

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.

The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail

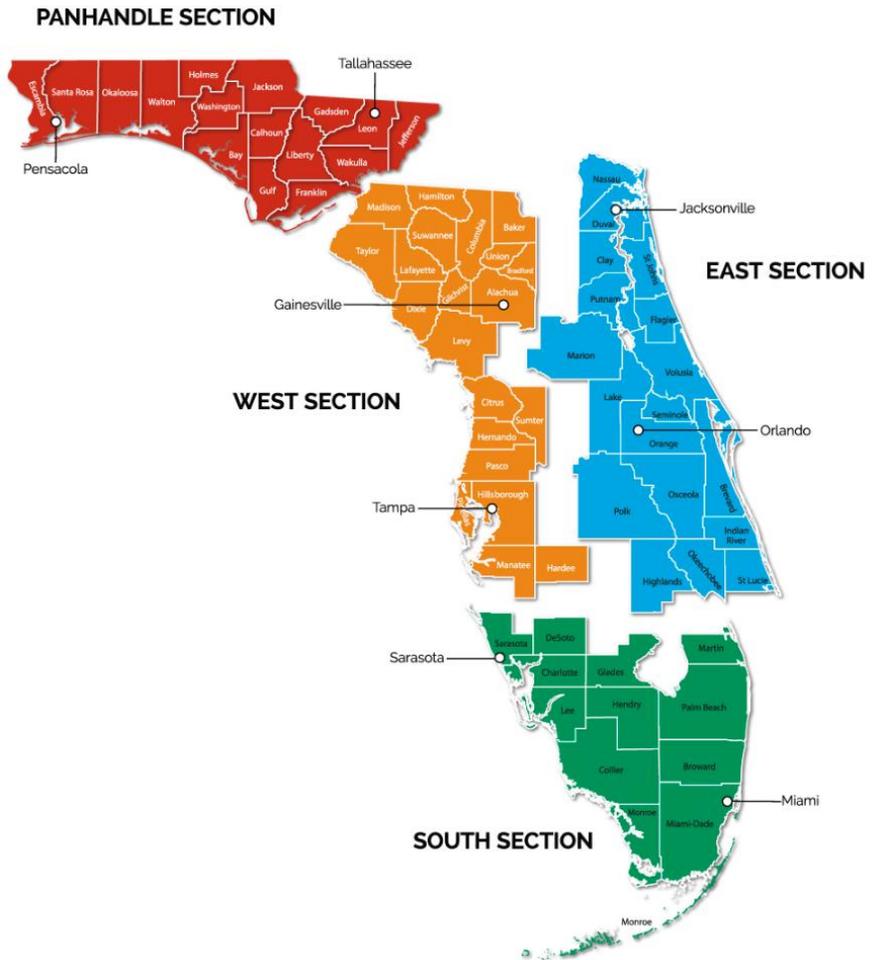
By early December most of the northern birds which will spend the winter in Florida have arrived at their destinations. Even a few 'snowbirds'.

As you surf the web from the comfort of your home, consider the opportunities of The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail. Their newly redesigned website hosts a way to plan your trip to many areas of Florida. Check out their new [Bird Portfolio](#) and discover where to see them in Florida.

Go outside and play.

Would you like to see their trail maps?

[Click here.](#)



Clearwater Audubon Society

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>

December 2016, January 2017

Vol. 74 No. 1

Supporting our community since 1959

Our Motto: Conservation through Education

For more information call us at 727-442-9140





November Program: Green Eggs (but no ham) aka The Perils of Laying Your Eggs on the Beach

There are multiple perils facing beach nesting birds. Their eggs can be cooked by the sun if the parents are away too long, they can be trampled by beach walking people, they can be washed over by tropical storms, they can be drowned by torrential rains, they can be predated on by raccoons or feral cats. One of the major causes of egg loss however is predation by other birds such as crows, gulls, or night herons.

One of the major predators locally are fish crows. They are smart! They can use tools and recognize people. They are group hunters with their population increasing since the 70's. They have caused complete abandonment of black skimmer colonies and have caused complete non-productivity of plovers on beaches.

Beth Forys Ph. D. from Eckerd College has long been aware of this problem. USDA was contacted and they offered 3 suggestions: 1 scare the crows away – we tried hanging fake crow effigies by their necks from stakes but the local live crows would come and sit on the stakes completely undeterred. 2 trap the crows – didn't work. They are too smart. Caught plenty of gulls with Doritos however. 3 get rid of the crows (ie shoot). Had USDA sharpshooters lined up but it was too late in the season and the colonies were finished for the year.

