



Conservation Through Education
The Newsletter of the Clearwater Audubon Society
Nov-Dec 2022 Vol. 109

Audubon Florida *Virtual* Assembly

Audubon Assembly 2022 is now open... to everyone!

As a result of the impacts of Hurricane Ian, Audubon Florida canceled the Audubon Assembly in Ft. Myers this year. We still want to virtually flock together this fall, so some of the Assembly events are on an online platform. This content will be free for everyone, even if you did not register for the in-person Assembly.

Join us November 2, 2022 at 6 p.m. for the Chapter Celebration and Florida Audubon Annual Meeting

Join us for the brief annual meeting of Florida Audubon Society as well as a celebration of Audubon's 45 chapters, their successes, and the announcement of this year's chapter awards winners!


[To register, click here.](#)



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

November 5th Monthly Bird Outing at Moccasin Lake Nature Park

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

Accessible with assistance 

November 7th Monthly Program: Potluck and Atlantic Puffins at Hog Island with Kim Begay

Please bring your own serving pieces and a dish to share.

Kim Begay, our Conservation VP, will share her adventures and experiences at the National Audubon Society Hog Island Camp in Maine from June of 2022. From bird walks, educational seminars, meeting Dr. Stephen Kress and the other dedicated Hog Island staff, and a fascinating boat trip to Eastern Egg Rock, where there were hundreds of nesting Common Terns, Guillemots, Eiders, Storm Petrels, and Atlantic Puffins, you'll hear all about what makes this amazing camp so special! Meet & Greet at 6:30PM, Program begins at 7PM.

November 12th War Veterans Memorial Park

Meet at 9600 Bay Pines Blvd, St. Petersburg 33708

Early birds meet at Shelter 5 at 7am, others meet at Shelter 1 at 8am.

Leader - Carl Shavers (727) 632-7502

November 19th Hammock Park, Dunedin

Meet at 8:00am at 1900 San Mateo Drive at the chapel entrance. Park down by the bathrooms.

Leader— Cuneyt Yilmaz (727) 657-0803


November 26th Safety Harbor 'HOT Spots'

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at North City Park (2075 Swan Ln, Safety Harbor, FL 34695). We will then continue on to other hotspots in town possibly including Folly Farms, Marshall Street Park, Safety Harbor City Park and Safety Harbor Waterfront Park

Leader - Bill Kaempfer (303) 717-5063

December 3rd Monthly Bird Outing at Moccasin Lake Nature Park

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

Accessible with assistance 

December 7th Monthly Program The Birds of Maine with Seth Benz

Seth Benz is the Director of the ANP's Bird Ecology Program and one of Maine's most knowledgeable bird guides. He will share details about the upcoming May 2023 Maine trip. Meet & Greet at 6:30PM, Program begins at 7PM.

December 10th Fort DeSoto Park

Meet at the flagpole at 8am. 3500 Pinellas Bayway S, Tierra Verde 33715

Leader - John Swenfurth (813) 390-4734

December 26th North County CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Want to help? - Contact Bill Kaempfer (303) 717-5063 or Cuneyt Yilmaz 727-657-0803

Sanctuary of Sand by Carol Mathews

My trip down to Ft DeSoto Park on a beautiful October 17th morning turned into a new experience with a not-so-new little shorebird. Walking back along North Beach after gazing at the White Pelicans, I came upon this sweet Piping Plover hanging out by itself and was content to let me enjoy him and snap a few photographs.

When I came home and uploaded my photos and shared them, it was pointed out to me that I had a banded Piping Plover and that I should report it. There began my new, fun, and exciting experience!

Googling “report a banded piping plover” sent me to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service site which had a chart explaining the leg flags and bands. Matching my bird’s flag/bands, I then reported it along with a photo to plover@umn.edu (Great Lakes Piping Plovers).



I received an immediate response! He hatched in 2019 at Silver Lake Park, MI and began breeding on North Manitou Island in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, MI in 2020. He has nested there each summer, and Ft De Soto has been his winter territory each year. The contact noted that this bird was a favorite and identified him as GLuG (Green=G, Black=L, u, Green=G).

Migration is amazing! I will watch out for this feathered friend and for other banded birds to report!

WELCOME ABOARD



We are excited to welcome **Victoria Germany** as this year's CLI Student. CLI stands for [Conservation Leadership Initiative](#). Participants apply with Audubon Florida, are selected and partnered with a local Audubon chapter. Victoria has participated in Jim McGinity's bird banding at Hammock Park and will also be working on the Plants4Birds project.

This year, several Eckerd College students are serving for a season as interns for various projects with Clearwater Audubon.

