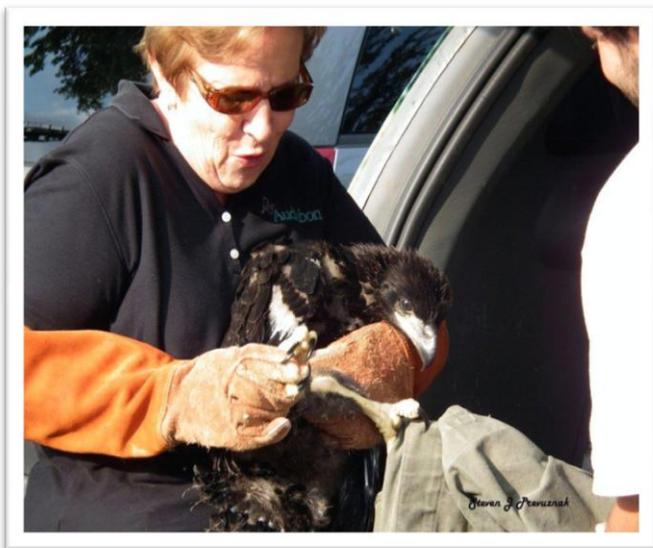


Wing Beat

We represent Audubon Society members in Northern Pinellas County and provide services to all who are interested: free local field trips with expert birders; inexpensive extended field trips within the US and to other locales, free monthly programs, volunteer & networking opportunities within the local conservation community; scholarships to local summer camps and speakers for a variety of classrooms and groups.



Eagle Watch

Barbara Walker

The Audubon Center for Birds of Prey is providing an eaglet his best chance for survival by taking him out of his nest for medical attention. Pinellas EagleWatchers noticed a problem with the eaglet, most specifically with the eye, last week. The problem had not resolved on its own and the eaglet would not likely have been able to fledge properly or learn how to hunt. Art Finn who is an expert tree climber came to the rescue and climbed the live pine up to the nest to get the six to seven week old eaglet. The nest started incubating on March 7th, the latest on record in Pinellas! It had also been inactive for the last four years. The eaglet's eye is improving and he will be released at a later date.

One other nest, at Anclote Key became active after being inactive for six years but that nest produced no young this year. Most eggs are laid in mid-December and incubation lasts 35 days. Eaglets typically fledge between 10 and 12 weeks. Pinellas County fledged 44 eaglets this year out of 27 productive nests. Seven active nests failed due to territory conflicts or unknown causes. 13 nests were on towers and one was on a wooden osprey platform.

Clearwater Audubon Society

August, September 2012

Vol. 48 No. 1

Supporting our community since 1959

Our Motto: Conservation through Education

For more information call us at 727-442-9140





California 2012

John Hood

Nine local birders under the expert leadership of Paul Trunk recently completed a trip to California. We flew into San Francisco and drove immediately to Yosemite. Up and out early the next day we birded the north rim of the valley seeing such birds as the White-headed Woodpecker and the Red-breasted Sapsucker. We continued on to Mono Lake with its strange tufa calcium carbonate formations and seabirds. On the south side of the lake in an unusual environment of pumice flats we found Lewis's Woodpecker. There were 2-3 foot trunk diameter conifers growing out of a flat pumice substrate with absolutely no understory vegetation. A very moon like vista. Brian Ahern got his 600th North American bird on this day.

The next day we birded the valley and took in all the usual natural features such as El Capitan, Half Dome, and Bridalveil Falls (Chestnut-backed Chickadees). We then drove up to Glacier point overlook (Thick-billed Fox Sparrow).

On our last day we went down to the south entrance area and birded a meadow area (California Quail), had breakfast at a 1927 lodge, and then hiked and hiked and hiked up and through an ancient grove of Giant Sequoias.

We then left Yosemite and drove to San Luis Obispo. Our first stop was at Moro Bay which has a large dome shaped old volcanic plug that was home to many Brandt's Cormorants and Western Gulls. Black Oystercatchers were also seen.

The following three days were spent in various habitats including a cattle feedlot for Tricolored Blackbirds (birders go strange places but no sewage treatment plants on this trip). We went to lakes, the seashore, the mountains (Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Oak Titmouse) and the plains.

The species count at the end was 138. Those who had not birded this area previously were able to easily add 25+ birds to their life lists. All in all a wonderful trip.

