black-crowned night heron — no mark #119. Like yellow-crowned, this bird had very small spots on its wings. When it finally flew because of an approaching car I noticed that its legs extended well behind the tail. Further consideration, however, recognized that it had quite an amount of yellow on bill and lacked white edges on its primaries. Also, its general stature was more that of the black-crowned. I also found a great egret and a little blue heron that were very photo-cooperative

I didn't pay a lot of attention to the plants on this trip but I did notice a

goldenrod in bloom that was not of the types I've been seeing thus far.

This afternoon I attempted to id more of the shells that Ann and I recently collected from Tigertail. Two types of barnacles were added to the list. The id's must be considered tentative, though. They are based entirely on Witherington & Witherington (2009) and I have no idea how comprehensive this reference is. As far as the mulluscs are concerned, we have now listed 35 species from 22 families.

3/10/13

I purchased an orchid (*Spathoglottis*) at the market on Pine Ridge and Airport Pulling Road. This was a ground orchid rather than an epiphyte.

3/11/13

I met with the Berninger group this morning to explore the portion of the Collier Seminole Park north of hy41. We met at the park entrance and while I was waiting to connect with the group, I saw Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) in bloom near the park entrance. After I met up with the group we entered the north section of the park and walked the orange trail east of the unblazed service road.

Shortly into the hike we saw the apparent small-leaved climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*) along the path. This was very different from what I expected; the fronds being very small, distinct nevertheless. We didn't pay too much attention to other ferns during our walk but we did see swamp ferns and a few others.

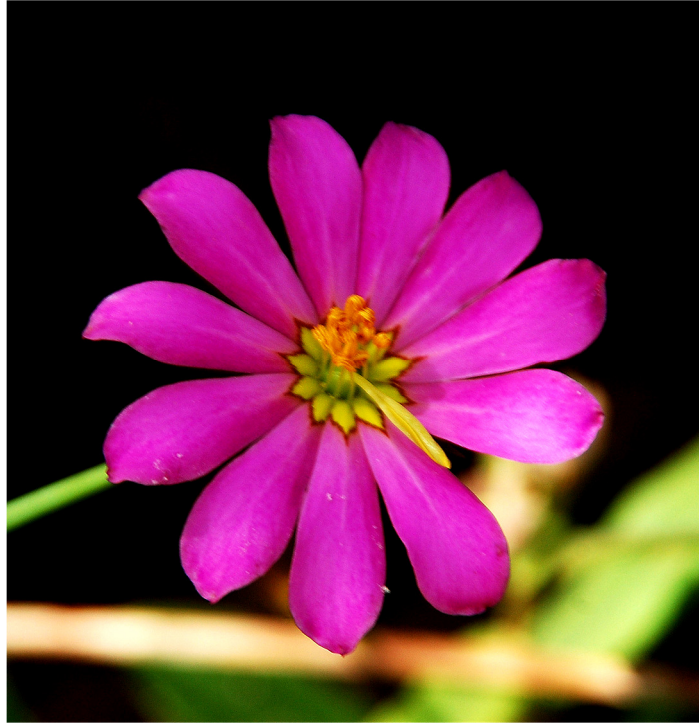
Jack and Elaine seemed to differ a bit on some of their identifications. They argued a little over the id of the Pitted Stripeseed (*Piriqueta carolineata*) and the Small's Flax (*Linum carteri*) but I believe we saw both. There was also some difference of opinion about what Jack id'd as a Queen's Delight and whether it was the herbaceous perennial (*Stillingia sylvatica*) or the woody Corkwood (*Stillingia aquatica*). I thought it looked most like the woody species I identified at Sabel Palms last year although it was more yellow and less red than what I saw and photo'd there. There was also some discussion of the possibility of confusing this species as well as the Southern Bayberry (*Myrica cerifera*) with young Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) shoots.

Elaine and I examined several aster species. She id'd one as the Rice Button Aster. (*Aster dumosus*). This plant had small pinkish flowers and much reduced, dried cauline leaves. Another aster had seemingly more narrow opposite, linear leaves. The flowers were bluish with yellow discs. In my mind, these asters were not positively id'd to species.

Several of the sabatia species were seen in bloom. One was id'd as *Sabatia raminea* by Jack but I couldn't find a reference to this species in any of my references. A small white species was also seen. It had five widely spaced petals with no apparent ring. The leaves were small and somewhat ascending. I later id'd this plant as the White Sabatia (*Sabatia brevifolia*) and added it to the plant list. Bartram's Sabatia (*Sabatia bartramii*) was also seen in

bloom.

Some of the plants seen were id'd casually but not to species. One was a hawkweed. Also, a small sundew, very orange, was seen along the service road indicating that there must be a lot of moisture there. One of the butterworts was also there. A possible false nettle could have been confused with a clearweed. One of the Ladies tresses was also in bloom. Several species of St. Johns-wort (*Hypericum* sp.) were in bloom including the Fourpetal St. Johns-wort (*Hypericum tetrapetalum*). Eriocaulaceae was also well represented but the comments of Jack and Elaine did little to clear up the confusion that I have with this group. Jack did point out one he called Bantam Buttons but he didn't mention a specific name. There was also a bit of discussion on the differences between dodder and love vine but there was still confusion on the matter. Jack pointed out rosemary and I realized that it was a plant I had seen previously and possibly confused with rabbit's clover. It had small bluish flowers but Bell & Taylor (1982) suggest brown or yellowish flowers for this plant. A small bladderwort was id'd by Jack as *Utricularia subulata* and a species of *Bacopa* with a distinct turpentine odor was found. Jack also pointed out a species of *Eupatorium* but was unsure of the species. Other plants mentioned were a small pellitory with whorled leaves, a snowberry and muhly grass.



Some plants were added to the plant list. The Chocolate Plant was a low lying plant with pink flowers with five petals having distinct lines. The leaves were three-parted and the entire plant appeared hairy. Jack id'd the plant with Hammer (2009) as *Melotia spicata*. Another was the Obedient Plant (*Physostegia purpurea*) which I noticed was much darker purple than those I see at home. The plant had long, linear, opposite leaves.

Other plants seen in bloom included the Pineland Heliotrope (*Heliotropium polyphyllum*), Tickseed (*Coreopsis laevenworthii*), Water Pimpernel (*Samolus ebracteatus*), Yellow Colicroot (*Aletris lutea*), Horrible thistle (*Cirsium horridulus*), Longleaf Milkweed (*Asclepias longifolia*), Narrowleaf Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*), Bluehearts (*Buchnera americana*), Blackroot (*Pterocaulon pycnostachyum*), Marsh Fleabane (*Pluchia rosea*), shiny Blueberry (*Vaccinium myrsinites*), the Cardinal Airplant (*Tillandsia fascicata*) and the Glades Lobelia (*Lobelia glandulosa*).

We spent some time looking at dragonflies but didn't have taxonomic references for id'ing them. A few small lubber grasshoppers were seen and one small toad was hopping across the service drive. We didn't see too many birds but what we did see was recorded in BD as usual. These records included a brown-headed nuthatch which we attracted with recordings of its call. Amazingly, when I played the song from my iPod, without amplification, several of the birds were attracted and were easily seen.

