



Wing Beat

Conservation Through Education

The Newsletter of the Clearwater Audubon Society

Sept-Oct 2023 Vol. 114

Congratulations Kim Begay

For more than a decade, the City of Dunedin and the Committee on Environmental Quality and Sustainability (CEQS) have been celebrating Dunedin's local green advocates, residents, businesses, and organizations.

We are proud to have **Kim Begay** be honored with this year's award winners: Salty Soul Foundation, Dana Ziecheck, Carol Smith, Ceara Riling, Craig Wilson, Dan Larremore, Dunedin Health and Wellness Center, Elizabeth Faubert and Kim Sauls Begay.



As our VP of Conservation, she works tirelessly as an advocate for birds and their habitats. She partners with so many organizations to ensure the safety of these birds. She rescues so many of our shorebirds, raptors, owls and others. She is a great example of our community's commitment to the environment.

We would also like to congratulate **Dan Larremore**, Environmental Specialist at Honeymoon Island State Park & Florida Service's Dept of Environmental Protection. Dan is a wonderful advocate for our beach nesting bird stewards, avid ebirder, storyteller, Park Biologist, Ranger, conservationist, friend of Clearwater Audubon and really cool guy.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Start the Fall Season with these Field Trips... Bring a Friend

September 23rd John Taylor Park

Migrants, bitterns, Green herons and more. Meet at the park's Shelter 6 at 8:00am.


Leader - Steve Aversa 727-218-7938

September 30th Honeymoon Island SP

Meet at 8:30am at 1 Causeway Blvd, Dunedin at the Osprey Trail head at the north end of the playground parking lot. Leader - Cuneyt Yilmaz 727-657-0803

October 7th Monthly Bird Outing at Moccasin Lake Nature Park

Meet at 8:00am. Leader - Dr. Lynn Sumerson 727-215-7477

Accessible with assistance 

October 12th -15th Florida Birding and Nature Festival

A four-day festival offering field and boat trips, presentations, keynotes, and a free nature expo of vendors and exhibits. Enjoy and learn from renowned professionals, experience peak migration, and shop unique products. Highlights Wildlife Corridors and Migrating birds, experience Central FL's peak fall migration. 6650 Dickman Rd, Apollo Beach, FL 33572. Contact - Info (813) 444-0115 or info@fbnfestival.org
<http://www.floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org/>

October 21st Sand Key Park

Meet at the southwest corner of the beach parking lot 8:30am at 1060 Gulf Blvd, Clearwater., 33767. Leaders - Cuneyt Yilmaz 727-657-0803 & Steve Aversa 727-218-7938

October 28th Colt Creek State Park

Meet at Target's northern portion of the parking lot, 2747 Gulf to Bay Blvd. at 7:00am or meet at the park entrance at 8:30am. CCSP 16000 SR 471 Lakeland, 33809. BRING Lunch. CAS will cover the admission fee. Leader - Paul Trunk 727-430-0368

PROGRAMS CALENDAR

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.

| MONTH | SPEAKER | DETAILS |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| Oct 2 @ 7PM | Melissa Edwards | Albatross at the Midway Atoll Midway Atoll's (Kauaihelani) three small islands provide a virtually predator-free safe haven for the world's largest albatross colony. Melissa Edwards (Avian Hospital Director at Seaside Sanctuary) shares her experiences volunteering this past year. |
| Nov 6 @ 7PM | Kara Cook | Rooftop Stewarding The Rooftop Nesting stewardship program is vital to preserving populations of shorebirds who are no longer able to find safe nesting on our shorelines. Kara Cook, Audubon Florida's Rooftop Biologist, will share multiple ways volunteers can get involved to help out rooftop nesting birds. |
| Dec 4 @ 7PM | Dr. Ken Meyer | ARCI Conservation ARCI is a leader in the tracking of wild birds. They focus on applied ecological studies of rare and imperiled birds. Dr. Meyer will share with us how they gather the scientific data that are used to guide conservation projects. |
| Jan 8 @ 7PM | Paul Trunk | Birding Arizona Overall, Arizona's species list of around 550 is the highest of any state without an ocean coastline. Paul Trunk will share his recent birding trip with species and hotspots to encourage you to plan your next trip. |