Sarah Durbin is assisting our Plants4Birds project led by Stephanie Hall, CAS Secretary. This is a habitat restoration project in Dunedin's Hammock Park. It is grant-funded by Audubon Florida and in partnership with the Pinellas Native Plant Society.



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.

Rachael Boatwright & Jordan Canfro have been participating in community science. Rachael, with the Florida Young Birders Club, and Jordan with bird banding.

We are pleased to be able to offer opportunities that allow these students field experience in conservation.



P4B PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

P4B= Plants for Birds

October 15, 2022: Workday at Hammock Park Report

Stephanie Hall (CAS Secretary and Project Lead) and Kim Begay (CAS VP Conservation) attended this workday along with members of Friends of the Hammock and other volunteers including CAS interns Sara and Jessica. The purpose was to continue removing invasive plants from the garden area. Moving forward, we will continue to remove invasive plants in November and plant native plants in December. Special thanks to two CAS members who were visiting the park, Ronnie and John Stewart. They were very impressed with the project and made a donation of \$300! Thank you very much for your contribution. The next workdays will be November 19 & December 17th. We are so excited!



Thank you awesome volunteers!

CONSERVATION CORNER

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank **GFWC North Pinellas Woman's Club** for their continued support of Clearwater Audubon's Conservation efforts. We appreciate their commitment to conservation and applaud their volunteer efforts in our community.

Latest on the West Klosterman Preserve effort to purchase the pristine tract of wildlife habitat in Tarpon Springs. This is from their Facebook page.

“Our efforts to save the West Klosterman Preserve as a natural habitat for animals, plants and trees had a completely unexpected setback this week with the loss of the Local Support Grant from the state.

That's the bad news. Here's the GOOD news: We remain 100% committed to saving this irreplaceable slice of paradise. And we are pleased to announce that Rebecca and Stu Sjouwerman, who have proven their love of animals and nature with their work on behalf of the Humane Society and Dunedin's Gladys Douglas project, have now joined the Efroymsen Family Foundation as Cornerstone Sponsors of WKPG.

As champions for habitat preservation and care for animals and wildlife, the Sjouwermans have committed to helping save the West Klosterman Preserve, and hope that other community members with a heart for preservation will also join in.

When touring the WKP, Rebecca noted that the property provided a unique habitat for the many gopher tortoises, the birds and mammals that live there and that it "must be saved" as a preserve. It is up to all of us to raise funds to secure the property as the preserve that we all want to create.

Yes, we are back in fundraising mode to save the West Klosterman Preserve. We are encouraged by this commitment from the Sjouwermans, and we will ask other donors and Pinellas County to join us in reaching our \$3 million goal.

We WILL save the West Klosterman Preserve and other slices of paradise in Pinellas County. Donate today through our website at www.wkpreserve.com. #SavetheWKP”

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

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](#).

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](#)



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

Birds Will Be Birds by Madeleine Bohrer

There is nothing like fall in Florida when the light becomes almost tangible and friends gather again to go birding. John Swenfurth led our second walk of the season through Brooker Creek Preserve in Tarpon Springs—a nearly 10,000 acre expanse and a living testament to the word “preserve”. It is a great reminder to preserve as much land as possible for Nature’s sake. Being in these amazing woods and open spaces was just what we all needed.

One of the best birds of the day was at the start of our walk—you guessed it...in the parking lot! Into the top of a small tree flew a female Scarlet Tanager (right). That was a surprise! As we worked our way into the oak and pine woods, Pileated Woodpeckers, Great Crested Flycatchers, and White-eyed Vireos provided background music. We heard the tittering of a lone Chimney Swift. I wonder if he missed the bus to go south. At the other side of the size spectrum, a Bald Eagle flew through the open area by the power lines. We are so lucky to share space with these creatures.



A Yellow-throated Warbler made a nice color splash in the trees along with the Cardinals. There were plenty of ever-active Gnatcatchers and Titmice to keep things going through the day. We even had our first of season Gray Catbird—welcome “home”! We are so happy you’re back! To top things off, a female Summer Tanager flew in to remind us how varied and amazing the neotropical tanagers are.



As we compiled the day’s sightings (by the parking lot, I might add) a dark morph of the Short-tailed Hawk (left) appeared far overhead! The wind gusted in such a way that as this magnificent soaring bird scanned the ground, it

was pushed backwards! Oh, what a sight...

Through the morning we talked about how amazing birds are. At times, their behavior is just unpredictable. For us humans who think they know everything, this is so refreshing. Birds will be birds—and aren’t we glad for that?