3/12/13

Being told that painted buntings were a near certainty at the Bird Rookery Swamp, Ann, Cooch and I headed there this morning to record #120 for the trip. I got to 120 but it was because of a downy woodpecker (finally!). Few other birds were seen but an entry to BD was made. We walked along a path which led to a boardwalk and then along a path that led to a 12 mile loop.

While walking on the boardwalk I noticed large clumps of a *Carex* type sedge growing below. I took several photos of the plant and eventually went below the boardwalk to observe it more closely and collect a sample. *Carex comosa* immediately came to my mind. The sedge was quite robust, being 18-24" tall with a thick triangular stem measuring 3/16" per side. The edges of this stem were slightly toothed. The larger leaves were 24-30" long and 1/2" wide with a strong "w" in cross section. They also were toothed along the edges as well as the ventral surface of the central vein. Large bracts exceeded the inflorescence. These were much like slightly smaller versions of the



leaves. The inflorescence consisted of several (3-5) female spikes each measuring about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long by $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. Each female spike was suspended by a short ($\frac{3}{16}$ ") stalk. There was also one male spike. The peryginia were more numerous than in the spikes of *C. lupuliformis*. These measured abt $\frac{3}{16}$ " and were long-tapered with forked ends. There appeared to be two styles. Comparing the six species of *Carex* listed by the AFP for Collier County, the plants did, indeed, appear to be *Carex comosa* and was added to the plant list.

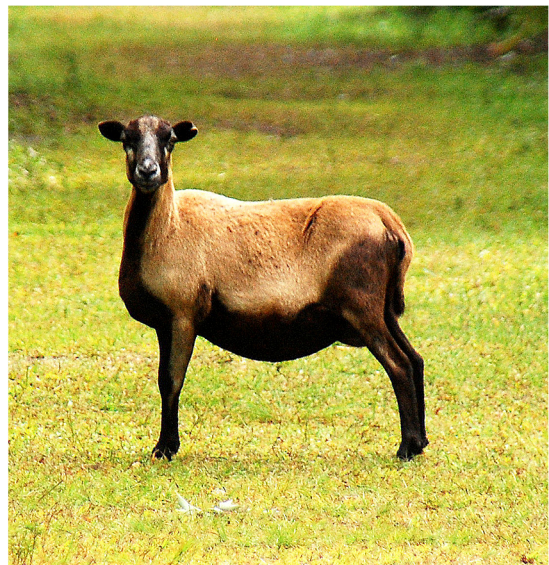
A few photos of other plants were taken but serious botany was not undertaken. The area appeared to have at least two species of arrowhead, as well as a variety of weedy plants in the Asteraceae. Tasselflowers (*Emilia fosbergii*), Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), apparent Bay Lobelia (*Lobelia feayana*) and day-flowers (*Commelina sp.*) were seen in

bloom. Several Blueflags (*Iris hexagona*) were also seen in bloom. I was surprised that I had never added them to the list and did so at this time. A small vetch was also seen. This had very thin, widely spaced, opposite leaves and small flowers with a slightly blue hue. This was likely *Vicia acutifolia* and was also added to the plant list. I also noticed several of the apparent rushes, grasses and non-carex sedges that I should be attempting to identify.

I didn't see too many animals along the way. Young lubber grasshoppers were seen and an old goat accompanied us for much of the trip. I also saw what I thought was fresh bear dung on the path.

3/13/13

This will probably be Ann's year for morels. We spent several hours walking the beach at Tigertail and she found several very nice sand dollars, mostly unbroken. We got a bit fussier in our shell collecting but we added three more to our list and replaced several in our collection with better specimens. I also collected what I thought was probably an egg case of one of the tulip snails. For me, this was another morning at Tigertail Beach paying more attention to shells than the birds. I noticed the common bird species, though, and recorded them in BD. These included a clear snowy plover that I got reasonable photos of.



I noticed the Beach Naupaka (*Scaevola toccada*) in bloom on this visit and listed the species in the plant list. Both flowers and fruit were present. The Indian Basket Flower (*Gailardia pilchella*) and the Dune Sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*) were also in bloom. Yellowtops (*Flaveria linearis*) showed the beginning of its flowering and the Cowpea (*Vigna luteola*) was also in bloom.

3/18/13

Ann and I went to the Marco Island Shell Club show on (3/14/13). After breakfast, we had a little time to kill before the show opened so we drove under the causeway bridge on Hy951. As soon as I saw the area I thought it would be perfect spotted sandpiper habitat; rocky shorelines. Sure enough, after a short period I saw the bird fly in and got trip mark 121; a new record over last year (but who's counting). We then went on to the shell show.

My purism as a birder has been compromised lately by my use of recordings so it is not surprising that I purchased some shells at the shell show. We went there on the 14th and again after doing some shelling at the beach (Ann at

South Beach and me at Tigertail) on 3/15/13. As a result we acquired several species not on our list of shells. This initiated a new policy regarding the list. Those specimens purchased, but not on our list, will be kept in a separate list until that species has been collected by us. Then they will be added to our official list. The birds were few at Tigertail on 3/15/13 but I was glad to see several red knots. I also had a very cooperative prairie warbler in the mangroves along the lagoon. I got a few decent photos of it as well as some of periwinkle snails and red mangrove flowers. I have been noticing the periwinkle snails on the last several trips to Tigertail. Witherington & Witherington (2009) shows four members of the periwinkle family (Littorinidae). The ones that I'm seeing are most likely the mangrove periwinkle (*Littoraria angulifera*). The smaller ones are pretty deeply colored but they seem to fade as they grow.



A while ago, the Bernenger group went to a place they called White's Bird Yard. I was unable to go but emailed Jack for information about it. He sent back directions and so, when Ann and I went to Largo to visit Jim and Lisa on 3/16/13, we detoured to find the place. White's Bird Yard is two houses west of the intersection of Broadway and Pearl streets in Alva, Florida. When we got there, Mr. White was out in the yard providing food and water for his many bird feeders. He saw me looking at his feeders and waved me over for a talk. He suggested that I stay for a few minutes and the many birds that frequent the feeders would return. They did! As Jack had indicated, I saw several painted buntings, a white-winged dove and numerous indigo buntings and goldfinches. Mr. White said that he often gets pine siskins but none came to the feeders while I was there. I had a nice talk with Mr. White, thanked him and gave him a small donation toward bird food. Then we continued our trip north to Largo. We decided to continue east for a while and then headed north on Hy29 to Hy27 and west again on Hy70 until it joined Hy75. As we drove we saw lots of orange groves and cattle ranches. Swallow-tailed kites were seen at several locations as were sandhill cranes.