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|-------------|----------------------|---|
| Feb 5 @ 7PM | Jim McGinity | <p>The Florida Young Birders Club</p> <p>Jim McGinity has a strong interest in educating the next generation of bird conservationists. He formed the YBC with support from local Audubon chapters and the Florida Ornithological Society (FOS) to begin laying the foundation for expanding the Florida Young Birders Club state-wide. Jim, along with a few members, will share the experiences of this vibrant young group and share their passion.</p> <p>Special report from FYBC mom, Rachael Woodams, about her CAS Educator Scholarship trip to Hog Island's Educator's Camp. She is an elementary teacher and Project FeederWatch participant.</p> |
| Mar 4 @ 7PM | Wes Tallyn | <p>The Science of the Chase</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Apr 1 @ 7PM | Marianne Korosy, PhD | <p>Birds and Wildlife of Antarctica, South Georgia, Falklands, and the Southern Ocean</p> <p>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.</p> |
| May 6 @ 7PM | TBD | |

Birding Arizona

by Paul Trunk

There are many wonderful places to bird in the United States. At the top of most lists is SE Arizona. Late July early August starts Arizona's "second spring" due to the onset of the monsoon season. These summer rains bring about a second nesting season and a break from the heat. Eight of us from CAS traveled there this past July, and as expected, we experienced why Arizona is a special place to bird.

We started the trip on the hot desert floor at Saguaro National Park. We were greeted by Cactus Wrens, Verdins, Canyon Towhees, Curve-billed Thrashers and Black-tailed Gnatcatchers. It was the middle of the day and these birds were actively feeding. We ended that afternoon with an Arizona specialty-the Gilded Flicker.

We traveled to one of the famous "Sky Islands", Mt. Lemmon. This famous birding area gave us an opportunity to experience various life zones as we traveled from the desert floor to over 9000 ft in elevation. The variety of birds changed as we made stops along the

way. Painted Redstarts, Red-faced, Grace's, Black-throated Gray and Olive Warblers were seen as were various flycatchers, woodpeckers and songbirds. It was a beautiful introduction to the variety of birds one can see in this area of the country. We also traveled to two other sky islands during our trip, the Huachuca and Chiricahua mountain ranges. Both areas gave us numerous views of the birds that make SE AZ so special.



Photo by Nancy McClelland

One early morning we got up before sunrise to listen for trogons calling in Madera Canyon. We Were rewarded by having a male land at the top of a nearby snag.



Photo by Craig Liddell

Late summer in Arizona also offers visiting birders the experience of migrating hummingbirds.

We had an outstanding 14 species of hummers, including seldom seen Berylline, White-eared and Plain-capped Starthroat. Various places open their yards to visitors and provide numerous feeders to see these birds as they are passing through.

We had a total of 156 species for our trip. Although you rarely see everything you are looking for, the variety of birds and beauty of SE Arizona fills the senses and makes one want to return over and over again.

A BIT OF HOUSEKEEPING

by Gene Ellis

During the nesting season of 2022, Dale Goebel, while visiting the houses noticed a repair that was needed to the roof of one of the Purple Martin houses at the Dunedin Marina. She then contacted CAS Secretary Stephanie Hall, about the possibility of contact & coordination with Dunedin's Parks and Recreation and Gene Ellis to make the necessary repairs.

The two Purple Martin houses located on tall poles at the western edge of the Dunedin Marina received a much-needed house cleaning in late July by Stephanie Hall, Gene Ellis, and Jason Keel. The Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) had departed earlier and headed to their wintering areas in the Amazon basin of South America.



Stephanie contacted Laurie Ferguson, who is the Harbormaster for the City of Dunedin, and offered to coordinate the cleaning of these two houses, if the city would remove the padlock that secured the lowering mechanism on the larger house. City employee Jason Keel agreed to help, and his hard work was instrumental in the successful completion of the task.

After laboriously removing the padlock, whose key had been lost, and wrestling with rusted fittings and a recalcitrant predator guard, we were able to lower both houses so the serious house cleaning could begin. Metal scraping tools, putty knives, soapy water, a leaf blower, and generous amounts of

elbow grease were used to remove the accumulation of leaves, grass, dirt, and small scraps of plastic from the birdhouse apartments. The desiccated, flattened body of one nestling was found, as were three dirt-covered unhatched eggs.

By the end of the morning, the apartments of both houses were clean and ready for the Purple Martins who will return next year. Raising the bird houses back into place (again wrestling with the predator guard) completed the work. The bird houses were clean, dry, and comfortable, which is more than can be said for the three people who did the work. We trust the birds will appreciate our efforts.



