



# Wing Beat

Conservation Through Education

The Newsletter of the Clearwater Audubon Society

Mar-April 2024 Vol. 117

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## Spring Spectacle: How Native Plants Fuel Florida's Avian Migration

Our Sunshine State transforms into a vibrant tapestry of colors and activity each spring. While the blooming landscapes and warming temperatures are a delight for humans, they also mark a crucial period for countless migratory birds. Millions of feathered voyagers, weary from their long journeys south, descend upon Florida, seeking refuge and replenishing their energy before continuing their northward trek.



These stopovers are vital for the birds' survival. They allow them to rest, refuel, and prepare for the next leg of their arduous journey. However, the quality and availability of these rest areas play a crucial role in their success. This is where native plants come into play, acting as silent heroes in this annual avian spectacle.

### Native Plants: A Haven for Migratory Birds

Florida's diverse ecosystems boast a wealth of native plant species, each offering unique benefits for migrating birds. Lush forests provide dense foliage for shelter and nesting, while

*Northern Parula & Coreopsis* vibrant flowering trees and shrubs attract insects – a vital source of protein for these feathered travelers. Native fruiting plants offer a burst of energy, replenishing depleted reserves and preparing them for the next leg of their flight.

Beyond providing sustenance, native plants create a familiar and welcoming environment for the birds. Their intricate ecological relationships with native insects and other organisms provide a balanced ecosystem, ensuring a reliable food source and fostering a healthy habitat for these transient visitors.

## The Importance of Conservation

Unfortunately, the ever-expanding human footprint often leads to the destruction of these vital native habitats. The conversion of natural landscapes into urban areas and the proliferation of invasive plant species disrupt these delicate ecosystems, jeopardizing the well-being of migratory birds.

## Protecting the Stopovers

By actively promoting the conservation and restoration of native plant communities, we can ensure the continued existence of these crucial stopover habitats. Planting native species in our gardens, supporting local conservation efforts, and advocating for responsible land management practices are all essential steps in safeguarding the future of Florida's spring migration spectacle.



*Black-throated Blue Warbler & American Beautyberry*

**Bring birds to your home today** by growing native plants. With [Audubon's Native Plant Database](#), you can find the best plants for the birds in your area. Growing bird-friendly plants will attract and protect the birds you love while making your space beautiful, easy to care for, and better for the environment. Explore all of our native plant resources here, including our factsheets on [creating a native plant garden](#) and [how it can save you money](#). And, if you're attracting birds using native plants, you will want to ensure that your space is bird-friendly in every way. Visit our [Reducing Collisions](#) page to learn more about protecting birds from collisions with glass.

## Thank you Volunteers!

Our Volunteers and Volunteers of The Friends of Hammock Park were able to create a plants for birds area at Hammock Park, Dunedin. This is an ongoing partnership that also includes the Pinellas Chapter of the Native plant Society (PNPS). On [eBird](#), there have been 141 species (+8 other taxa) reported over the past year. We will be improving that area this year to include more plants that provide sustenance during migration seasons. Watch our newsletter, emails and socials for more volunteer opportunities.




# UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

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Most trips are led by volunteer Clearwater Audubon Society leaders. Unless otherwise indicated, they are free and open to the public. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled meet time designated

## **March 2nd Monthly Bird Outing at Moccasin Lake Nature Park**

Meet at 8:00am. Leader - Madeleine Bohrer (727) 748-6885 Accessible with assistance 

## **March 9th Island Girl Cruises Homosassa River**

This trip is full.

## **March 16th Picnic: John Chesnut Sr. Park**

Bring a dish to share. Shelter 10 at 11:30am Drinks, paper products & dessert provided. If you can, please let us know you're attending. Dale Goebel (727) 510-1462


## **March 23rd Walsingham Park**

Meet at Shelter 6 12615 102nd Ave, Seminole, 33778 at 8:00am.  
Leader - Carl Shavers (727) 632-7502

## **March 30th Sawgrass Lake Park**

Meet in the parking lot at 8:30am at 17400 25th St. N, St. Pete, 33702.  
Leader - Cuneyt Yilmaz (727) 657-0803

## **April 6th Monthly Bird Outing at Moccasin Lake Nature Park**

Meet at 8:00am. Leader - Madeleine Bohrer (727) 748-6885 Accessible with assistance 