We spent the night at Jim and Lisa's. During our many conversations Lisa recommended the Myakka River State Park as an interesting place to visit. So, on our return trip on 3/17/13, we detoured about nine miles east of Hy75 along Hy72 in the Sarasota area to the park. The park was interesting, indeed. Our arrival time was not the greatest for birding, but we spent about two hours driving through and enjoying the area. The park has a great variety of habitats including prairies, wetlands and flatwoods. I was amazed at the huge concentrations of cabbage palm in what appeared to be floodplains. Spanish moss and southern needle-leaf were extremely abundant. I didn't spend much time with detailed observations of plants but one plant especially attracted my attention. It reminded me of the white vervain that I see at home except that the flowers were blue instead of white. I finally id'd the plant with Taylor (1992) as the the Harsh Vervain (*Verbena scabra*) and added it to the plant list. I bought a copy of Vascular Plants of Myakka River State Park by Huffman & Benschhoff (2012) while I was at the park and the plant was listed in this reference. Other plants seen in bloom were the common white Bidens (*Bidens alba*) and the beeblossom (*Gaura*). A possible Eupatorium was also beginning to bloom.

Before we left the park, we stopped at the Myakka Outpost for a bit of refreshment. While I was feeding Cooch, I heard a loud bird song across the river. Finally I spotted the limpkin that was making the sound high in a tree. Another, closer to us, also sounded off before we left. I remembered hearing this sound in the past while I was hiking along one of the Fakahatchee trams but I was unable to identify it at that time. The other bird of interest in the park was the northern parula warbler.

Thirty-two birds species were listed this morning (3/18/13) for the TenK marsh trail. Few of them were close enough for good photos, though, so I was not able to take advantage of the somewhat overcast morning for photographing large white birds. Instead, I did do a little macro work; photographing a few of the flowers that were in bloom. Among those photographed was a small bush with grey bark and twigs. Its leaves were only about an inch long and 3/4 inches wide. The leaves were smooth, leathery and somewhat glossy on the top surface but a bit duller underneath. There was one main vein with pinnate lateral veins. Thorns projected from some of the leaf axils. Small white flowers terminated some of the branches. These were abt 1/2" wide with the petals in a tube spreading at the end. The calyx was much shorter. This could be the White Snowberry (*Randia aculeata*) but my references are unclear on this. I also noticed the Grass Pink (*Calopogon tuberosus*) that I id'd there last year in bloom. This year, though, it was on the east side of the walk, directly across from the observation tower. In the same area, I noticed large concentrations of apparent oysters as well as some kind of tube worms growing on the prop roots of

the red mangroves. These were photographed.

As I left the condo this morning to go to TenK I noticed the lizard earlier id'd as the Indo-Pacific gecko (*Hemidactylus garnoti*). It appeared to run into the threshold strip of the screen of the entry door. Tonight it was on the wall right above this area. I used flash and manual focus to photo the critter. The photo seems to confirm the earlier id.



3/19/13

For abundance and diversity of birds this year, Eagle Lakes Park has been hard to beat. I birded there this morning while Ann was shopping and listed 48 species in little over an hour. This included a painted bunting, black-necked stilts and a lesser yellowlegs to bring the trip count to 126. I noticed a very pretty Scarlet Milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) in bloom along the walk and I also noticed that apparently both the common cattail (*Typha latifolia*) and the Southern Cattail (*Typha domingensis*) were present. *Typha latifolia* had never been added to the plant list so it was at this time.

3/21/13

Yesterday (3/20/13) I met up with the Berninger group and we hiked the Fakahatchee tram 18 again, this time with Fakahatchee biologist Mike Owen. The trip was booked as a hike along Mud Tram but I'm not sure we ever got to it. Basically, we followed the same path we hiked on 2/6/13. Mike Owen indicated that the path had recently been opened and that he had not yet hiked it. He was anxious to check it out and record what he could for the park records. Quite a few plants were found in bloom including the Prairie Milkweed (*Asclepias lanceolata*), Beggarticks (*Bidens alba*), Pineland Pimpernel (*Samolus ebracteatus*), Oakleaf Fleabane (*Erigeron quercifolius*), Horrible Thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*), Yellow Star Grass (*Hypoxis curtisii*) and Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*).

Another plant seen in bloom was id'd by Mike as the Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*). This reminded me of the Bluemink (*Ageratum houstonianum*) that I had id'd in Lee County in 2007 but this species is not listed in the AFP for Collier County. When photos of these two plants were compared on the AFP, I decided to add the Mistflower to the plant list. Another plant that was seen in bloom and added to the plant list is the Creeping Cucumber (*Melothria pendula*). This was found intermingling with the vegetation near the beginning of the trail. Several fruit of the plant was also present. I did get photos of this plant.

Jack and Mike also pointed out several of the woody plants along the path. One of them was the Saffron Plum (*Bumelia reclinata*), a short shrub with abundant spines. Another was the Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*). This plant was readily id'd because of its whitish lower leaf surfaces. Neither of these plants was added to the list at this time. We also saw a small possible dewberry in bloom.

Although we didn't see many birds on this trip, we did see some interesting animals. Possible winged ants were coming out of a dead hollow log that was downed along the path. It almost appeared like smoke; the number being so great. We then saw a five-lined skink come out and lap up the ants as fast as he could. A couple of small anoles were also trying to feed on the ants. It was quite a phenomenon. This is when I got my flat tire. The sole of one of my shoes came loose at the toes and completely flipped back, being attached only at the heel. Luckily, one of the guys in the party had an emergency kit with duct tape and patched the shoe for me. I guess I need to add the tape to my field kit if I ever put one together. Shells of apple snails were seen along the path as well. Mike indicated that they were the native species; the invasive not yet being found in the Fakahatchee. We also saw a hatched egg mass of the snail; the height of which showed that the area has much higher water during the wet season.

As we left the area, driving along Janes Scenic Drive, Jack pointed out a stake he had placed to mark the location of a rather uncommon fern along the edge of the road. He referred to it as the goldenrod fern and I will have to go back to see and photograph it. We also saw one of the ground orchids in bloom. Jack quickly id'd it as the Pine-Pink (*Bletia purpurea*). Although we didn't stop to look at it more carefully, I thought it might have been the

Grass-pink (*Calopogon tuberosus*) that I had id'd at TenK last year.

It was that confusion that brought me back to TenK this morning (3/21/13) to double check the orchid. In addition to being present across from the observation platform, the plant was now in bloom where I saw it last year as well. After looking at it again, I am now wondering if it is the Pine-Pink after all. I think I need to go back and see the plant later in the day when the flower is more fully open. Until then, I think I will list the Grass-Pink as an excluded plant on my list. I also looked somewhat carefully at one of the vines twining about in the mangroves. It had very dark red stems with alternate leaves variously shaped. Tightly wound tendrils appeared to arise in the leaf axils although my references seem to suggest that the tendrils are actually opposite the leaves. The plant appeared to be the Corky-stemmed Passion-flower (*Passiflora suberosa*). This was id'd earlier in Lee County.