The Littoral Zone: A Bridge Between Land and Water

By Jessica Hughes, Conservation Committee

The littoral zone is the space between the land and open water, usually encompassing the area from the high-tide mark to the area affected by breaking waves. Most of us know this zone on our local beaches to contain an abundance of living organisms including shorebirds, horseshoe crabs, seagrass, sand dollars and more (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998). It is a fascinating 'bridge' between two worlds - which should be marveled at for its ecological importance (especially the services it provides to birds).

In this space, there is a clear dependence between birds and marine life. One example is that between the American horseshoe crab and the Red Knot. Florida has a population of American horseshoe crabs (*Limulus polyphemus*), which is a species that has changed very little over millions of years. Many fish and bird species found in Florida



feed on horseshoe crab eggs, especially the Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, n.d.). However, a decline in horseshoe crab populations on the East Coast due to their use in the biomedical industry poses a threat

to the species that rely on their eggs as a major food source. When Red Knots migrate, they rely on these eggs to keep them nourished during the taxing journey and without these eggs, migrating becomes increasingly difficult. While synthetic versions of horseshoe crab blood are not widespread yet, we can only hope that an increase in their use soon is the key to protecting horseshoe crabs and the animals which rely on them (Whittle, 2023).

Another way the littoral zone is beneficial to birds is by providing them with habitat to nest and forage. For example, ducks love to use different aquatic plants to build their nests (Michigan Department of Natural Resources, 2015). Different shorebirds (like plovers) need to forage on mudflats for marine invertebrates, crustaceans, worms, etc. (Audubon, 2023). Littoral zones not only provide habitat to birds but improve water quality and hence, provide a better home for a variety of fish species, which is beneficial to both fishing and recreational industries (Michigan Department of Natural Resources, 2015). Simply put, littoral zones provide sheltered spaces for many creatures to thrive.

Like many environments today, littoral zones face a long list of threats. Some include eutrophication, which is when excess amounts of nutrients in the water lead to deoxygenation – killing many living organisms (Winfield, 2004). Other threats include the prevalence of invasive species, development, and human disturbance (Kennedy, 2018). While these are complex conservation issues, it is crucial to remain aware. A key takeaway as birders is to remember to be respectful in all environments by giving birds space, picking up litter, and generally being aware of the needs of other living things.

Jessica is a Junior at Eckerd College studying Marine Science and Environmental Studies. She is the newest member of our Board and serves on the Conservation committee.

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FLORIDA BIRDING & NATURE FESTIVAL

October 12 - 15 , 2023

6650 Dickman Rd, Apollo Beach, FL

Four days of field and boat trips, expert seminars, keynote speakers, and a great free nature expo!

[REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!](#)



SAVE THE DATE!

Join Us as We Continue to Celebrate our 50th Year!



Fall 2023 FOS Meeting

Boyd Hill Nature Preserve in South St. Petersburg
1101 Country Club Way S, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Friday, November 10 – Sunday, November 12

Field Trips will visit Ft. DeSoto County Park, Egmont Key NWR/State Park, Honeymoon Island State Park, and other great regional birding sites.

For more information, contact Mary Mack Gray graymarymack@gmail.com
David Goodwin david.goodwin@aol.com or Ann Paul annpaul26@gmail.com



North Shore Birding Festival

(Nov 30-Dec 4, 2023)

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive
2850 Lust Rd, Apopka, FL

This Festival is hosted by Orange Audubon Society. Space Coast Audubon supports this festival through cross promotion and members who volunteer as trip leaders. More info here:

<https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/>

Your Clearwater Audubon Society Board

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Cuneyt Yilmaz

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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 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



CLEARWATER AUDUBON SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

REV 2023

Website: www.clearwateraudubonsociety.org

Email: clearwateraudubonsociety@gmail.com



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____ (optional)

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____.

Chapter: E36 Clearwater Audubon Society

\$20 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP - includes a one year subscription to Audubon's magazine.

Make \$20 check payable to: National Audubon Society

Send this application & check to:

The National Audubon Society

ATTN: Membership

225 Varick Street, 7th floor

New York, NY 10014

By sending in this application, you are becoming a member of Clearwater Audubon Society as well as National Audubon Society. You receive member benefits from both.

Membership can also be accomplished online at:

<http://www.clearwateraudubonsociety.org/membership.html>