

# 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.*

## Birding Festival Pack List

I try to procrastinate packing on purpose for a day trip because if I pack too far in advance, I second guess myself by the day of the trip. Pack the night before or the day of the trip to ensure that you take only what you need. If we are being honest, the only truly necessary things are comfortable shoes, binoculars and a checklist. Everything else is a bonus. Essential packing lists are posted online for every occasion, but a few friends helped me narrow theirs down to just a day-trip or festival backpack. Enjoy, Meichelle.



- cash – small bills best, make sure they are clean of marks and tears
- credit cards – two types, in case one doesn't 'go through
- daypack
- bird field guide and checklist
- wet wipes (antibacterial)
- cellphone with birding apps
- binoculars
- scope/tripod
- snacks
- bug spray
- rain pouch or lens over
- pens, pencil, notepad
- sunscreen
- first aid kit (you never know)



Download the 2017-2018  
Field Trip Brochure

**Clearwater Audubon Society**  
<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>

February, March 2018

Vol. 81 No. 1

Supporting our community since 1959  
Our Motto: Conservation through Education  
For more information call us at 727-442-9140





**Membership**

[Membership Application](#)

**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](#)  
Dec 17-Jan 18



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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](#)



## **Programs: Lyn Roger's Bird Physiology**

At our December meeting Lyn Rogers gave a stimulating talk on bird physiology. All physical systems were covered and not a single person in the audience walked away without new knowledge.

1 diversity – present on all continents. Ostrich the largest at 7ft tall and 225 lbs. Bee hummingbird the smallest weighs less than a dime.

2 feathers – tail, wing/flight, semi plume, contour/body, down, filo plume, bristle. The calamus (bottom) is hollow (good for quill pens) while the top rachis is solid. The vane has barbs and barbicels that act like Velcro to keep the feather intact. Made of beta keratin – think fingernails. Come from feather follicles – the little bumps on a chicken skin before you cook it. They have muscles attached to their base and the important flight feathers are attached to bone via quill knobs. Water repellent feathers (ducks) are due to the spaces between the barbs and the barbules and the use of oil from the uropygial gland that the bird spreads over its feathers.

On the other hand, some birds have water absorbent feathers (anhinga) which enables them to dive and swim more easily. However, they do have to dry off before flight. Size varies – the eyebrow feathers of a bee hummingbird are 0.4mm long (25mm to the inch) while the tail feathers of the peacock are 1500mm long. The number of feathers on a bird vary from 940 on a ruby-throated hummingbird to 25, 216 (somebody in 1937 actually counted them) on a tundra swan. A bird's feathers weigh 2 to 3 times heavier than its bones.





## **Bird Physiology (cont.)**

The club wing manakin has a system of ridges on one feather next to a pick on the adjacent feather that it rubs together to make a “ting” sound during its mating dance. Hummingbirds make sounds with their feathers during dives as part of their mating process (pulling 9 Gs in the act – think fighter jet pilots or astronauts during takeoff).

Molt varies quite a bit. Land birds will molt a few feathers at a time while water birds will drop all their feathers at once leaving them unable to fly for as long as a month. Feather care consists of a bird grasping a feather at its base in its beak and then pulling the feather through its beak. This process rezipts the barbs, removes old oil, dirt, and ectoparasites, and spreads new oil. Birds use their feet to preen feathers they can't reach with their beaks – head. Birds also bath in water, snow, or dust to clean their feathers.

Feather colors are produced either by pigments or structure. The pigments are melanin (black, brown, gray), carotenoids (yellow, orange, red), or porphyrins (red). Structural colors (blues and iridescents) are produced by the coherent scattering of light by the Nano structure of the feathers involving air bubbles, melanin, and keratin. Overall coloration varies dramatically.

During breeding season males can become vivid in order to attract a mate (opposite humans). Countershading occurs when a bird is darker on top and white on the bottom. This enables them to blend into the background and thereby avoiding detection by predators or conversely enabling them to sneak up on their prey. Disruptive coloration enables birds to blend into the background such as the ground dwelling nightjars. A rare few birds have aposematic coloration which warns away predators since their feathers are poisonous containing the neurotoxin homobatrachotoxin (same as poison dart frogs).



FREE ADMISSION



# Raptor Fest

AT BOYD HILL NATURE PRESERVE

1101 COUNTRY CLUB WAY SOUTH, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33705

JOIN US FOR AN "OWL"  
DAY EVENT FEATURING  
BIRDS OF PREY  
FEBRUARY 3, 2018, 10AM-4PM

- Trained raptors in free flight
- Presentations featuring Florida's native owl species
- Dissect owl pellets with Sensing Nature LLC
- Free tram tours
- Photo ops with live birds of prey
- Environmental exhibitors
- Activities for children and families
- Bird walks
- and much more!

