



**Conservation Through Education**  
The Newsletter of the Clearwater Audubon Society  
Jan-Feb 2023 Vol. 110

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## **By the Numbers... and Birds**

2022 Christmas Bird Count with Bill Kaempfer & Cuneyt Yilmaz

A fairly chilly December 26th marked the 46th North Pinellas Christmas Bird Count. CBCs are a tradition all over North and Central America dating back to the year 1900. Each count is a census of the entire bird population inside the count circle of 15 miles in diameter. For the North Pinellas CBC, the count circle is centered at US 19 and Tampa road meaning almost all of Pinellas County north of Gulf-to-Bay is included.

This year over 60 counters in 20 teams scoured the area for birds from dawn to dusk and ended up finding 163 species. Reports generally noted smaller numbers of individuals present and few rarities, but the total number of species was the second highest total for us all time. Ten years ago, the Green-tailed Towhee year, we had 168. But until this year, second place was only 161, shared by several years.

We managed this large total which will probably rank us in the top 50 in the US without finding many rare birds. Wood Thrush found at Dunedin Hammock was a new species for the count. Other unusual species included Bachmann's Sparrow (3 times before) and Northern Waterthrush (4 times before). All other species that we recorded had been reported on at least 5 of the last 21 counts.

Our most abundant species was Fish Crow with almost 5,000 tallied. Did you guess that one? Other abundant species included White Ibis, Laughing Gull, Lesser Scaup, American Robin, and Double-crested Cormorant.

I can report on my biggest personal disappointment. For the second year in a row, I failed to find Canada Goose in my block where they've been reported every month of the year except June. I had five on the football practice fields on the 23rd, 2 on the 24th and then 11 on the 28th, but none on count day. So, it's wait 'til next year for Canada Goose yet again.

# UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

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## **January 2nd Monthly Program: Reverend Bob & Terry Fortner**

Join us to learn about the history and legacy of Caladesi Island and the new Discovery Center. After years of planning and fundraising, the new center is opening this year and will be a great place to learn about the varied history and ecology of this state park.

**Meet & Greet at 6:30, Program at 7PM.**

## **January 7th Monthly Bird Outing at Moccasin Lake Nature Park**

Meet at 8:00am Leader - Paul Trunk (727) 430-0368 Accessible with assistance 

## **January 14th John Chesnut Sr. Park**

Meet at shelter #6 at 8AM. Leader- Jennifer Zelik (954) 648-5240

## **January 28th Myakka River State Park**

Meet at the Wal-Mart 2677 Roosevelt Blvd, Clearwater at 7:30am or meet at the park entrance at 8:45am. Carpooling, bring gas \$\$ and lunch. Myakka 13208 SR72, Sarasota 34241

Guest Leader - Holley Short (352) 455-8993

## **February 4th RAPTOR FEST**

Boyd Hill Nature Park, St. Petersburg 10am - 4pm  
Great Fun for the entire family. [www.raptorfest.org](http://www.raptorfest.org)

## **February 6th Monthly Program: Tom & Lindsay Bell**

In September of 2022, Tom & Lindsay headed on a 6,000 mile round trip in their Sportsmobile (affectionately known as The BirdMobile) around Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula to the mouth of the mighty St. Lawrence River. This area is one of the best whale-watching spots in the world and also has a wealth of other marine mammals as well as very diverse birdlife. Please join Tom & Lindsay as they share their photographs and experiences with the birds and other wildlife of the North Atlantic.

**Meet & Greet at 6:30, Program at 7PM.**

## **February 4th Monthly Bird Outing at Moccasin Lake Nature Park**

Meet at 8:00am Leader - Cuneyt Yilmaz (727) 657-0803 Accessible with assistance 

## **February 11th Largo Central Park Nature Preserve**

Meet at 8:00am at the park at 150 Highland Ave N, Largo, 33770.  
Leader – Steve Aversa (727) 218-7938

## **February 18th Great Backyard Bird Count @ Folly Farms 8-11AM Bill & Cuneyt**

## **February 25th TECO Manatee Viewing Big Bend Power Station**

Meet at the Wal-Mart 2677 Roosevelt Blvd, Clearwater at 9am.  
Carpooling, bring gas \$\$ and lunch. 6990 Dickman Road, Apollo Beach, 33572.  
Leader - Dale Goebel (727) 510-1462

# P4B PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

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## **P4B= Plants for Birds**

*December 17, 2022: Workday at Hammock Park Report*  
Stephanie Hall (CAS Secretary and Project Lead)

The planting went as planned with the help of fantastic volunteers. The plants were delivered to the park on Friday, the 16th. Nicole Jones, the planner, placed the plants where they should be planted so Saturday we got them all in the ground. The City has provided an oscillating sprinkler that will cover the entire area. We are planning to add some Fakahatchee grass (Bunchgrass) and another Mulberry tree. Stay tuned for other volunteer opportunities.