Our field trips and programs are open to anyone who has an interest in learning about Florida's environment. Call or email the trip leader prior to the trip for directions and information. Refer to the 2012-2013 Field Trips & Programs Guide mailed to members and online.



Brewer's Blackbird (female) at Yosemite NP

All photos by Sid Crawford



California Gull at Mono Lake



American Avocet at Mono Lake



The Beach Nesting Bird Season 2012

The beach nesting bird season was very active this year. Our Three Rooker Bar steward program was much enhanced from last year. A quarter mile area of beach was fenced off to protect the large terns and swim buoy markers were placed off shore to alert boaters that the area was closed. Stewards were placed at either fence on weekend days armed with spotting scopes and literature to educate the public. In general the response of the public was overwhelmingly positive. Other areas of the island were also posted and stewards placed nearby. The majority of the boat transportation was provided by Dan Larremore of Honeymoon Island State Park and Amy Clifton of FWC, without whom the program would not have been possible. Other drivers included Dennis McNeill, Dave Hood, Dee Dubendorff, Barb Hoffman, and Ted Tanner.

We had one north county rooftop nesting colony of Least Terns that was admirably managed by Mardy & Cy Hornsby. A number of birds fell, were banded and then returned to the roof. The maintenance personnel and management were quite helpful.

Our mega rooftop colony on Ulmerton Rd. underwent a major change this year. The manager/owner contacted Nancy Douglass of FWC to ask about having a fence installed. They provided the hardware cloth and bricks. Dave Kantz, Jerry Fletcher and I then cut 1600 feet of hardware cloth and hauled it along with a pallet of pavers onto the roof and assembled the fence. This resulted in a 95% reduction in birds that fell off the roof. Instead of many hundreds as in prior years, we had only about 30 after this project. Birds banded at Ulmerton in 2009, 10, & 11 were seen on beaches throughout the county and as far south as Ft. Myers.

The floating Least Tern rafts at Ft. DeSoto were finally successful after 2-3 years of bobbing about and being used only as a resting place. About 25 nests were created, eggs laid, and hatchlings raised to fledgling. When the rafts were brought close to shore so that the fledglings would have a short flight path to the beach we were able to band 14 chicks. One of our banded Ulmerton birds from 2010 was seen on the raft. Unfortunately we could not observe it feeding a chick so we don't know if it nested or was just hanging about. The success of the rafts has generated interest from other land managers in Florida and from as far abroad as the UK. The use of rafts will also be considered for Honeymoon Island.

Then along came tropical storm Debby. With 12+ inches of rain and tides 3-5 feet above normal the entire coastal island beach nesting bird population from Anclote to Egmont was wiped out. 30-40,000 chicks were lost – nearly an entire generation, a few birds (hatched before the storm) survived, including 50+ Royal Tern chicks and 1000+ Laughing Gull chicks. The only fledglings were those from the rooftops and rafts. The adults will be back next year to try again and so will we.



Terns and Chicks at Three Rooker Bar Raft
photo by Tom Carey



Three Rooker Bar Steward Station
photo by Marianne Korosy



Least Tern Chicks on Raft
photo by Lorraine Margeson



Officers of Clearwater Audubon Society

Membership

[Membership Application](#)

Size : 141,717 Kb

Type : pdf

Monthly Meetings

October – May

The first Monday of each month
at Moccasin Lake Nature Park:

Meet and Greet @ 6:30PM

Public Program @ 7:00PM

(Unless otherwise noted)

Past Issue of Wing Beat



click issue to view
May, June, July 2012

"A Boater's Guide to Clearwater Harbor & St. Joseph's Sound including Three Rooker Island, the Anclote Keys and Anclote Bar" is now available online.



click picture to view

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Clearwater Audubon Society Program Snap-Shots

May and Summer Clearwater Audubon Society Programs by Cynthia Kluss

The 2011-2012 Clearwater Audubon Society (CAS) program season ended with Dolly Cummings who represented the League of Environmental Educators in Florida (LEEF; <http://leef-florida.org>) and Camp Bayou (www.campbayou.org). Dolly shared an education exercise (EE) called "How Many Bears in the Woods". This WILD lesson plan starts with the premise of what a bear needs: water, food, shelter, and space. The audience participated with most of the bears surviving. These exercises help develop critical thinking skills, especially for kids. The LEEF network was formed in 1983 and services 34 counties in Florida. Its mission is to promote environmental education in Florida at all levels (knowledge skills) utilizing a variety of methods and resources. Camp Bayou, where Dolly works is part of the Hillsborough County Environmental Land Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP) and is managed by BOLD (Bayou Outdoor Learning and Discovery), a non-profit organization. Camp Bayou encompasses 160 acres near Ruskin. It is a Hillsborough County Nature Preserve and an official native plant nursery. On Saturdays, only, the fossil museum is open to the public.