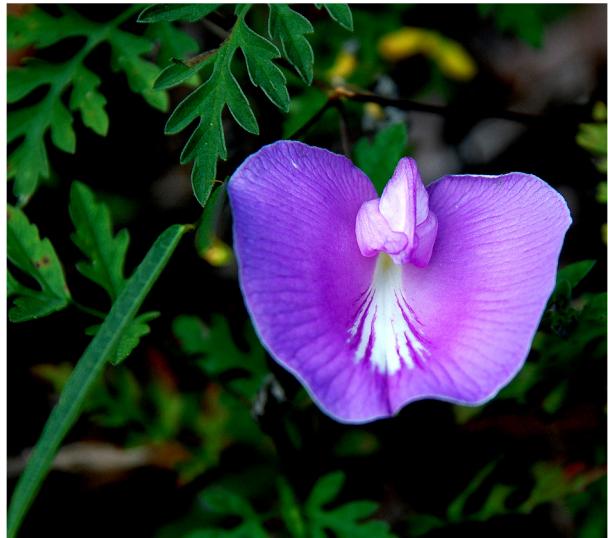
3/26/13:

We have had Ted and Rosemary Foti with us for the last several days so I haven't done much B&B'ing . There are a few items worthy of note, though:

We and the Foti's went to Tigertail beach on 3/22/13 and did some shelling on the Sand Dollar Spit. This resulted in a few more species being added to our collection.

I had sent photos of the skink that I saw with the Bernenger group on 3/20/13 to Jack and Elaine as well as Richard and Diane Johnson. On 3/24/13, I got an email from Jack indicating that it was a Broadhead Skink (*Eumeces laticeps*). I seem to recall that Mike had id'd it in the field as the five-lined skink.

On 3/25/13, we took the Foti's to the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. The swamp was as dry as I can ever remember seeing it; so dry, in fact, that the lettuce lake area was pretty much reduced to two muddy ponds. For me, the target for the trip was the yellow-crowned night heron but we never saw it. We also missed the painted buntings although we noticed, when we left, that they had been listed as seen for the day. The lettuce lake area did have a large concentration of wading birds including egrets, herons, storks and spoonbills. It was interesting to watch the "touch feeders" probing through the muddy water. The spoonbills would move their heads back and forth through the water occasionally jerking it back as if to swallow something they had found. I seemed to have trouble getting the right exposure with my camera, though, so the pictures are disappointing in spite of the fact that the birds were close by.



Included among the plants in bloom were the Virginia Willow (*Itea virginica*), Sand Vetch (*Vicia acutifolia*) and Water Hemlock (*Cicuta Mexicana*). I also added a couple of new plants to the list. One of these was de-



scribed as the Fakahatchee leafless beaked orchid by a couple of the park volunteers. Brown (2005) shows the Leafless Beaked Orchid (*Sacoila lanceolata* var. *lanceolata*) and the Fakahatchee Beaked Orchid (*Sacoila lanceolata* var. *paludicola*) I remember trying to see the leaves and could not find them so I think the variety *lanceolata* is what we saw. One of these was growing right out of a strap fern giving it the illusive look of a flowering fern. We also saw the Butterfly-pea (*Centrosema virginianum*) in bloom along the beginning of the walk in the more open dry area. This was id'd with Taylor (1992). One of my picture does show a leaf, a bit out of focus, thus preventing confusion with *Clitoria mariana*. Later, I noticed that this flower is featured on the pamphlet for the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. I purchased a copy of Flora of

Florida: Vol.1 by Wunderland and Hansen from the gift shop at Corkscrew before we Left.

Although I haven't done any serious birding over the last few days, records for Corkscrew were recorded in BD. It's also worth mentioning that, although not always recorded, the swallow-tailed kite has been seen on almost a daily basis.

3/28/13

I found an interesting plant growing along Fakahatchee's Tram 11 (East Main Gate) on 3/27/13. In general character the plant reminded me of the myrsine but it had terminal bunches of green to reddish berries. The leaves were opposite and lanceolate with pointed tips and short petioles. The main stem was grey. The plant appears to be the Marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*), in the same family as the Myrsine, and was added to the plant list. Other plants seen in bloom included one of the wild tobaccos, Coralberry (*Erythrina herbacea*) and the Sand Vetch (*Vicia acutifolia*). I also saw several specimens of bromeliads that I think were probably not in the Tillandsia group but I still do not recognize the other genera of Bromeliads in the field.

Once again I found a probable strap fern that was unusually small causing me to wonder if it might be Narrow Strap Fern (*Campyloneurum angustifolium*). This was apparently a repeat of the experience of 3/8/12 (see notes of 3/9/12) at which time I considered the possibility of the fern being *C. costatum* and added that species to the plant list. I have also seen a similar confusing fern along the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk. I photographed the plant and sent one of the photos to Mike Owen and asked him for an opinion. I await his response. There were few birds seen on this trip. I didn't even make an entry in BD.



Today (3/28/13) I visited Tigertail beach after dropping Ann at Marco's South Beach. I didn't cross the lagoon but examined some of the plants along the beach end. Apparent Water Pimpernel (*Samolus ebracteatus*) was in bloom along with the Beach Sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*) and Coco-plum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*). Sea Grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) was seen to be sending out flower buds but was not yet in bloom. I also saw more plants of what was earlier id'd as Beach Naupaka (*Scaevola toccada*) in bloom. These looked more like the Inkberry (*Scaevola plumieri*) but a close examination of floral structure was not made. I need to look at the fruit color of these plants on later trips. Another shrub examined had small alternate leaves. These were lanceolate and somewhat succulent. When broken, the leaves had a distinct fragrance which seemed, at first, to be somewhat like a citrus. I later determined that the plant was likely the Beach Elder (*Iva imbricata*) as shown in Witherington & Witherington (2009). The id was supported by Nelson (1992). The plant was added to the list.

On recent trips to Tigertail I have clearly seen Sea Oats but have never put them in the plant list. I decided to do that on this trip.

3/31/13

I heard back from Mike Owen on 3/29/13 and, according to him: "The plants in your photo look like juvenile *C. phyllitidis*". As a result I am going to list the *C. costatum* as excluded and will not list the *C. angustifolium*. That still leaves me with the apparent small strap fern along the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk located right by the sign for and sharing a fallen log with the resurrection fern. I viewed that fern again on the morning of 3/29/13 and it does not seem to have grown much in the last several years.

During a walk along the marsh trail at TenK yesterday morning (3/30/13) I noticed distinct signs of the area drying up. Black-necked stilts and greater yellowlegs were recorded for the morning. I remember that last year I was wondering if the coots had begun their migration north because I was not seeing them any longer. This year it's the

pied-billed grebe that is becoming scarce. I haven't seen too many mammals this year but both a marsh rabbit and raccoon were seen along the trail on this trip. Actually, I've seen marsh rabbits several times this year. I noticed more of the ground orchids growing further along the trail than I've seen them before. I seem to be seeing the leaves typical of *Bletia purpurea* and I've decided that that's the orchid (rather than *Calopogon tuberosus*) that I've been seeing all along; the grass-pink remains excluded.