Another method of crow control is conditioned taste avoidance. This involves putting treated quail eggs in fake skimmer scrapes. The eggs are treated by injecting them with carbachol which will cause the crows to vomit within a few seconds of eating the egg. FWC funded the study with 3 objectives in mind 1 - does it result in decreased predation by fish crows 2 – how many days does it take a fish crow colony to develop taste aversion 3 – how long does the aversion last.

The local site of the study was Sand Key where there was a colony of several hundred skimmers. Ten decoys were placed around the edge of the colony and treated eggs were placed in adjacent scrapes. The crows came in, took the eggs, flew off, ate them, and barfed.

The project worked!! As more crows ate treated eggs the predation rate decreased. All it took was one meal and the crow would cease and desist from any more predation. Once all the crows in a colony ate one treated egg predation on that colony ceased. The aversion lasted 6-7 weeks long enough to have the colony be successful.

By the way green eggs were used as controls.

We chose 6 areas where crows were observed to be eating a significant number of eggs.



Sand Key
St. Pete Beach
Lido



Anna Maria
Siesta Key



Wilson's Plover





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)

First meeting is October 3

Past Issue of Wing Beat



*click issue to view
Oct-Nov 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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History of the Christmas Bird Count

How the count started, and how the data is used today

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns—whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Chapman and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

Each November, birders interesting in participating in the CBC can sign up and join in through the Audubon website. From December 14 through January 5 each year tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas brave snow, wind, or rain, and take part in the effort. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this long-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations, and to help guide conservation action.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow Audubon researchers, conservation biologists, wildlife agencies and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

The long-term perspective is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

---National Audubon Society

Reminder: The North Pinellas CBC is on December 31st.

Contact Paul Trunk ptrunk@gmail.com if you want to participate.





Sax Sim Bog

-Tom Malone

Autumn in eastern North America is extremely varied, depending on your latitude. Long term Floridians may differ, but I find Autumn here to be somewhat of a cool summer. We lose some of our summer species, to be sure, but the real attractions are the birds flying in from the north.

This is only partially true in northern Minnesota. Long gone are the Bobolinks, Orioles and swallows that enchanted me during my summer visits. The big attractions in the Bog, the Canadian winter species and of course certain owls, have yet to arrive but the real September spectacle is the enormous gatherings of species starting their journey.

Blue jays fly in loose flocks of 10-30 birds; long lines of Canada Geese and various ducks fill the skies in the Sax Zim Bog. Passerines fill the trees; all moving inexorably south.

I arrived in the Bog on September 20 and stayed until the 29th. The prevalent birds upon my arrival were yellow rumped warblers. Until the 25th they were everywhere, even to the point of hanging off my house.

However, they totally disappeared on the 25th. In their place was the harbinger of the northern winter, the Junco. Suddenly, where there had been none the day before, now they were present by the score.

In my nine days, I noted subtle but unmistakable changes in the migration patterns. Trees yellowed and turned crimson, nights were noticeably colder. Winter was low on the horizon but was not going to be denied. Winter in the north is like that, you know.

I will return in January. Owl experts in the area predict an invasion of Boreal owls. Pine grosbeaks and Bohemian waxwing are already present.

Minnesota's Theater of Seasons continues. I look forward to repeatedly sampling each of them.

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>





Jamaican Blue Mountains

-Anastasia Steinbrunner

As for here, the little ones have been a joy and a challenge to work with. This month has been particularly tough since I was gone at our Early Service conference. Then we had the hurricane Matthew scare and then a four-day weekend because of the Jamaican holiday “Heroes Day” where Jamaican national heroes are celebrated for their contributions to the Nation. Even still, I am seeing some progress with them and with my projects. This past Thursday I put on a literacy event with the lower school students called Read for the Record a worldwide event initiated by my old Americorps assignment, Jumpstart. I also was finally granted use of some abandoned property near the school to begin an outdoor classroom and garden. I’ll be getting the Environmental Education program going before long! I am looking forward to not only growing crops to help augment the nutrition of the school lunches but grow many native plants as well to feed the numerous birds and butterflies that I am lucky enough to see. I have been getting several reminders to email CAS from the abundant migrants that have landed over the last couple weeks. Currently we have flocks of Black-throated Blues, Black-throated Greens, and Redstarts filling up the yards. They are foraging alongside our Jamaican Orioles and (life bird as of today!) the Jamaican Euphonia. The Euphonias were sharing an ackee tree in my yard with both Black-throated species. While the warblers gleaned insects the Euphonia were busy devouring the ackee fruit.