Over the summer the movie [*Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time*](#) is scheduled to be shown on: July 18 (Wednesday) at 6:30PM at the Florida Gulf Coast Center for Fishing and Interactive Museum. This is a new facility located at 12211 Walsingham Road in Largo, Florida 33774 (727-365-4660, www.centerforfishing.org) The Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society is hosting the event.

The movie Green Fire will also be shown: August 4 (Saturday) at 2:00PM Weedon Island Preserve (1800 Weedon Drive Northeast St. Petersburg, Florida 33702, www.weedonislandpreserve.org) hosted by the Pinellas County Extension Service.

If you missed the CAS 2011-2012 program season, be sure to examine the up-coming 2012-2013 programs and field trips brochure. There are some great educational programs being prepared for you. An enormous Thank You to the Hospitality Excellence provided by Dorothy Fritzingler and Team Hospitality. Another good reason to attend the monthly meetings is to enjoy the skills of great cooks. Now is an opportunity for those interested in training for program planning and preparation. The program chairmanship is open in 2013. Contact Cynthia Kluss at programs@clearwateraudubon.com to start your on-the-job training. You will meet amazing people who enjoy the fun and possess expert knowledge of wildlife and natural habitats.

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Opportunity

Michael MacDonald

As I write this, Moccasin Lake Nature Park is working its way towards a planned future of great promise! User groups and interested citizens have come together to create vision, and the necessary plans, to grow MLNP. The facilitator of this process is an urban planner on staff at Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department.

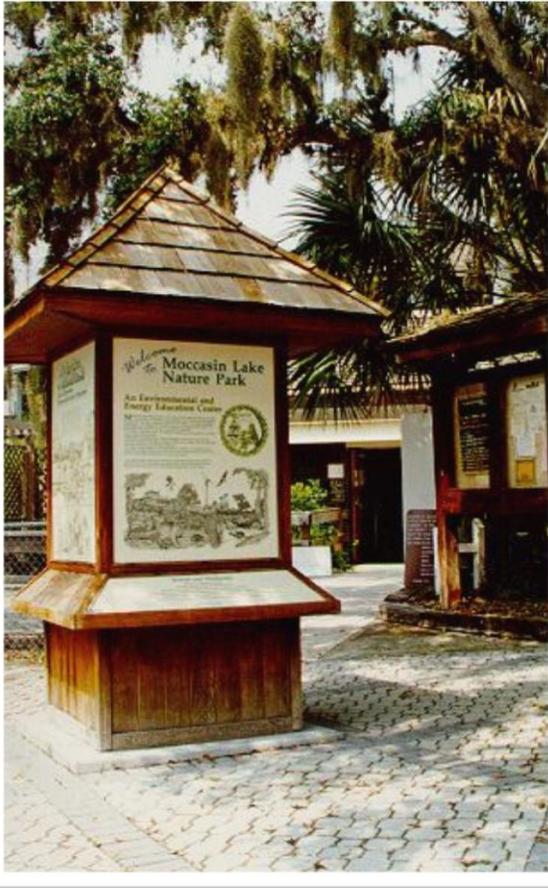
Recalling the history of MLNP, I see opportunity galore. CAS has been one of MLNP's user groups for more than a decade, and CAS members created a 'Friends' society to support MLNP. Those 'Friends' created many activities that offer opportunity for CAS to continue its generous support of MLNP.

Some of the activities those 'Friends' volunteers enabled:

- dock duty – occupy the Moccasin Lake dock to interpret wildlife and the park;
- roving naturalists –wander park trails to interpret wildlife, habitats and the park;
- animal handlers – interpret and exercise captive animals;
- maintenance – captive animal care, general park upkeep, repair and improvement;
- festivals – environmental fests to educate citizens and promote the park.

No matter your skills or 'free' time, seize this opportunity! Many dedicated people will be needed to help MLNP realize its potential. I'm looking forward to the challenge!

Wouldn't you like to volunteer your time and energy?



Opened in 1982, Moccasin Lake Nature Park is dedicated to providing guests with a unique environmental experience.

2750 Park Trail Ln.
Clearwater, FL 33759-2602

[Facilities Locator Map](#)

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