For some time now, I have been wondering what lies beyond Hy41 on Tomato Rd. This road intersects with the highway just west of Collier-Seminole State Park. This morning (3/31/13), I walked down that road and found very little. White sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*) and common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) lined the road as it led back to a residential and probably agricultural area. Both of these plants were in bloom as was beggarticks (*Bidens alba*). The channel paralleling the road had water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) in bloom. There was also a large shrub with palmately lobed leaves. The mature stems of this plant was grey but the fresh growth was deep red. The plant was laden with ripe fruit which resembled small horse chestnuts. The plant was Id'd with Nelson (1996) as the castor bean (*Ricinus communis*). Internet photos supported this id. I remembered seeing this plant in nearby areas on the other side of Hy41 last year. Curiously, the plant was not listed by the AFP for Collier County. Perhaps it is restricted as an agricultural escapee and has not become naturalized. I added it to the plant list.

As I was returning to the car, having decided that the area was probably not worth another visit, I saw a great white heron in the ditch along Hy41. This was one cooperative GWH, making me happy for digital cameras. I also heard a rooster crowing all the while I was there — It wasn't on my Florida list, though.

Across the yard from the condo is a rough area which leads to water. The other day I saw a group walk into that area so this afternoon I walked into it to see what it was like. I was dressed in shorts and short socks so I didn't go very far. While I was there, though, I collected one of the "marsh" ferns and attempted to id it. With Nelson (2000), going directly to Thelypteris: [p.159: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 — *T. kunthii*] the fern keyed out to the widespread maiden fern. Using the new Wunderlin & Hansen (2000): [p.197: 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14 — *T. kunthii*] as well. There was some indecision regarding the relative nature of pubescence but I'm reasonably sure of the id. The plant was added to the plant list.

4/1/13:

I intended to drive along Janes Scenic Drive this morning but some utility work or such prevented a left turn to north Hy29. As a result I detoured to Birdon Road and botanized for a while.

Along Birdon Road were several flowering trees that attracted my attention. These were relatively small, upright

trees with a whitish bark. The leaves were somewhat clustered at the end of the branches. The leaves were lanceolate (widest in the middle), with short petioles and pinnate veins. The upper surface of the leaves was green but the undersides were somewhat white-wooly. There was a slight odor when crushed but this was not very distinctive. The flowers were large and cream-white in color. There were three reflexed sepals and eight white petals. It appeared that there was a single pistil in the center of the flower with possible stamens attached to it. The flower immediately reminded me of a magnolia and a search through Nelson (1994) suggested the sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginianum*). This plant is shown for Collier County by the AFP.

Lantana was also in bloom along the road. The flowers were yellow to pink with orange centers. The toothed leaves were opposite and the square stem had short thorns. Dogwood shrubs also were flowering as was the black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), Small's flax (*Linum carteri*), horrible thistle (*Cirsium horridulus*), southern beeblossom (*Gaura angustifolia*), yellowtops (*Flaveria linearis*) and the pine-pink (*Bletia purpurea*) among others. A small weedy plant remains unid'd. It had a reddish stem with a terminal inflorescence of five-parted brown flowers. The sepals were pointed, the points extending just beyond the petals, and the petals appeared to be somewhat inflated. There was one pistil / flower. A flowering aster was also seen. The lower leaves were long, lanceolate (4" x 1/2") and sessile. Clusters of small branches seemed to be sprouting in the leaf axils. The flower head was about 1" in diameter with more or less 30 ray flowers. The disc was reddish. The floral bracts each had 2 green lines joining into an expanded green terminus. The center head of the inflorescence opened first. An interesting fern was found growing in a large limestone boulder. It appeared to be one of the brake ferns (*Pteris sp.*).

I collected a number of small clams in one of the dried creek beds along the road. Some of them had both halves tightly closed. I wondered if they were alive and resisting desiccation. I put them in tap water back at the condo but none of them have opened at the time of writing these notes. I didn't see a lot of birds on this trip but I was able to record the white-winged dove for the second time on this trip.

4/5/13:

Things at TenK continue to dry up. There seems to be fewer birds and very few opportunities for close photos. I did go there on the morning of 4/3/13, though, and recorded most of the regular birds along with black-necked stilts. Maddy, Kenzie and Mike joined us on the previous day, though, so serious B&B time will be limited for a while. Ann and I took them for an air boat ride at Wooten's in the afternoon of 4/3/13. We did see a swallow-tailed kite & stilts on the ride. I was not at all pleased with our guide's lack of sensitivity for the birds. On several occasions, he approached the birds in a fast, threatening way and scared them into flight. It cost him some of the tip I had decided to give him but he'll never know.

On 4/4/13, we took the kids to shelling. Unfortunately, we found some nice shells. The I found some nicer specimens. Also, Kenzie found a long probably its reason for being birds, either, and I found mythem have left for the north. I thought. He delighted in find-demonstrating how they, once the sand.



Tigertail beach for some serious kids did collect a few, though, and of species we had collected earlier. welk egg case tangled in fish line; on the beach. There were not many self again wondering if many of learned a bit of biology from Mike, ing live Coquina clams and beached, dug themselves back into

4/8/13:

We had planned to go to Shark Valley on 4/5/13 but it rained all day and we went to Tin City with the girls. The next day (4/6/13) we did head out to Shark Valley. On the way we saw a roadkill otter with a couple of others running across the road. Although we saw swallow-tailed kites on the way to the park, Shark Valley, itself, was a bit of a disappointment. We did see a limpkin near the beginning of the walk, few other birds and gators were there. We came back by way of the Loop Road and we did see more birds, including roseate spoonbills, and many alligators. The kids got saturated early, though, and soon they were playing games on their iPods or texting their friends on their phones.

I did go to the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk for a little birding on 4/7/13. I didn't see many birds but I did examine some of the "marsh" ferns, one in particular. The basal veins of adjacent pinnules joined before proceeding to the

margin as pictured for *T. dentata* in Nelson (2000). Unfortunately, this reference doesn't show the venation pattern for *T. interrupta*, a species with which this species could be confused. The distinction between these two species, according to the keys of both Nelson (2000) and Wunderlin & Hansen (2000) relates to the condition of the sori. According to Nelson (2000), *T. interrupta* blades lack hairs and have marginal sori appearing to connect from pinule to pinule in a continuous line, while *T. dentata* has hairy blades. Wunderlin & Hansen (2000) also suggest the same difference of the sori and adds that the petioles of *T. dentata* are brownish purple above the base and that the lower leaf surface has short trichomes (less than 0.2mm) while in *T. interrupta* the base of the petioles is black. The small segments of the plants collected and brought home seemed to have very short hairs and the line of sori was discontinuous at the very tip of each pinule. On this basis I believe at this time that I am seeing *T. dentata* rather than *T. interrupta* but I still need to examine them further.

We went to the flea market on Bonita Beach road on 4/7/13. On the way back, we went to the Cay's Drive side of the Port of the Islands to see if we could find manatees. It had been pretty warm in recent days but we were able to see a couple of them, one close up. Later at the condo I showed the girls some of the shells Ann and I have collected from Tigertail this year. I divided some of the duplicates of the shells for the girls. Later in the evening we were playing cards and seemed to experience a small invasion of the water bugs. Some seemed to be attracted to the light above our table and even more were found on the kitchen floor. The bugs looked like our water boatmen back home but much smaller (1/8in. Long). They were probably of the family Corixidae, possibly of the genus *Sigara* but no positive id'ing reference could be found in the internet.