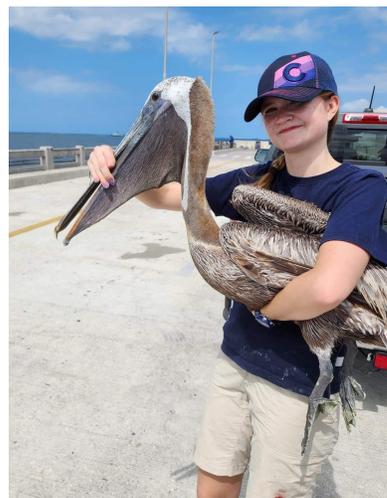


Thank you awesome volunteers!

# INTERN INSIGHTS with JESSICA HUGHES

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**Jessica Hughes** is working with Kim Begay, VP Conservation, getting hands-on field experience rescuing wild birds and lending time to the Plants4Birds project. In addition, she's working with Kim & FWC to have fishing line recycling tubes installed at Sand Key Park near busy fishing areas.



Since interning at Clearwater Audubon Society, I have learned a tremendous amount about the impact society can have on conservation when several parties work together. Nothing has demonstrated that quite as well as my time spent working with Kim Begay of Clearwater Audubon Society, Tampa Bay Watch, and Pinellas County's Sand Key Park to install monofilament recycling tubes.

After Kim received a request to install monofilament recycling tubes at Sand Key Park fishing pier from FWC Officer Brian Ferguson, she enlisted me to help her with this project.



The first step was to contact the necessary parties. Of course, we needed the physical monotubes and signage, as well as permission.

First, I had the pleasure of working with Sand Key Park Ranger Shaun Griffin, who was incredibly supportive of our endeavor. He helped us gain permission in the beginning and ensured the installation was safe and legal in the end.

Next, I contacted Tara Kok from Tampa Bay Watch, who was extremely helpful. I recall joining Tara, Kim, and Tampa Bay Watch's incredible volunteer Norm Englert one morning before Thanksgiving to survey the area. On that gorgeous morning, I specifically remember discussing the importance of placing the monotubes far away from trash cans so that they are not mistaken as such. We also considered potential locations for the monotubes, with one being near the pier's exit.



Tampa Bay Watch generously donated three monotubes which now stand beautifully along the pier and at another fishing area near the picnic area.



Unfortunately, I had to miss the installation day but Tara sent me some great photos soon after. I felt immensely happy knowing that we could support local fishermen who wanted this resource while helping to keep the park clean and safer for birds.

When carelessly discarded fishing line is left on the ground, frequently seabirds end up with the line tangled on their toes and/or feet, which happens as they walk along in the fishing areas.

Finally, thank you to Kim Begay, Tara Kok, Norm Englert, and Shaun Griffin for all your help and guidance.

Keeping fishing lines out of the environment, away from birds and wildlife, and in the recycling tubes is just one of many things we can do to make our environment safer for everyone.

*\*The good news is Jessica was able to extend her internship all the way into May. This coming semester her internship activities that she will do are part of her class practicum and average.*

**If you see a wild bird in need. Do not touch the bird. Call Kim Begay: 727.480.9010**

**Clearwater Audubon Internships are available for the following priorities:**

Conservation | Educational Outreach | Habitat Restoration  
Marketing/Media | Non-Profit Management

If you have a specific area of interest not listed above, please include your project/research idea with the application to better pair you with a mentor.

If you have any questions about the [Clearwater Audubon Society Internship Program](#), contact [clearwateraudubonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:clearwateraudubonsociety@gmail.com).

[APPLY HERE](#)

# Your Clearwater Audubon Society Board

## Executive Committee:

John Hood  
Lynn Sumerson  
Dale Goebel  
Méichelle Long  
Cuneyt Yilmaz

## Committee Chairs:

Conservation Projects: Dana Kerstein  
Field Trips: Dale Goebel  
Media: [Position Available](#)  
Membership: Cuneyt Yilmaz  
Newsletter/Webmaster: Méichelle Long  
Programs: [Position Available](#)

## Officers:

VP Conservation: Kim Begay  
Treasurer: Deborah Larkin  
Secretary: Stephanie Hall

## Board Member at Large:

Mardy Hornsby  
Diane Ives  
IP President: John Hood

## Committees:

CBC: Bill Kaempfer  
Eagle Watch: Louise Roy  
Finance: Don Peccia

## Join the Board or a Committee

Becoming a member of a nonprofit organization's board can be a meaningful way to explore how your experience and expertise can be applied in the nonprofit sector at the governance level, and ultimately, how your experience and expertise can help advance a nonprofit organization's social impact. Please take a few moments to read Audubon's statement of [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging](#) and the [Board Member Expectations](#). Board members meet on the last Monday of each month. Monthly general membership meetings (open to the public) are the first Monday of the month unless otherwise noted.

To view a list of available positions on the board or on a committee, please view [this document](#). Complete the [Board Interest Survey here](#).