## **April 13th John Chesnut Park**

Meet at shelter 6 at 8am. Leader - Steve Reardon (727) 871-2706

## **April 20th McGough & Bonner Nature Parks**

Meet 8:00am. at McGough 11901 146th St N, Largo 33774, then to Bonner 14444 143rd St. N, Largo 33774. Leader - Madeleine Bohrer (727) 748-6885

## **April 24th WEDNESDAY Honeymoon Island SP**

Migrating songbirds, raptors, wintering shorebirds & more. Meet at 8:15am 1 Causeway Blvd, Dunedin at the Osprey Trail head at the north end of the playground parking lot.  
Leader Steve Reardon (727) 871-2706

## **April 27th Ft. De Soto Park**

Meet at the flagpole inside the gate at 7:30am. 3500 Pinellas Bayway S., Tierra Verde 33715  
Leader - John Swenfurth (813) 390-4734

[\[ALL THE TRIPS\]](#)

# Birding Western Washington State

August 9th – 18th, 2024 [Download the flyer](#)



*The Olympic Peninsula, Hurricane Ridge, Olympic National Park, Westport Seabirds Pelagic Cruise, Cape Flattery, Neah Bay, Ruby Beach, Whale/Bird Watching in the San Juan Islands with Shep Thorp as our expert guide.*

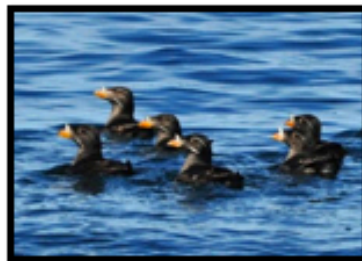
**August 9<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Day 1 – Tampa to Seattle:** Arriving by 2:00pm PST, traveling to our hotel in Port Townsend, WA. Ferry Boat ride from Seattle to Bainbridge Island. Welcomed by Glaucous-winged Gulls and Pigeon Guillemots. Fort Worden State Park if time allows for some evening birding.

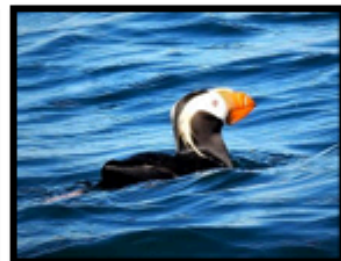
**Day 2 – San Juan Islands Whale/Bird Watching Day Tour:** “Guaranteed whales by PSE with a two-hour stop for lunch at Friday Harbor on San Juan Island”. Shep will be calling out the birds as we cruise along. Possible whale/bird sightings Orca, Humpback, Gray, and Minke as well as Rhinoceros Auklet, Tufted Puffin, Pigeon Guillemot, Common Murre, Marbled and Ancient Murrelets, Brandt, Double-crested, and Pelagic Cormorants, Glaucous-winged and Western Gulls, Surf, Black and White-winged Scoters and more.



Orca Whales – Mother & child



Rhinoceros Auklets



Tufted Puffin

# PROGRAMS CALENDAR

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Monthly meetings are held at Moccasin Lake Nature Park the 1st Monday of the month (unless a holiday) from October to May. Meet & Greet at 6:30PM, Program begins at 7PM.

View our previous programs on our [YouTube](#) channel.



## Monday, March 4th

Come join us for a thrilling and educational event with Captain Wes Tallyn as we delve into the Science of the Chase. Explore the complexities of pursuit behavior in the animal kingdom and how it relates to human endeavors. This in-person event promises to be both enlightening and entertaining. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a seasoned expert in the field!

Wes Tallyn is an avid birder, scientist, outdoor enthusiast and writer for Coastal Angler

Magazine and [Gulfster.com](#). Owner of Snook Jam Outdoors, he will be sharing resources and methodologies he uses to learn more about a species he is 'chasing' to get that perfect shot.

NEW\* Have you heard Cpt. Wes on the Florida Bird Pod podcast? Explore the diverse world of Florida birding with the Florida Bird Pod.

Meet & Greet with refreshments @6:30, Speaker @7



## Monday, April 1st

Marianne is a former Clearwater Audubon board member and Audubon Florida's former Director of Bird Conservation. She will be sharing an amazing adventure through story and photographs that you won't want to miss.

Penguins, seabirds, terrestrial birds, whales, fur seals, and elephant seals will be highlighted in addition to interesting historical aspects of this 20-day journey in the Southern Ocean.