 Thanks to John for his photos of the Scarlet Tanager and Short-tailed Hawk.

BIRDING YOUTH


Clearwater Audubon Supports the Florida Young Birders Club

The **Florida Avian Conservation** (FAC) has a strong interest in educating the next generation of bird conservationists. Partnering with Tampa Audubon Society in 2020 to start the **Florida Young Birders Club** – Tampa Bay, and more recently with Clearwater Audubon in 2022. Also, in 2021 FAC partnered with the Florida Ornithological Society (FOS) to begin laying the foundation for expanding the Florida Young Birders Club state-wide.

This club is for young adults, ages 9 – 17, from the Tampa Bay area, who have an interest in learning more about birds and the environment. FYBC offers several field trips to local birding hot spots, workshops, and volunteer projects. These activities are a great opportunity to see all kinds of warblers, shorebirds, and wading birds, as well as, meet other kids who share the same passion.

If you know of any young birders in the Tampa Bay area, please check out the Florida Young Birders Club Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/171281611058188/about>) for information about outings and details on how to join. They can also contact the organizers at: fybc.tampabay@gmail.com. For more information about how Young Birders Clubs work, visit <https://www.ohioyoungbirders.org/young-birders-network.html>



 Shorebird Outing to Ft. DeSoto County

POETIC LICENSE

Randy Kessler recently joined Clearwater Audubon for our local field trips. She is a quick shot with the camera, quick of wit and offers stories and poetry alongside. Here are a few posts and photos that she agreed to share:

No Holds Barred?

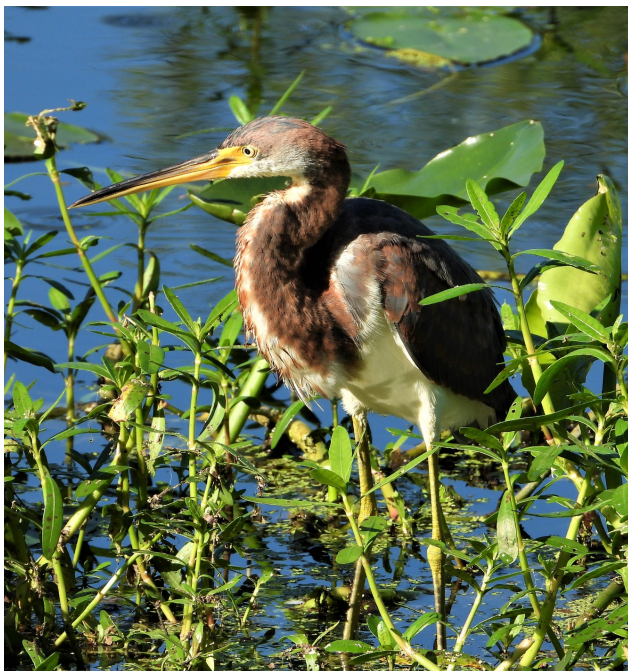
For my very first outing with the Clearwater Audubon Society, I was pleased that I had managed to arrive about 10 minutes early and, boy, was I glad I did. Madeleine Bohrer, who would be leading the birding hike, saw me toting my camera along with my monopod, and asked me if I would like to take a picture of a Barred Owl she had spotted high up in a nearby tree. He had been conversing with one of the owls in the park's rehab facility. As soon as I started snapping some pix, I noticed a squirrel getting awfully close to the owl, climbing over and



under the same limb and scolding him, with its mouth turned down in a scowl. The squirrel got the owl's attention, but no attempt was made to retaliate or make it a meal. Judging by the owl's expression, I could imagine him snidely saying, "Tell me how you really feel!" The bold, angry squirrel finally took off, and a female Barred Owl magically appeared in its place. Not sure whether this was a parent or mate, but they immediately began preening each other's face. I was touched at how endearing and gently affectionate they were with each other. It's amazing how they can be fierce with their prey, yet so tender with one another.

My Walk Along with Clearwater Audubon

What a wonderful group of birding people I got to hang out with yesterday during the Clearwater Audubon Society's Saturday morning walk through Moccasin Lake Nature Park, led by Madeleine Bohrer, who provided great information about the birds and plants in her talk. A few of the participants I already knew or had seen them in other nature parks and places, while, even those I hadn't met before, warmly welcomed me and had such friendly faces. Following is just a small sampling of the many species that members of the group spotted.