The kids left for Wisconsin today and the Kaczmarek's come for a visit on Saturday. That gives me four days for serious B&B.

4/9/13:

Three deer were seen in the scrubby upland area as I drove along Shell Island Rd. this morning. This was my third trip to the Briggs Nature Center boardwalk in attempts to add the eastern towhee to the trip list. This time it was successful. After I left the boardwalk I drove the rest of the road to the nature trail near the boat launching area. I had never been along this trail before and was surprised to see burrows of the gopher turtles in the area. Along a strip of shore bereft of mangroves I saw what appeared to be a hermit crab in a banded tulip snail shell as well as live banded tulip snails and possible conchs.



Three plants were added to the database as a result of this morning's walk. Along the Brigg's boardwalk a sign shows the rusty *Lyonia* (*Lyonia ferruginea*). I've seen this plant before but was hesitant about adding it to the list until I was confident I could id it without the sign. I clearly do this now. According to the AFP, this is synonymous with *Lyonia fruticosa* and it was added to the plant list with the latter name. Along the mangrove trail I found sixangle foldwing (*Dicliptera sexangularis*). This plant was id'd with Hammer (2002). Another plant id'd with this reference was the goatweed (*Capraria biflora*).



This small, white-flowering shrub had a tubular corolla separating into five pointed petals at the end. The leaves were alternate, lanceolate and widely toothed. The bark was light brown. All three of these plants were in bloom at the time.

4/10/113

Ann and I resumed our usual Wednesday routine by going out for breakfast, the market and then the beach; this time Tigertail. We got to the beach shortly after low tide and had good shelling. Ann's search image for sand dollars was still working as she found one of the year's biggest. Razor clams were added to the col-

lection and a sea squirt was also found attached to a shell. I finally saw the least tern and added it to the list, bringing the trip's total thus far to 129. I was also able to get decent pictures of a reddish egret as we came back across the lagoon.

4/11/13:

This morning I drove into the Fakahatchee Strand along Janes Scenic Drive not quite to gate 7. Along the early part of the ride, in the more prairie-like high ground, I saw nine deer in three groups. Several of them were developing antlers. Many dragonflies were later id'd with Brian Ahern's web site on Florida dragonflies (http://www.pbase.com/brianahern/florida_dragonflies) as the golden-winged skimmer (*Libellula auripennis*). By the photo in Alden et.al. (1998), which shows a red male, those I saw were probably females. Nice specimen plants of Pine-Pink (*Bletia purpurea*) were in bloom as was porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*), beggarticks (*Bidens alba*) and one of the primrose willows (*Ludwigia sp.*). Apparent common plantain (*Plantago major*) was also seen in bloom. Although this species is on the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park plant list, it has not been added to my database. It will now be added. I also saw a species of what I believe to be one of the panic grasses along the road. The stalks of these plants had several (5) leaves widely spaced and clasping the stem. The leaves were about 3/4" wide by 4'5" long. Each stalk was terminated by a panicle. The previously mentioned plant list shows six *Panicum* species in the park. Photos on the AFP did not help id this plant.



I also examined one of the ferns that I have been casually calling a brake fern. The plants were growing along the roadside. Quite noticeable was their very hairy (almost wooly) petiole and hairy rachis. The bottom pinnae of each frond were reduced and somewhat eared. The sori were in continuous marginal rows. This could well be the Chinese ladder brake fern (*Pteris vittata*) shown in Nelson (2000). Looking through the color plants in this reference, it seems pretty clear that the fern I id'd as *Thelypteris dentata* on 4/8/13 (see notes) was, in fact, *Thelypteris interrupta* after all. I also found a diagram on the web site for "Flora of North America" (http://www.efloras.org/object_page.aspx?object_id=41410&flora_id=1) which shows that the basal veins of adjacent pinnules for both of these species join as Nelson (2000) shows for *T. dentata*. Also, as I've noticed, the pinnae of *T. interrupta* are more pointed than those of *T. dentata*. This was corrected in the database.

Apparently one of the Florida frogs was active while I was in the park. Every now and then, they would seem to croak in unison and very loudly. They were not the pig frogs that I heard on other occasions. I also had an opportunity to get my 130th bird species for the trip but was not able to see the bird. Its call reminded me of the phrase "shave and a hair cut" with a cadence of: " _ _ _ _ _ — ". Notice the slightly higher pitch of the last note.

4/13/13:

I had little time for B&B yesterday morning (4/12/13) so I made a quick trip to TenK. Recent rain seems to have kept the area from drying. Conspicuously, several of the birds have been missing or, at least, have diminished numbers. White pelicans, wood storks, coot, moorhens and grebes are among them. Many of them have, perhaps, begun their migration or are nesting elsewhere. It seems that green herons and black-crowned night herons are more abundant than earlier in the trip.



I examined a fern of the “marsh” group along the paved area near the parking lot. It was a soft green in color. The pinnae were somewhat triangular with the pinnules at the base somewhat larger and flared from the rest. The petiole and rachis were yellowish and both frond surfaces as well as the petiole and rachis were hairy. The basal veins of the adjacent pinnules met at the margin of the sinus. It keyed out later with Nelson (2000) as *T. kunthii*.

Later in the day I dropped Ann at Marco’s South Beach and proceeded to Tigertail. Again, the birds were fewer than earlier in the trip in spite of low tide. I did see the least terns again, though, and recorded a few others. In the lagoon I watched a King conch crawling along the mud and eventually burrow in. I also spent quite a bit of time trying to photograph fiddler crabs, especially trying to document some of their interactions.

This morning (4/13/13) I got caught in the rain along Janes Scenic Drive at Gate 7. I examined another “marsh” type ferns along the road and determined that it was, again, *T. kunthii*. In this specimen though, in contrast to that at TenK yesterday, the petiole and rachis were deep reddish-brown. It may have been a more mature plant. Also collected one of the sword ferns for later examination. I also used Nelson (2011) in the field to id one of the primrose willows [p.144: 1, 2,—*Ludwigia peruviana*]. Kaczmarek’s will be joining us momentarily, so these notes may be suspended for a while.

4/19/13:

Kaczmarek’s left yesterday morning (4/18/13) and I spent a little time later in the day organizing the shells from the last visit to Tigertail. I added three more species to the list, bringing it to 47 collected thus far.

Once again this morning, I attempted to turn an immature black-crowned night heron at the marsh trail of TenK to a yellow-crowned one. This one had a more upright posture than others I had seen and I could not see any traces of yellow on the bill. The white spots on the wings were very small but I could not see the white edges along the wing coverts. Had I already seen a yellow-crowned night heron this year, I would probably have called this one but I wasn’t willing to use this bird for a trip mark. Thus, another black-crowned night heron.

TenK is surely drying up but recent rains have kept it wetter than I remember last year at this time. Fewer of the wading birds were present this morning but one deeper area provided enough diversity for a count of 27 species for the morning. Surprisingly, two reddish egrets and four cattle egrets were included in the count. I had never seen reddish egrets along the marsh trail before and had never seen more than a single member of the species anywhere at all. As noted earlier, immature black-crowned night herons and green herons are especially abundant along the trail. They are both very vocal as well as visible.