Meet & Greet with refreshments @6:30, Speaker @7

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

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March 2 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am

## **Naturalist Guided Tour \$3**

Explore the coastal and upland ecosystems of Weedon Island on this guided tour of the Preserve. Participants will...

March 3 @ 8:00 am - 9:30 am

## **Free Sunday Bird Hike**

Come out for this “early morning” walk in the woods. Come out for this “early morning” walk in...

March 3 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am

## **Pollinator Hike \$20**

This family hike combines the outdoor experience with the educational aspects of discovering the various species of pollinators...

March 13 @ 6:30 pm Online Training Event

## **2024 Rooftop Volunteer Training**

This virtual event will focus on providing in-depth training for new or returning volunteers for rooftops in the Tampa Bay area (Pasco, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, & Sarasota Counties). We have over 80 historic rooftop nesting sites that we collect data from each season. Volunteers are needed to do ground surveys, check sites for fallen chicks, report avian predators, and report data. This training will provide the tools you need to become a successful rooftop volunteer by learning about the species you'll protect, how to collect data on nesting species, and return chicks to rooftops when needed. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

March 16th 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

## **Wilcox Nursery's Annual Spring Festival**

### **In support of the West Klosterman Preserve**

The day will be packed with educational presentations from The Narrows (George C. McGough Park) and the West Klosterman Preserve, who will both talk about the importance of conserving our natural areas and protecting our wildlife. We will also have live birds from several local rescue groups at the nursery, over a dozen local vendors from the bay area, food and drink and, of course, plenty of native plants!

March 20 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

## **Free Seed Saving Strategies – Spring Vegetable Gardening Series**

Learn how to save seeds from your favorite vegetables! Have you ever thought about saving seeds from your...

March 21 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am

[Wading Bird Walk](#) \$3

Meet the wading birds of the Weedon Island Preserve on a guided walk of the trails.

April 27 @ 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

**Earth Day at Moccasin Lake Nature Park**

Celebrate this special day by learning how to better protect our Earth at Moccasin Lake Nature Park. Moccasin Lake is a 51-acre nature preserve with trails and boardwalks under a canopy of mature oaks and across ponds and creeks, with an array of wildlife, including gopher turtles, raccoons, and many birds. Be sure to check out the hourly animal and educational presentations and participate in fun activities and crafts. A food truck will be on site.

## **CLEARWATER AUDUBON'S STATE-WIDE BIRDATHON**

Gather a few birders and register your team. Teams are 2-4 people. Download the [FLYER](#) and pledge form on our website. All levels welcome, young birders encouraged!

Participants collect pledges from family, friends, work colleagues, businesses and others who want to support birds.

Beginning April 1st, during peak bird migration, each team goes out and counts and records as many species as they can identify. The count must be conducted within the state of Florida and during a single, contiguous 24-hour period (which may span two days) anywhere in the state of Florida and immediately surrounding waters.

The Birdathon window is April 1-30, 2024.

### **Important Dates:**

Team Registration Open through March 31, 2024

Statewide Birdathon Window: April 1-30, 2024

Fundraising Deadline: May 11, 2024

Celebration Luncheon at Brooker Creek: May 18, 2024



Register now for  
**CLEARWATER AUDUBON'S**  
**STATE-WIDE BIRDATHON**

**April 2024**  
 birding window

**24 hrs**  
 of your choice



**BIRDING  
 TEAMS**  
 2-4 BIRDERS



**DONATION  
 BENEFICIARIES**  
 CONSERVATION



**AFTER  
 PARTY**  
 PRIZES & GLORY

**Important Dates:**



Team Registration Open through March 31, 2024  
 Statewide Birdathon Window: April 1-30, 2024  
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**Event Sponsors**



<https://f3birdathon.wixsite.com/birdathon>



# Your Clearwater Audubon Society Board

## Executive Committee:

Dale Goebel  
Lynn Sumerson  
Méichelle Long  
Cuneyt Yilmaz

## Committee Chairs:

Conservation Projects: Dana Kerstein  
Field Trips: Dale Goebel  
Communication/Media: **Position Available**  
Membership: Cuneyt Yilmaz  
Newsletter/Webmaster: Méichelle Long  
Community Outreach: Lynn Sumerson

## Officers:

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

## Board Member at Large:

Mardy Hornsby  
Diane Ives, Don Peccia  
IP President: John Hood

## Sub-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 Information](#)



[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)



# 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  
Florida Young Birder's Club & Florida Avian Conservation