In other birdy news; I made it up to the Blue Mountains in August. The trip was not as exploratory as I would have liked because of transportation issues but I did manage to spot the Arrowhead Warbler and Ring-tailed Pigeon. I got to enjoy re-sightings of Kestrels, a Jamaican Tody, some Red-eyed Vireos and Jamaican Crows. I also had a mystery flycatcher which looks closest to the Cinnamon Flycatcher found in the Andes. If anyone has any ideas I would love to hear them!

The kids and I are still birding occasionally and I hope to get more of them into it as the school garden grows. If anybody has some old binoculars to send my way I’d love to share them with the kids! I will be back in Clearwater Dec 29-Jan 5. Hope to catch up with you all then! If CAS is having a meeting while I’m in town I’d love to give a talk about my experiences here. Sharing my host country’s culture with folks back home is Peace Corps Goal 3 after all! I miss everyone! Take care :)

My best,

Anastasia Steinbrunner
Peace Corps Volunteer
Education Sector
Jamaica, W.I.



Birding Festivities

White Pelican Celebration

06 Jan 2017 — 08 Jan 2017

White pelicans winter in Chokoloskee Bay. Pelagic tours by 6 seat motor boat or kayak (advanced reservations required) to approach, observe & photograph. Arts & craft booths, local bluegrass, authentic Seminole foods & guided walking tours of the Island. Speaker, Dr. Tommy King, research wildlife biologist from USDA/APHIS/WS National Wildlife Research Center, MS. Local avian experts.

Location

Chokoloskee Island, FL, US

Contact Person: Lynn McMillin

Phone Number: 239 695 2989

Website: <http://www.smallwoodstore.com/>

Everglades Birding Festival

12 Jan 2017 — 16 Jan 2017

Find up to 165 species such as Snail Kite, Limpkin, Short-tailed Hawk, Painted Bunting, Burrowing Owl and exotics in South Florida hotspots: Everglades, Corkscrew, Keys, STA 5, Miami on full day field trips with Expert Guides. The focus is on YOU gaining advanced skills with workshops applied in the field in small groups. Evening talks, lunch, transportation, snacks & water included. Limited to 60

Location

Ft. Lauderdale, FL, US

Contact Person: Paddy Cunningham

Phone Number: 7542011141

Website: <http://www.evergladesbirdingfestival.com>

Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza Birding Festival

20 Jan 2017 — 22 Jan 2017

The Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza Birding Festival features many of the 360+ bird species on the 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore. Choose among 2 full-day trips and 9 half-day trips, along with dinners and keynotes, including one by Greg Miller. Saturday is the 5th annual Free family Birdapalooza festival. Join us on the North Shore of Lake Apopka for great birding!

Location

Apopka, FL, US

Organization Name: Orange Audubon Society

Contact Person: Deborah Green

Phone Number: 407-637-2525

Website: <http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/birdapalooza>

Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival

25 Jan 2017 — 30 Jan 2017

The 20th Annual Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival is scheduled

Jan 25 – 30, 2017 at Eastern Florida State College Titusville, FL. Festival activities feature unique birding, wildlife, nature, technology, cultural/historical and photography field trips, Offshore birding boat trip, classroom & keynote presentations as well as an Art Show.

Location

Titusville, FL, US

Organization Name: Brevard Nature Alliance

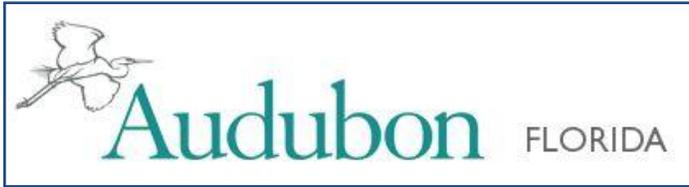
Contact Person: Neta Harris

Phone Number: 321-268-5224

Website: <http://www.SCBWF.org>



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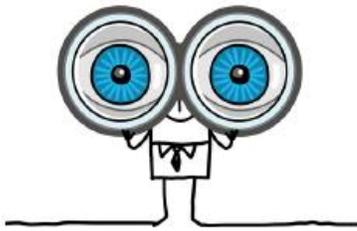
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