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## Clearwater Audubon Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 97 Clearwater Florida 33757 EIN 59-6177460

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>

Supporting our community since 1959

### **Our Motto: Conservation through Education**

*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.*

[Membership Application](#)



## The Crow & The Peacock by Bob & Denise Lane

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Recently in our Pinellas County Clearwater yard, two of the regular daily visitors have been creating total entertainment.

A fairly tame American Crow and a really tame male Peacock, have been creating unusual bonding. The crow stands on the deck railing, bellowing out a perfect imitation of a Peafowl. This absolutely drives the male Peacock crazy. It then runs insanely round and round the perimeter of the deck. Then the show really begins!

The Peacock eventually comes up on the deck, facing the crow a few feet away. Up comes the crest plumes, with the ocellated spotted tail feathers fanned, the color iridescently shimmering and shaking, him making a proud display of himself. Eventually a second crow comes by, the instigator loses interest, the amusement ends, off goes the two crows.

The Peacock seemed lost and bewildered!



*Do you have a story to tell? Email it with photos to [newsletter@clearwateraudubonsociety.org](mailto:newsletter@clearwateraudubonsociety.org)*

# PARTNER **EVENT** LISTING

Local events listing can be found on the [Bay Soundings](#) website.

## **[Botany Walk](#)**

January 13 @ 9:30 am - 11:00 am

[Brooker Creek Environmental Education Center](#), [+ Google Map](#)

We will identify wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes, trees and more. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. Best suited for adult participants. Registration is required. This is a free hike, however space is limited. Please be courteous and do not register unless you plan to attend and cancel your reservation. Guided Hike Information Guided hikes are under a mile in length, much of which is on unimproved, uneven...

[Find out more »](#)

## **[Heads up for Hawks Hike \\$5](#)**

January 13 @ 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

[Boyd Hill Nature Preserve](#), [+ Google Map](#)

An introduction to the diurnal (daytime) birds of prey that soar, swoop, and glide through Florida's skies. Learn about how expert watchers identify raptors by their shapes and flight behavior. As we discuss these fascinating predators, we will also share a few success stories in the ongoing effort to conserve birds of prey.

[Find out more »](#)

## **[Weedon Walkabout \\$3](#)**

January 14 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 pm

[Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center](#) [+ Google Map](#)

Join us for a guided tour of the trails and boardwalks of the Weedon Island Preserve. Explore the mangrove and upland ecosystems of the Weedon Island Preserve on a guided walk of the Tower Boardwalk. This tour will include a visit to the Preserve's 45 ft. tall Observation Tower for a 360 degree view of the area. Learn about the coastal environment, native wildlife, and early history of Weedon Island. Total walk length will be just under 1 mile. Attendees...

[Find out more »](#)

## **[Wading Bird Walk \\$3](#)**

January 19 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am

[Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center](#), [+ Google Map](#)

Meet the wading birds of the Weedon Island Preserve on a guided walk of the trails. Learn the identifying marks and behaviors of the most common wading birds at Weedon Island Preserve during a guided walk of the trails. This walk will take place during a low tide so participants will have the best chance for viewing wildlife that forage on the exposed tidal flats!

[Find out more »](#)

## [Birds of Brooker Hike](#)

January 22 @ 8:00 am - 10:00 am

[Brooker Creek Environmental Education Center](#), [+ Google Map](#)

Have you wondered what bird is singing in your backyard? Do you see and hear birds but don't know who they are? If so, join us for a Beginning Bird Hike to learn how to identify the county's common birds as we meander along a one-mile trail. Registration is required. This is a free hike, however space is limited. [Find out more »](#)



## **Raptor Fest**

[Saturday, February 4, 2023 | 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.](#)

1101 Country Club Way South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Join the Friends of Boyd Hill and the City of St. Petersburg Parks and Recreation Department for the 10th Annual Raptor Fest! Raptor Fest allows Friends of Boyd Hill to continue its support of the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve [Birds of Prey program](#).



## **Hope Spot Festival Dunedin**

February 12th

Second annual event on ocean conservation and environmental awareness, action, and education! Location: Edgewater Park [51 Main Street Dunedin](#)

Ocean exhibitors will be highlighting our special waters during this eco-friendly event alongside exhibitors and vendors offering food, drinks, live music, hands-on activities, and educational experiences. Make your own eco-friendly outfit out of all eco-friendly, recycled, or recyclable material and enter into our Costume and Wearable Art Contest. Participate in a shoreline cleanup and contribute to a community art installation led by SHAMc Artreach.

## Partnering Organizations



Audubon Florida

St. Petersburg Audubon Society

Tampa Audubon Society



Important Bird Areas in Florida

Great Florida Birding Trail

Florida Ornithological Society

Florida Avian Conservation



Moccasin Lake Nature Park

Moccasin Lake Raptor Sanctuary

Friends of Moccasin Lake



Pinellas Chapter FNPS

Florida Herb Society

Safety Harbor Garden Club

Florida Botanical Gardens



Friends of Dunedin Hammock

Friends Of Brooker Creek Preserve

Suncoast Herpetological Society, Inc.

Tampa Bay Turtle & Tortoise Society

Friends in Focus Photography Club