



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.

Beeps in the Night

~John Hood

The night was dark (0400) A sliver of moon peeped above the horizon. Barking noises echoed around a group of bird nerds huddled in front of a hemi tent. It was time for the second annual black skimmer fledgling banding party. Young athletic students (leaves me out) armed with butterfly nets were poised to spring into action. Two banding stations were set up with all the necessary equipment – bands, band opening pliers, wing rules, micrometers, scales, PVC cement, weighing bags, etc. The weather was cooperating. After receiving instructions from our mentor Dr. Beth Forsys the students took off with their nets capturing juveniles who were only a couple of days away from being flight capable. They were brought back to the banding stations where they were measured and banded with a unique PVC alphanumeric band (BO01, BO02, etc.) and then released back onto the beach near their colony. The 3 major colonies this year were Indian Shores, Sand Key, and St Pete Beach and each had about 15 juveniles banded.

The results from last year allowed us to track the individual birds. A lot stayed locally. A lot went down to Marco Island, a few went to Lake Okeechobee, a few went to the East coast, and a few went north to the big bend area. Two of the birds (A16 & A44) mated here and produced a chick. Some of the St. Pete Beach birds died with seizures questionably related to the St Pete sewage spill. None of this information would be available without the unique bands.

A new feature this year was the application of motus nano tags. These tags are glued to the back of the birds and emit a ping every so often. If the bird is within 10 miles of a motus tower the information is recorded. There is a motus tower at Ft Desoto. This is new technology with towers going up all along the eastern coast of North America. The tags are small enough that they can be used on warblers. There is a micro nano tag that can be used on dragonflies (unfortunately the battery life is only 10 hours). We applied 4 of these tags at St. Pete Beach and plan to apply another 11 on 8/2/17.

If you see any skimmers with these green tags with white letters Please record the number and let us know the location.



Clearwater Audubon Society

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>

August, September 2017

Vol. 78 No. 1

Supporting our community since 1959

Our Motto: Conservation through Education

For more information call us at 727-442-9140





Membership

[Membership Application](#)

Size : 141.717 Kb

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
June-July 2017



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"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



Annual Summer Film Fest & POPCORN!

Last Chance!

August – Movie Night

September - no program - Labor Day

"Ding" Darling Days 2017: Mark your calendars for October 15-21



"Ding" Darling Days' Family Fun Day on Sunday, October 15, kicks off a week of eco-activities with all-free refuge tram tours, live wildlife presentations, hot dogs, kids crafts, and other family activities. Birding, boating, tram, paddleboarding, and kayaking activities fill the week. The 29th annual celebration ends on Saturday, October 21, with Conservation Art Day, where Federal Duck Stamp Winners, other artists, cartooning, and a Refuge photography tram tour will highlight a day devoted to Jay Norwood Darling's legacy as the first duck stamp artist and Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist.

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>





Mountains to the Sea Birding Adventure in Maine ~Maureen Breakiron-Evans

What could be more exciting than a high speed, full-throttled boat race against a Northern Fulmar on the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean off the gorgeous coast of Maine? This was one of our many adventures on the 5-day Clearwater Audubon "Mountains to the Sea Birding Adventure in Maine" this past June. By the way, we lost the race against the swift Northern Fulmar!

Ten intrepid birders armed with binoculars, field guides, sun screen and bug spray met in Bangor, Maine and set off the next morning for the Maine Highlands in and around Baxter State Park. Our quaint lodgings at Big Moose Inn nestled between two lakes oozed with character and were the perfect launching pad for great boreal birding. Our wonderful guides, Bob Duchesne and Seth Benz, worked hard to help us locate some of the tougher birds. Several birders followed Bob deep into the wild bog in pursuit of the Black-backed Woodpecker and its close cousin, the American Three-toed Woodpecker, these two species only being split recently. Here we also saw Common Loons, both Red and White-winged Crossbills; Lincoln's, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows; Purple Finch; Blue-headed, Philadelphia, Warbling, and Red-eyed Vireos; Olive-sided, Yellow-bellied, Alder, Least, and Great-crested Flycatchers; nesting Eastern Phoebe, and Eastern Wood-Pewee. It was also a great spot for warblers and we saw many species including the colorful Blackburian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, and Magnolia, to name a few. Even the common Pine and Palm Warblers were a delight to see in their splendid breeding plumage!



American Bittern



Atlantic Puffin



Black-backed
Woodpecker



Black-throated
Green Warbler

Photos by Maureen Breakiron-Evans



Mountains to the Sea Birding (cont.)



