

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.

Florida Birding and Nature Festival



October 13-16, 2016

Highlighting Wildlife Corridors and Migrating Birds

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South Shore campus, 551 24th St. NE, Ruskin, FL (Tampa)

- Experience Central Florida's peak migration - over 180 species
- Field trips to the best wildlife sites in West Central Florida lead by our most experienced and engaging experts.
- Workshops on identification, nature photography techniques, conservation initiatives, and wildlife corridors.
- Birds, butterflies, dragonflies, reptiles, mammals and more.
- Nature products, art work, binoculars, bird boxes, unique products for wildlife lovers available for purchase.
- Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that protects birds native to North America.

<http://www.floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org/>

Clearwater Audubon Society

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>

August, September 2016

Vol. 72 No. 1

Supporting our community since 1959

Our Motto: Conservation through Education

For more information call us at 727-442-9140





Jamaica's Doctorbird

The main role of a Peace Corps volunteer is to form positive relationships that then support capacity building. I have started to share my love of birds with the community which they seem to find endearing and odd at the same time. I have taken the binoculars on the walks with the children and they are pretty good at using them to spot some feathered friends. They even helped me find a Jamaican woodpecker nest near my house! The area is rather birdy as I can hear the Yellow-faced Grassquits singing all day. There is also an abundance of White-crowned Pigeons and Smooth-billed Ani. The raptors at high altitude continue to be dominated by Kestrels. They have very little markings on their chests and seem to eat mostly lizards. I have glimpsed a few Red-tailed Hawks but only occasionally. The John Crow (Turkey vultures) are less abundant here than in Hellshire. I have also not seen any Jamaican crow, unlike Guys Hill where they were everywhere. Other fun notable species are the White-chinned Thrush, Red-billed Streamertail (Doctor Bird) and a familiar face the Red-eyed Vireo. I was very fortunate to have a close encounter with a female Doctorbird as she fed. The flowers were growing out of a vertical wall of red soil that bordered the road. As the kids and I walked she hovered inches from my face, darting back and forth without paying me any mind at all. Now that the kids have seen how excited I get when I see birds on our walks they are always pointing them out to me. Shanel, the 11-year-old that lives next door, frequently tells the other children, "Miss love bird." Miss is the general term all children call their teachers. On another walk with my 10-year-old host niece Shanique, I was fortunate to see a Jamaican Tody flitting about in a nearby tree. I was literally jumping up and down with excitement. Shanique told me, "Miss, you are getting too excited, Miss!" To which I told her there is no such thing as too excited especially when it comes to birds. As the regular school year draws to a close I am looking forward to more adventures to share. I hope everyone is well!

-Anastasia Steinbrunner



These are pictures from our swearing in ceremony where I was privileged to give the Education Sector speech.

My best, Anastasia





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)

First meeting is October 3

Past Issue of Wing Beat



*click issue to view
June-July 2016*

"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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University of Florida's Master Naturalist Program

-Tom Malone

Having moved from Minnesota a year ago, I found myself agog at my utter ignorance of my new home. I felt as though I dropped into a sub-tropical environment from Russia. Then, having learned of the Master Naturalist Program courses Senseng Nature runs in Pinellas County, I poked into it and decided to register for the first of three Core Modules, "Upland Systems".

There are a total of seven courses offered by Senseng Nature, but only the three Core courses are required for certification as a Florida Master Naturalist: Upland Systems; Coastal Systems and Freshwater Systems. Each of these three "Core" courses run for 40 hours of a combination Field and classroom work.

Upon completion of the three Core courses one is certified as a Florida Master Naturalist by the University of Florida and IFAS. The other, shorter, courses are 3 eight hour sessions as opposed to the 5 day Core courses. They are: Conservation Science; Environmental Interpretation; Wildlife Monitoring and Habitat Evaluation. These are designed to complement the core courses While completion of these are not required for certification as a Florida Master Naturalist, but they do "dovetail" with the three Core courses and are for that reason quite valuable.

The Upland course I took in July was an amazing riot of information concerning everything from ancient beaches, now stranded far inland, upland and scrub pine forests, oak trees that have their trunks underground. Through it all ran the importance of fire as regenerators or inhibitors of these habitats. We also studied the myriad of live forms indigenous to each of the Upland areas and how they fit in with the flora to form a perfected blended ecosystem. Of course we had to study the intense scope of human activity and its intended and unintended consequences on the Upland areas.