Special thanks to EarthQuest ([www.EarthQuest.org](http://www.EarthQuest.org))  
Food and drinks will be available for purchase.

For more information and directions contact  
Boyd Hill Nature Preserve at 727-893-7326 or  
check us out at [www.RaptorFest.org](http://www.RaptorFest.org).

Park at Lakewood High School (1400 54th Ave S.)  
for FREE shuttles to the event.

\*\* No pets please \*\*



[www.RaptorFest.org](http://www.RaptorFest.org)



## [Florida Scrub-Jay Festival](#)

**February 3 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

*Lyonia Preserve, 2150 Eustace Avenue  
Deltona, FL 32725 United States* [+ Google Map](#)

[Find out more »](#)



## [Birds of a Feather Fest](#)

**February 9 - February 11**

*Palm Coast Community Center, 305 Palm Coast Parkway NE  
Palm Coast, FL 32137 United States* [+ Google Map](#)

Several years ago, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission recognized several park trails in Palm Coast as Great Florida Birding Trails, thanks to the City's ideal bird watching opportunities along its extensive trail system. Fast forward to present time, and now Palm Coast is truly for the birds. The First Annual Birds of a Feather Fest was introduced to the community in February 2015. An entire weekend is devoted to teaching participants about birds, with workshops, presentations and nature...

[Find out more »](#)



## [Orlando Wetlands Festival](#)

**February 17 @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

*Orlando Wetlands, 1300 North Fort Christmas Road  
Christmas, FL 32709 United States* [+ Google Map](#)

Come and enjoy the Orlando Wetlands Festival on Saturday, February 17, 2018, from 9am-3pm at Fort Christmas Historical Park. The Orlando Wetlands Festival highlights the Orlando Wetlands Park, the City's 1,650 acre water reclamation wetland. The event is sponsored by: City of Orlando, Orange Audubon Society and Orange County Parks and Recreation. On February 17, 2018, experience this unique wetland treatment system with the entire family. Event co-sponsor, Orange Audubon Society, will lead guided bird-watching excursions. The Friends of the...

[Find out more »](#)





## **Birding Pinellas**

**~Bob Lane**

Yesterday, Saturday morning, my wife Denise and I were the field trip leaders with one of the best group of birders we have ever been with. There were ten participants plus the two of us. It was a very interactive group of birders, all contributing to the adventure, and as one of the participants said, the camaraderie that developed with the group was wonderful. Everyone apparently enjoyed themselves, a scheduled two-hour outing lasted four hours and forty-five minutes, recording fifty-two species of birds.

The epic day began at The Courtney Campbell Causeway Beach at 7:15AM and a temperature of fifty-two degrees. Most of group witnessed a beautiful sunrise. A good start with twelve species of shorebirds and the opportunity to study seven species of gulls and terns. By 8:45AM we moved on to Philippe Park, to view the celebrity visiting Brown Boobies and to enjoy the Great Horned Owl pair. Last stop on the tour was at 11:00AM, at The Safety Harbor Waterfront Park Boardwalk. Great views of Safety Harbor Bay were had, as everyone shared travel stories, and birding conquests. Completion of the eastern Pinellas County outing sadly ended at 12:00 (NOON) with a temperature of sixty-two degrees.

The following is a list of the birds seen, just the species, not the numbers seen.

Muscovy Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Horned Grebe, Brown Booby, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Anhinga, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Reddish Egret, Green Heron, Yellow-crowned Heron, White Ibis, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Black-bellied Plover, Wilson's Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Willet, Spotted Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Laughing Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring, Royal Tern, Forster's Tern, Black Skimmer, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Fish Crow, Northern Mockingbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal, and Boat-tailed Grackle.

I am sure this was a memorable day for all.



January 24, 2018

To All Concerned:

This letter intends to inform you about Clearwater Audubon Society's interest in preserving the natural state of the Dunedin Causeway. The property in question, next to the property owned by the Dunedin Sailing Foundation, should be maintained in its natural state. It is a salt marsh and a sensitive marine environment including **sea grass beds** and mangroves that supports several threatened avian species.

Increased recreational use of that property, including a sidewalk surrounding the property, will disturb the habitat, as well as the birds. This essentially goes against the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which is in place to prevent disturbance of birds. Specifically, the Reddish Egret utilizes that area. The Little Blue Heron also relies on this currently undisturbed property. The area serves as an important migratory stopover for red knots and piping plover. Six snowy egrets were recently reported.