A few plants, including a ground cherry (possibly coastal groundcherry (*Physalis angustifolia*)) and a polygonum species (possibly *Polygonum grandiflora*) were in bloom along the trail. The wild allamanda (*Pentalinon luteum*),

seen along the trail last year (see notes for 4/16/12) was again seen and was beginning to bloom.

4/20/13:



I went to the Fakahatchee Strand (Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk) in the morning hoping to add a warbler or two to break the 130 mark for the trip. While I was there I met a guy from New Hampshire that I see each year and compared birding notes with him. He indicated that he saw a redstart which could have been my mark.

Unfortunately, I didn't see it. While I was on the boardwalk, I kept hearing a sound like ducks flying overhead. I finally decided that it was probably a frog sound. Later, at the condo, I looked for duck-sounding frogs on the internet and came up with the squirrel tree-frog (*Hyla squirella*) as a possible id (http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/frogstoads/hyla_squirella.php). After leaving the boardwalk I went across the street and got my best pix yet of a swallow-tailed kite.

When I got back to the condo, Ann showed me a nesting bird near the marina across the street. One of the neighbors roped the area and put up a sign indicating that it was a nesting Wilson's plover. Actually it was a killdeer and I took several pictures of it including its attempts to lead me away from its nest by feigning a broken wing. Ann then went to Bells and I had her drop me off at Eagle Lakes Park. The area had gotten really dry since my last visit but, in about an hour, I was able to see 33 bird species.



4/22/13:

Fakahatchee Strand this morning — Big Cypress Bend boardwalk. Finally, a chimney swift as number 130 for the trip but no new warblers. I did recognize a Dahoon in bloom along the boardwalk. Later I found that I had never added this species to the plant list so I did it with this id. I also found a suspected pineland purple (*Carphephorus odoratissima*) near the parking area but this should be observed more closely to confirm the id.

Later, at the condo, we heard the large alligator "booming" from the pond. I could see both his head and tail raised from the water as he rocked back and forth and he made his roar. Then we noticed a smaller, dead alligator further along the shore. Neighbors reported that the two were engaged earlier (perhaps yesterday) and that possibly the larger killed the smaller. That would be two kills for this "guy" in a rather short period. I couldn't help but wonder if we are witnessing a territorial dispute prior to breeding. Swallow-tailed kites continue to be seen almost every day; often above the condo.

4/23/13:

This morning I met my friend from New Hampshire again, this time at Bird Rookery Swamp. Ann and I went there hoping to find a few warblers for the trip list (at least, I was hoping). I didn't see or hear any and the fellow from New Hampshire said he possibly heard a northern parula when he came in but no others. On the whole, the swamp had dried up considerably since our last visit; birds weren't even recorded. I did see a plant that was later id'd as the balsam pear (*Momordica charantia*) with Hammer (2002); also apparently known as the wild balsam apple (Taylor, 1992). This plant was added to the list. Along the walk back to the car Ann found several nearly perfect fossil shells. According to Witherington & Witherington (2009), three of them resembled the present day cross-banded venus clam and the other appeared like one of the present day Atlantic kittenpaws. I didn't see the old goat this time (see notes of 3/12/13) but the guy from New Hampshire indicated that he also saw him on a previous visit.

4/25/13:

Ann and I went to Tigertail yesterday morning (4/24/13) for our last shelling experience of this year's trip. Alt-

though the tide was fairly low when we got there, it was near high tide when we left, about 4 hours later. We collected quite a few shells and were able to add several more to our collection of Florida species. I found it hard to watch birds while looking down for shells but several of them made their presence audibly evident. This was the first time I saw black Skimmers at Tigertail. A small group of them were resting on the beach with royal terns. Least terns were also abundant.

This morning I finally went to the Sabal Palm trail of the Picayune Strand. I saw many plants that I could identify and updated the database by adding this location to their entries. One of the plants seen in bloom was id'd as the pitted stripeeed (*Piriqueta carolineana*). When I walked with the Berninger group, this plant has been confused with Small's Flax (*Linum carteri*). Jack and the group seem to base the distinction between these two species on whether the petals overlap or not; doing so in the former but not in the later. Looking at the photos in Hammer (2002), however, it seems to me that a clearer distinction lies with the stamens. In the flax they have much longer filaments than in the stripeeed. The photos taken at Sabel Palm clearly resembles the pitted stripeeed.

A few plants were id'd for the first time and added to the database. One plant added was the miterwort (*Mitreola petiolata*). This plant was about 18" tall with opposite leaves measuring abt 1&1/2x 3/4". These leaves were widest in the middle with some development of the buds in their axils. The inflorescence was a terminal (often 3-parted) umbel. The flowers were very small and white. Both Hammer (2002) and Taylor (1992) listed the species but the photos in Taylor (1992) most resembled those I took. Another plant added to the list was the pale meadow beauty (*Rhexia mariana*). This plant was about 8-10" tall with deep pink flowers, each having four petals. The plant was seemingly unbranched and had small, opposite, linear leaves. Again, the lateral buds in the leaf axils showed some activity.

Brachen and swamp ferns were seen at various locations along the trail. I thought I was seeing the true marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) along the trail. This fern resembled those in the "marsh" group and, when I examined the veins in the pinnules, they were seen to have branched veins. Later in the walk, though, I examined another and found it to have the chain-like cell arrangement of the Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*). Subsequent examination of other ferns along the walk failed to show another true marsh fern. I expect I didn't see one afterall and added the Virginia chain fern to the list. I remember Jack Berninger pointing this fern out in Collier Seminole State Park so I listed this location as well.



As I was returning to the trail head, I saw a large fox squirrel and was able to get a decent picture of it. According to the trail guide, this was probably *Sciurus niger*, and is most likely the threatened Big Cypress Fox Squirrel subspecies (*S. niger avicennia*) described in Humphrey (1992). The range of this subspecies described in that reference is consistent with the id. I remember seeing a totally black specimen previously along Loop Road in 2010 (see notes for 2/22/10). The one seen today was much more like the one photo'd in Humphrey (1992).

4/26/13:

Today was one of my last chances to get to the Loop Road and Gator Hook. I went there early this morning and drove up from the west end as usual to a likely turn around spot. At the turn around spot I saw a purple flowered plant abt 18" tall. It had opposite leaves that were needlelike (linear) and about 1&1/2" long. The sepals were in a short tube which separated into 5 parts at the end. The

petals were also 5 parted. There seemed to be four stamens; two short and two longer, and a single long style. The plant reminded me of the obedient plant without the dense flower heads but I wasn't able to id it. I also saw a possible yellowtops in that area and examined it for possible confusion with the rayless goldenrod. This plant had long, linear, opposite leaves which were widely toothed. Each leaf had 1 prominent vein. Taylor (1992) shows

both of these species and this plant most resembled yellowtops (*Flaveria linearis*). I even saw a single ray in one flower as described in Hammer (2002).