Boreal Chickadee



Red Squirrel



Maureen

Photos by Dale Goebel



Petit Manan Island



Common Eiders



Participants

The second half of our adventure was based at the Schoodic Education and Research Center where Seth Benz is the Director of the Bird Ecology Lab. The highlight for me was our day of Pelagic birding. Leaving the picturesque coastal towns of Maine behind, we headed out to Petit Manan Island to view the breeding colonies of Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills, Common Murres, and Black Guillemots. Who could resist those cute little puffins who fly with such rapid wingbeats? From there we boated to Mt. Desert Rock. Although it is one of the most isolated and desolate places ever used as a lighthouse in the United States, numerous gulls, terns, gray and harbor seals have taken over the island. Here and enroute, we were able to spot Eider Ducks, Great Shearwaters, Sooty Shearwaters, Wilson's Storm Petrels, Northern Gannets, and White-winged Scoter.

On our final day, we searched for heretofore elusive species and were lucky to spot the Upland Sandpiper in the blueberry barrens. What better way to end a Maine birding trip than to tally our birding list over an outdoor farewell lobster fest? Overall, we saw 123 species, learned more about our feathered friends and had a wonderful time! Our thanks to Dale Goebel for organizing this great event.

Participants:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Janet Truant | Carol Mathews |
| Nancy Dunne | Sid Crawford |
| John Mangold | Steve Reardon |
| Maureen Breakiron-Evans | |
| Mardy & Cy Hornsby | |
| Dale Goebel | |



Download the 17-18 Field Trip Brochure



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Marathon, Fl. Holiday Inn Express

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Paddy Cunningham, Event Coordinator, Expert Guide

www.birdingfestivalofthekeys.com

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Kayak, Dry Tortugas**

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Shorebirds, Warblers
EVENING PROGRAMS**

**FIELD TRIPS-Curry
Hammock, Bahia
Honda, Windley, Key
Deer Preserve, Long
Key, Ft. Zachary,
Dagney Johnson,
KW Botanical Gardens
Indigenous Park**

FEATURING EXPERTS

**David Simpson, Gina
Kent, Adam Kent
Paddy Cunningham,
Dr. Jon Meyers, Robert
Torres, Peter Frezza,
Dr. Jerry Lorenz**





Beach-Nesting Birds of Pinellas County

~Holley Short

The beach-nesting birds throughout north Pinellas County have done it again! This season has been a successful one for our birds.

There are two breeding colonies of Black Skimmers on Clearwater Beaches. At the start of the season, the Sand Key colony had a large group of 300-400 skimmers looking to nest. Unfortunately, the skimmers abandoned their potential site because of disturbance. The group moved over to Clearwater Point, where they did attempt to nest. Again, most of this colony abandoned Clearwater Point and moved back to their original spot at Sand Key to nest. And they have been so successful! Closely monitored by Paul Ingham and Audubon members, this site has over 400 adults and about 166 chicks fledged. Remember, not *all* of the colony abandoned Clearwater Point! A small group tried nesting and succeeded with the help of members from Audubon Florida and Clearwater Audubon Society. John Hood posted the Clearwater Point colony alongside FWC. The small group has about 70 adults and close to 25 fledged chicks. The colonies range in sizes, but each of them have seen major success so far. And we're still counting! There are still downy chicks at both sites and eggs waiting to hatch at each of these colonies, so the breeding season is not yet finished.

Three Rooker Islands still have plenty going on, too. There are multiple nesting species – Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Caspian Tern, Least Tern, Laughing Gull, Black Skimmer, American Oystercatcher – still going strong in their season! Because the area for these colonies is roped off for their safety, it's difficult to get a precise count for nesting and fledged chicks. Members of Clearwater Audubon and volunteers for the Florida Park Service help Audubon Florida's stewardship coordinator, Jessica Lewis, with these tedious surveys. These strong estimates can help determine how well the birds do. There are hundreds of Royal and Sandwich Tern chicks, over 10 Caspian Tern chicks, over 10 Black Skimmer chicks, and hundreds of Laughing Gull chicks. Many of these chicks have already fledged, but they still need their parents to provide food. For the first time in years, Least Terns have successfully nested on Three Rooker with at least 10 chicks having hatched from the colony. There is also one fledged American Oystercatcher chick.

All of these colonies have good habitat, a good food source, and space to raise their chicks. But none of these beach-nesting birds would have been successful without the dedication of bird stewards set out to educate the public on how important these places are to such special birds. Through the stewardship program in north Pinellas County, over 1500 people (and counting!) have been educated about our beach-nesting birds.

"THANK YOU!" to each person who has become a bird steward or has supported the beach-nesting birds throughout the years!

Holley Short
Pinellas Shorebird Project Manager
Audubon Florida



At Hillsborough Community College

LEED-Gold certified SouthShore Campus
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