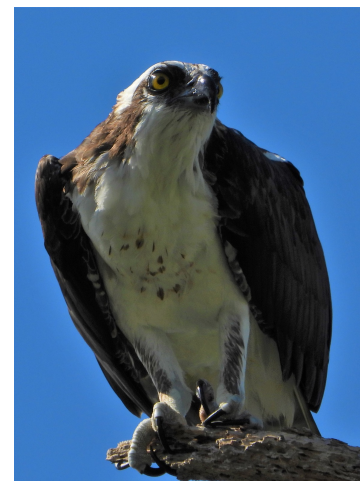
Immature Tricolored Heron



Immature Cooper's Hawk

My “Honeymoon” with Clearwater Audubon

This week’s birding hike with the Clearwater Audubon Society, led by Cuneyt Yilmaz, began at Honeymoon Island’s Osprey trail, but I also did a little pre-hike birding on Dunedin Causeway, while I waited for the state park to open so I could start this tale. I also did some post-hike birding with Cuneyt as well as last week’s hike leader, Steve Aversa; and it truly was a honeymoon of a day – except for those merciless skeeters who always enjoy using me as their personal blood bank. I must taste good, what can I say?



Top left to bottom right: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Merlin, Bay-breasted Warbler,
House finch, Northern Mockingbird, Osprey

EVENT LISTING

Oyster Reef Ball Construction- Volunteers needed

November 2 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Tampa Bay Watch Marine & Education Center
3000 Pinellas Bayway South Tierra Verde, FL 33715

Join us at the Tampa Bay Watch Marine Education Center, 3000 Pinellas Bayway South in Tierra Verde to help build oyster reef balls! This task involves pouring marine-friendly concrete into a fiberglass mold to create oyster reef balls, then taking apart the molds when dry. The reef balls will be installed at a future date to stabilize shorelines and prevent erosion while creating habitat similar to natural oyster communities found along shoreline areas throughout Tampa Bay.

Wonders of Wildlife Festival

November 5 @ 10:00 am - 4:30 pm

Edward Medard Conservation Park, 6140 Turkey Creek Rd Plant City, FL 33567
Free – \$15

With rehabilitation and education as our main focus, the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay is passionate about educating and inspiring the next generation of nature lovers, wildlife enthusiasts, and conservation champions so that we will all be able to enjoy Florida's diverse wildlife in the future.



NOVEMBER 5
EDWARD MEDARD
CONSERVATION PARK
6140 TURKEY CREEK RD. PLANT CITY, FL 33567



500 Million Years at Brooker Creek Preserve

November 8 @ 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Free Online Event

Have you ever looked at an alligator or a wood stork and thought “man, they look like living dinosaurs!”? Have you ever seen fossils and thought they looked similar to creatures still around today? And what about Florida specifically - when did all of the animals and plants we see here actually get here? This webinar will take a 500 million year journey through evolutionary history, looking at the origins of many of the creatures that call Brooker Creek home.

Wading Bird Walk (\$3)

November 10 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center

1800 Weedon Drive NE St. Petersburg, FL

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. A brief classroom session before the walk will give visitors an overview of the birds found at Weedon Island, including tips on when and where different species are most likely to be seen.

Moccasin Lake Invasive Removal Work Day

November 19 @ 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Moccasin Lake Environmental Education Center, 2750 Park Trail Lane Clearwater, FL

Join Keep Pinellas Beautiful for a beautification project at Moccasin Lake Nature Park in Clearwater! Keep Pinellas Beautiful is partnering with Moccasin Lake Nature Park in Clearwater to remove the invasive Caesar Weed, *Urena lobata*. Caesar Weed is an exotic invasive plant that is a prolific spreader. Removing Caesar Weed prevents the area from becoming a mono-culture dominated by a single type of plant.

Holiday Lights in the Gardens (\$10)

November 25 @ 5:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Florida Botanical Gardens, 12520 Ulmerton Road Largo, FL 33778

The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation is proud to announce the dates and times for its 22nd annual winter event. Admission is a suggested donation of \$10.00 per person, over the age of 13. Credit cards and cash are accepted at our entrance gates, no pre-registration necessary. The Gardens will sparkle with 1 million, twinkling, LED lights in a multitude of colors. Vibrant laser lights and lighted figures round out our display to wow guests of all ages.

Beginning Birding Class (Free)

December 3 @ 8:00 am - 10:30 am

J. B. Starkey Wilderness Park Education Center

10500 Wilderness Road New Port Richey, FL 34655

Beginning Birding Class by J Mike Kell Meet 8 AM J. B. Starkey Education Center in the parking lot for a short walk before going into class. Contact J Mike: jmike65@gmail.com

Part 1- Oct 1 2022, 8:00 - 10:30 AM Part 2- Nov 5 2022, 8:00 - 10:30 AM Part 3- Dec 3 2022, 8:00 - 10:30 AM