We would like to see an Environmental Impact Study done on the property prior to any changes or decisions. Additionally, we feel that any commissioners within Dunedin or the County that are members of the Dunedin Sailing Foundation should recuse themselves in any formal hearings.

We would like additional information on the current proposal as to exactly what the impacts, both short and long-term, would be to that property regarding the number of people that would use that area and the number of boats. Light public use is very different than having a sailing club with 40 or more boats and 250 members with a goal of having an Olympic Sailing Center monopolizing the area. How will the mangroves be protected from outstepping boundaries? What will the impacts be on the increased usage of that coastal tidal flat and the saltern?

We would like the property and St. Joseph's Sound to be undisturbed and the Bird Sanctuary sign to go back up. This is an Outstanding Florida Waterway and an Aquatic Preserve and needs to remain in its natural state with minimal impacts. We would like a meeting to discuss this and further express our concerns about this very rare coastal habitat. We need to do the right thing here and encourage minimization of usage.

Sincerely,

Barbara Walker, Conservation Advocate  
Clearwater Audubon Society

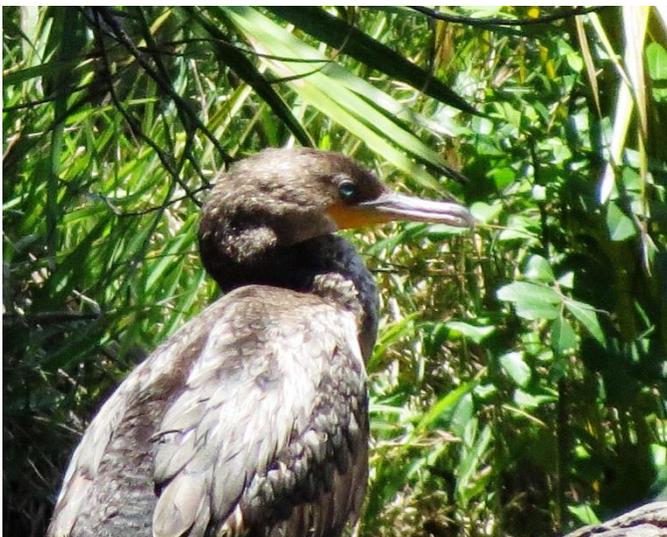


## Spotlight: Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park

### [Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park](#)

8737 US Highway 19 North  
Port Richey, FL 34668

Ranger Alan Miller  
Manager Adam Belden



Visitors can enjoy fishing, kayaking and paddling the inlets and bayous that wander through the salt marsh. Gray fox, gopher tortoises, and dolphins call this park and its waters home. Birders can enjoy sighting raptors (3 Bald Eagle nests within the 3,999 acres), wading birds, shore birds, and migratory songbirds. A great place to come to look for fall migrants. Although this park protects four miles of pristine coastline along the Gulf of Mexico in western Pasco County, due to the mangroves lining the shoreline we have no beaches or swimming area.

Werner-Boyce now has a total of three areas open to the public: Scenic Drive Trail Head at 10333 Scenic Drive, Port Richey which contains a picnic pavilion, tables, informational kiosk, and a short hiking trail (corner of Cinema and Scenic).

In 1992, the state of Florida purchased the southern portion of the property where Salt Springs is located. The property was leased to the Pasco County Division of Parks and Recreation. In 1994, the county purchased an adjacent parcel to the north, known as Werner-Boyce Preserve. In 2000, Pasco County relinquished its lease on the Salt Springs property and agreed to lease the



## Salt Springs (cont.)

Werner-Boyce property to the State. The property became known as Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park. A part of the park opened to the public in March 2001

When the state acquired the park in 2000, a small old portable facility was abandoned on the property. Staff and volunteers, with donations from local businesses, refurbished the facility into what it is today. The facility is used almost daily for training, meetings or interpretive programs. In 2005, the Port Richey Rotary Club donated funds for the materials needed to add an outside observation deck to the interpretive building. Volunteers worked to complete the project and today the deck provides an outside meeting place for groups.