Florida Pinelands are basically divided into three categories (with numerous subcategories of course): High or Longleaf pine; Scrubby Flatwoods and Pine Flatwoods. These categories are elevation dependent; but in Florida "elevation" differences can be measured in inches up to five or ten feet. Hardwood forests in Florida are of three principal types: Southern Hardwood (found mostly...but not exclusively in the panhandle and northern Florida); Temperate Broad leaf Evergreens and Tropical Rainforest. The type of hardwood forest found in a given location is largely dependent upon not only elevation and latitude but by hydrology as well.

Other types of Upland habitat in Florida are Scrub, Dry Prairie and Range. The first occurs on ancient sand dunes such as that found in the Lake Wales Ridge as well as in coastal areas. The latter is much younger than inland scrub. Scrub type, like so much else in Florida, is elevation dependent.

Coastal scrub, as the name suggests, occurs along Florida's modern beaches, just inland from the sand dunes. The other scrub habitats are oak (except live oak) and Rosemary Scrub habitats. I should add that Sand pine scrub is considered a scrub habitat as well.

Dry Prairie (best represented in modern Florida by the Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary and State Park). Dry prairie is virtually gone. 88% has been lost from the original and is heavily dependent upon fire. Current Dry Prairie management strategies call for fire during the growing season every 1-4 years. Interestingly, it has been found that burning during the growing season create better subsequent growth than fire during the dormant months.



Florida's Master Naturalist Program

-Tom Malone

Rangeland is a unique category. Think "cattle ranch". Depending upon the management techniques utilized on a particular parcel of rangeland, the area can be valuable or not for wildlife. However, no matter what techniques are used, it is a safe bet that any rangeland will be better for a greater variety of wildlife than, say, a strip mall, shopping center or housing development.

I found the Uplands module extremely rewarding, albeit difficult for me as I am not acclimated to summer's ferocious heat. You can bet, however, that I will be back for more. I have already signed up for October's Coastal Systems course and will enroll in the Freshwater course as it becomes available. While I am still wandering around kind of scratching my head I know my knowledge base has increased by a huge factor.

The Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) is an adult education UF/IFAS Extension program developed by the University of Florida and provided by many Extension offices and participating organizations throughout the state of Florida. FMNP training will benefit persons interested in learning more about Florida's environment or wishing to increase their knowledge for use in education programs as volunteers, employees, ecotourism guides, and others.

For more information, please visit <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/>



Florida Scrub Jay



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Earn Your CAS Volunteer Pin by Being a Bird Steward!

Volunteers monitor beach locations where sea and shorebirds are nesting. The beaches are surveyed early in the season and nesting sites are posted when the first egg is spotted. We usually have a black skimmer colony on Sand Key. Our primary emphasis is on Three Rooker Island which is just north of Honeymoon Island. Volunteers are transported by boat to the island where they set up in chairs and umbrellas (provided) adjacent to the colonies. They educate the folks who come by and keep people and dogs from entering the colonies. It's wonderful to spend the day on one of the only unspoiled pristine barrier islands on Florida's west coast. Nesting birds include snowy plovers, laughing gulls (4-5,000), least terns, royal terns, white ibis, Caspian terns, reddish egrets among others.

Click the PIN to learn more.