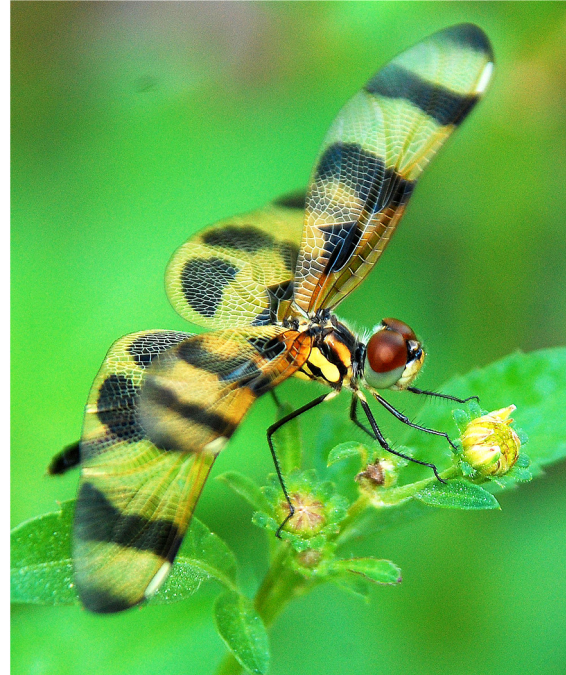


At one of the culvert areas I found a small bush-like plant that reminded me of a miniature lizard-tail. Using Hammer (2002) I found it to be the scorpiontail (*Heliotropium angiospermum*). The lower portion of the stem was clearly woody. The alternate leaves measured abt 1&1/4x3/4" and had pinnate veins. The small white flowers were on a long, downward curving inflorescence. Each flower had 5 petals and yellow centers. In that same area I saw two plants in bloom that seemed to be in the vervain group. One reminded me of the white vervain back home; with small white (with a possible blue tinge) 5-parted flowers on long wiry inflorescences. The opposite leaves were about 3" long and broadly toothed. The leaves also had coarse hairs. I believe that plant to be the harsh vervain (*Verbena scabra*) seen earlier this year at Myakka River Park. I updated the location field on the plant's database entry. Another herbaceous plant consisted of several (6-10) widely spaced stems coming from a common base. The stems were square and hairy. They were opposite and lanceolate with distinct teeth along the distal half. Small blue flowers were in crowded inflorescences. The petals were 5-parted with white centers. It reminded me of the velozo (*Verbena brasiliensis*) of Taylor (1992) except that the inflorescences of the flowers were not as long as shown in the photo. The AFP does show this species for Dada County and photos on the site suggest the possibility that the inflorescences get longer as flowering continues. The plant was added to the database. At several locations along Loop Road I used Nelson (2011) to identify the primrose willows. In each case the plants turned out to be *Ludwigia peruviana*.

When I got to the Gator Hook trailhead, I hiked in for about a mile or more; probably close to as far as I hiked last year with Jack Berninger but, not having another pair of shoes for disposal, without the swamp walk. I almost immediately saw a plant which I tentatively id'd as the Florida ironweed (*Vernonia blodgettii*). The composite flower head was deep red-purple in color. The leaves were long, linear and opposite with inflorescences coming from the leaf axils. The leaves were 4.5"x3/8". Later, Hammer (2002) was used to confirm the id and the plant was added to the plant list. Other plants seen here, as well as along the Loop Road were updated as to location in the database. I got good photographs of both *Tillandsia fasciculata* and *T. balbisiana* in bloom along the trail.

On the return to the car I saw several of the small butterwort (*Pinguicula pumila*) in bloom. This plant was added to the species list without a specific epithet last year after the swamp walk led by the Berninger's. The single plant seen at the time was not in bloom. This year's plants consisted of a basal whorl of small leaves and a single flower stalk. The stalk was abt 5" tall and had a single flower with 5 somewhat notched petals with yellow centers. Some of the plants had almost white flowers.

Lately, when Ann and I have been sitting in the lanai, we've noticed a lot of dragonflies in the area. Many of them seem to be the golden-winged skimmers noted on 4/11/13 but I've also seen smaller, black species around the foundation plantings lately. Several were seen today as well. Beside these golden-winged skimmers, I saw several Halloween pennants at Gator Hook and on the Loop Road also. I also saw some relatively large lubber grasshoppers along the trail at Gator Hook. Although large, they still had the color pattern of the immatures.



4/29/13:

This was the day of "lasts" for the trip. It was the last breakfast at the Island Café in Everglades City for the best eggs around (While I was in Everglades City, I stopped at the hardware store and purchased a copy of Reid Tillery's Low-Tech Land Navigation. This appears to be a pretty interesting little book.), the last oysters at the Crazy Flamingo and, most importantly, the last visit to the Big Cypress Bend boardwalk of the Fakahatchee Stand. Actually, there was little to see there this morning. Thirteen bird species were seen or heard and none of them could break the 130 mark for me. The birding doldrums seem to start early down here. I was seeing swallow-tailed kites on almost a daily basis for a while but I haven't seen one for the last several days. Few herons and egrets are being seen along the roads and several of the birds have been seen to be nesting. The young killdeer across the street are hatched and running about. While on the boardwalk, I made a few casual observation of some of the ferns; especially possibly two species of *Blechnum*, but no serious taxonomy was attempted. Basically it was a "goodbye" trip.

5/5/13:

We drove to the Kascmarek's on 4/30/13 and I went to the Starkey Wildlife Park for a couple of hours in the morning of 5/1/13. A few plants were in bloom and photographed for future reference. I saw an apparent winged sumac there and added it to the plant list. It was at Starkey's that I also finally found an apparent true marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) with the lateral veins of the pinnules branched in a "Y" like pattern. I was surprised that the branching occurred as close to the origin of the vein; the photo's in Nelson (2000) apparently somewhat out of proportion. This fern was also added to the database. Few birds were seen. I was hoping to add a warbler or two to break the 130 mark but that didn't happen.

On 5/2/13, we left New Port Richey for the long first day of the drive home. The drive was uneventful except for a few rain showers at various locations. Several interesting trees were noted along the ride, especially in Georgia. One, located in one of the waysides, was possibly a sweetgum (*liquidambar styraciflua*). Its star-like leaves were apparent. The other had huge clusters of large, lilac-colored flowers and was seen more generally along the highway, especially in wetter areas along waterways. This tree remains unidentified. After the usual overnight in Paducah, we arrived home on 5/3/13.

Summary

In several ways this year's Florida stay was different from previous ones. We had more rain, heat and humidity than in previous years. In spite of this, surprisingly, there were few mosquitoes, although the deer flies got bad near the end of the trip. I saw more bird species (130) than ever before and quite a few plants were added to the plant list. Few mammals were seen and, unfortunately, some of the larger ones that I did see (a bear and otter) were victims of road kill. Rabbits and raccoons seemed to be quite abundant and I was able to see the Big Cypress

Fox Squirrel. This was the first year that I got into shelling and Ann and I were able to build a list of 57 collected species including quite a number of sand dollars, Ann's specialty. I paid a bit more attention to the saltwater invertebrates; perhaps a focus of future trips. I got to know the Berninger group better and much enjoyed several field trips with them. Each year's trip get more interesting and this year's was no exception.