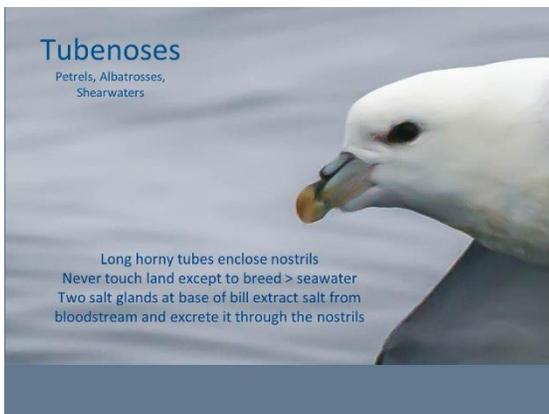
Work began in early 2008 to construct the main entrance into the park. This is Phase One for construction of the entrance, located along U.S. Highway 19 in Port Richey, Florida. Phase one also includes half a mile of roadway and utilities such as water for future facilities. December 2012 Main entrance is open to the public, with four walking trails, natural kayak launch and picnic tables. Construction started on Phase two and three in 2014 this will add a bathroom, parking, boardwalks, ADA kayak launch and picnic area once it is completed.





## Programs: The Bells Present Greenland

Tom and Lindsay again gave a spectacular talk to a packed house of about 60 folks about their recent trip to the east coast of Greenland. It is the world's largest island and has the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest ice sheet. The east coast population is only 3,000 hardy folks. The economy is 90% fishing although ruby mining and tourism are increasing. Denmark controls its foreign affairs and defense. It has the largest national park in the world consisting of about 1/3 of the area of the country (300,000 sq. miles). Base camp was 60 miles south of the arctic circle and consisted of Quonset hut type structures that were put up for two months and then taken down by the nearby villagers. Some of the villages had cable TV and cell phone coverage but no municipal fresh water supply.



From June to Nov supplies are brought in by boat and from Dec to May by helicopter. Garbage disposal is a problem with the influx of non-biodegradable metals and plastics. Fish is a major food source year-round for the people and their dogs. The Greenland ice sheet covers 80% of the country, is 15500 miles long from north on south, and is 2 miles thick. It weighs so much that it has depressed the central land mass forming a basin 980 ft below sea level and contains 10% of the world's fresh water. Frazil ice is free floating crystals on the top of the water that form when the water temperature drops to 28 degrees. The Arctic is warming 2x faster than the Antarctic and sea ice is decreasing at a rate of 10% per decade. The glaciers are retreating at a rate of 7 miles per year.

Some of the birds seen were familiar to us – Mallard, Starling, Common loon, Great black-backed gull. Others however were not. Gyrfalcons nest on 2-meter-tall guano piles that have been radiocarbon dated to 2500 years old. The northern wheatear has a global range of 900,000 sq. miles. The Great cormorant hunts by ear listening for its prey - herring and sculpin under water. The Northern fulmar is a tubenose. The tube on the top of the bill connects to salt glands which enables them to get rid of excess salt in their blood stream. They never touch land except to breed which they do on ledges on cliffs.



## Greenland (cont.)

They are also called fowl gulls since they can eject a foul-smelling liquid from the mouth and nose to scare off predators. They look like a gull, fly like an albatross and can dive 10 feet underwater after prey. They are long lived (50 years), don't breed until they are 10 years old, lay only 1 egg/year which they incubate for 2 months.

Also seen were common ravens (a flock of ravens is called an "unkindness"). Greater white fronted geese, Glaucous gulls, Brants, and Black-headed gulls were also seen. The Black-legged kittiwake was the most common gull. It is the only gull that dives and swims underwater and spends the entire winter on the open ocean. The Common eider is the largest duck in the northern hemisphere. Its down is prized for insulation in clothing. The purple sandpiper male makes several nests and then the female chooses one, lays eggs which the male then incubates and rears the chicks.



The vegetation and insects are unique. Moss campion is a low growing shrub that grows laterally 1 cm/5 years. Artic willow is a tree that is only a few inches high and is a winter food source for reindeer and ptarmigan. The woollybear caterpillar takes 14 years to develop freezing solid each winter and thawing out in the summer. The adult moth lives only 2 weeks and does not eat (similar to a mayfly).

The aquatic environment has the fin, Humpbacks and Orcas (killer whale) as summer visitors. The true artic whales are the Narwhal, Beluga, and the Bowhead. They have no dorsal fins to impede their passage under the ice. The Greenland shark is the world's longest living vertebrate (400 years by radiocarbon dating) growing to 23 feet long at the rate of 1 cm/yr. Sexual maturity is at 150 years old.

The Greenland huskies are a special breed. They are not pets. They live outside 24/7/365. At 8 weeks old the pups are moved to an off-shore island for 5-6 months to grow and establish hierarchy. They are not allowed to leave the island and if they do they cannot return.

All in all, Greenland sounds like a unique and fascinating place to visit (in the summer).



## Organizations We Support



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Important Bird Areas in Florida



Great Florida Birding Trail



Florida Ornithological Society



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