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/birdsteward.html>





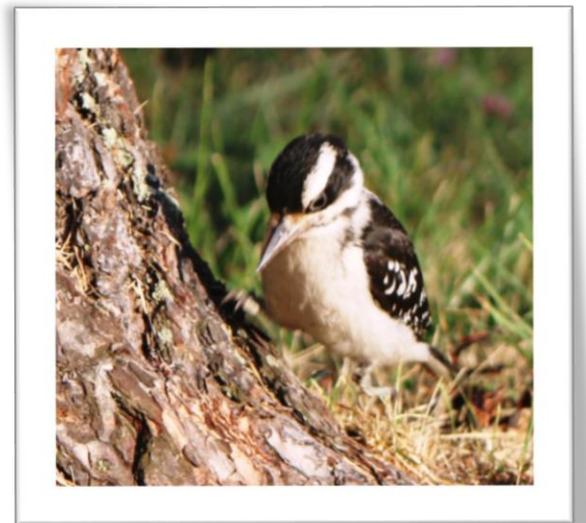
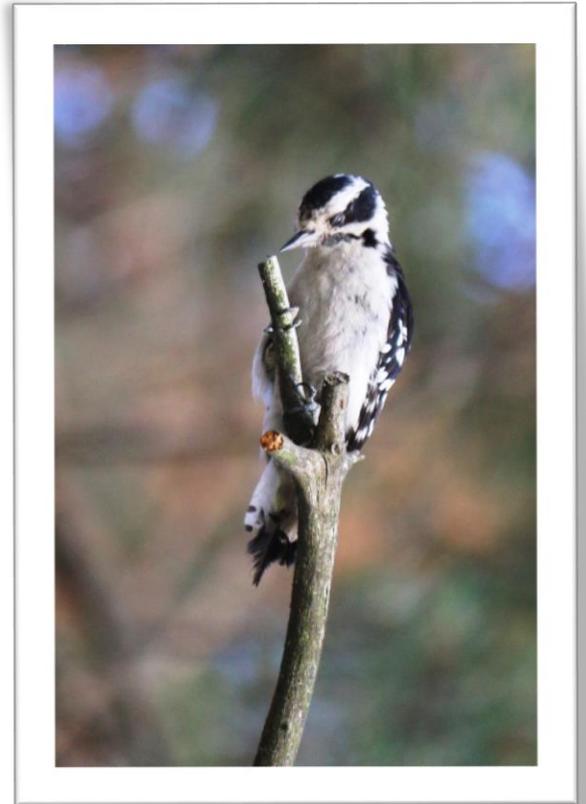
Hard Knock Life: Woodpeckers

This summer, Clearwater Audubon sponsored my attendance at the BirdSleuth Educator Retreat at Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology. One of my first bird encounters was with two woodpeckers. My first lesson was deciphering which was which species. They appeared to be so similar, but had one small difference. The beak.

During the first day of the retreat, we learned how to use **Merlin** to identify birds. This is an app to help make those small determinations. Answer five simple questions about a bird you are trying to identify and Merlin will come up with a list of possible matches. The top photo is a Downy Woodpecker. Note the small beak. A very similar woodpecker (lower photo) in size, color, and habitat, is the Hairy Woodpecker. The beak on this bird is longer. Using Merlin with students helps them to become familiar with birds in the field without using a guide as a primary resource. After using Merlin, students can continue to discover through a guide.

Our follow-up session was a lesson using the **eBird** app. It is a real-time, online checklist program. We went on several bird walks in different habitats creating a list for each one, then reporting each list on eBird. In this way any contribution made to eBird increases our understanding of the distribution, richness, and uniqueness of the biodiversity of our planet. Students can use this activity to participate in contributing citizen science activity. It is fun to use, engaging students in real-science field labs and captures their interest in birding for life.

I am grateful to Clearwater Audubon for the experience. I will be training four science teachers at my school in addition to creating professional development for other teachers in Pinellas & Hillsborough counties.



Merlin App: <http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

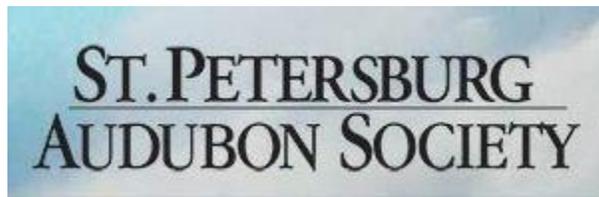
eBird App: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/mobileglobal/>



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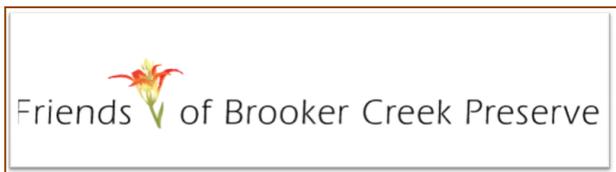
Important Bird Areas in Florida



Great Florida Birding Trail



Florida Ornithological Society



Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve



Dunedin Osprey Cam





PINELLAS COUNTY BIRD SEARCH

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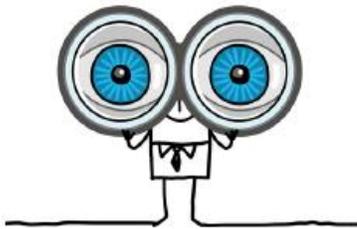
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[Click Here](#) to download our 2015-16 Field Trip and Program brochure.



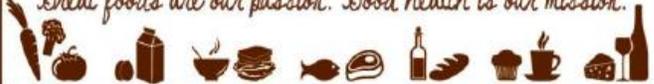
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