



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.

What is “Digiscoping”?

Placing the lens of a digital camera to the eyepiece of a spotting scope to take photos is called “digiscoping.” It’s caught on big-time with birders because you can take good (often great) pictures without a long, expensive, heavy telephoto lens. With that in mind, Audubon Florida is providing **“Tips for Successful Wildlife Photography”** Do you enjoy taking pictures of wildlife in their natural habitat? Watch this video for some easy to follow tips to make your experience with nature safer and more fulfilling. Learn more:

<http://fl.audubon.org/wildlife-photog...> Or click the photo below to view their video on YouTube:



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PHOTOS

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

April, May 2014
Vol. 58 No. 1
Supporting our community since 1959
Our Motto: Conservation through Education
For more information call us at 727-442-9140





Moccasin Lake Bird Blind

-John Hood

Located just behind the windmill/water tower is Moccasin Lake's newest addition – a bird blind! Constructed by Mike, Lynn, and myself this week it is 18x10 feet with a slit window for viewing, benches all the way across with shelves to prop your elbows on, and a tall window on one end for scopes or cameras on tripods. Out front there is a bird bath with a solar operated fountain, a brush pile, and feeders. Hopefully (don't cross your fingers) we can add a Jacuzzi and a beer fridge. Come out and enjoy!

[Learn more about Moccasin Lake nature Park](#)



Volunteers Needed

-John Hood

With the coming of nesting season we are in need of volunteers for our programs as outlined below:

1 – rooftop least tern nesting. Volunteers check on rooftops that historically have had rooftop nesting. Once nesting has been confirmed volunteers check for downed chicks on a routine basis. On a sparsely populated or protected roof this might be only 2-3 times per day. On densely populated unprotected roofs this may be as frequently as 6 times per day. You can choose what building you want to monitor, what day(s), and what time(s). If you find a downed chick you will call a bander who will come and band the chick and help you put it back on the roof if you need help. It's neat to watch these chicks grow from fuzzballs to fledglings who then leave for the beach.

2 – beach nesting bird stewards. Volunteers monitor beach locations where sea and shorebirds are nesting. The beaches are surveyed early in the season and nesting sites are posted when the first egg is spotted. We usually have a black skimmer colony on Sand Key. Our primary emphasis is on Three Rooker Island which is just north of Honeymoon Island. Volunteers are transported by boat to the island where they set up in chairs and umbrellas (provided) adjacent to the colonies. They educate the folks who come by and keep people and dogs from entering the colonies. It's wonderful to spend the day on one of the only unspoiled pristine barrier islands on Florida's west coast. Nesting birds include snowy plovers, laughing gulls (4-5,000), least terns, royal terns, white ibis, Caspian terns, reddish egrets among others.



Program Updates

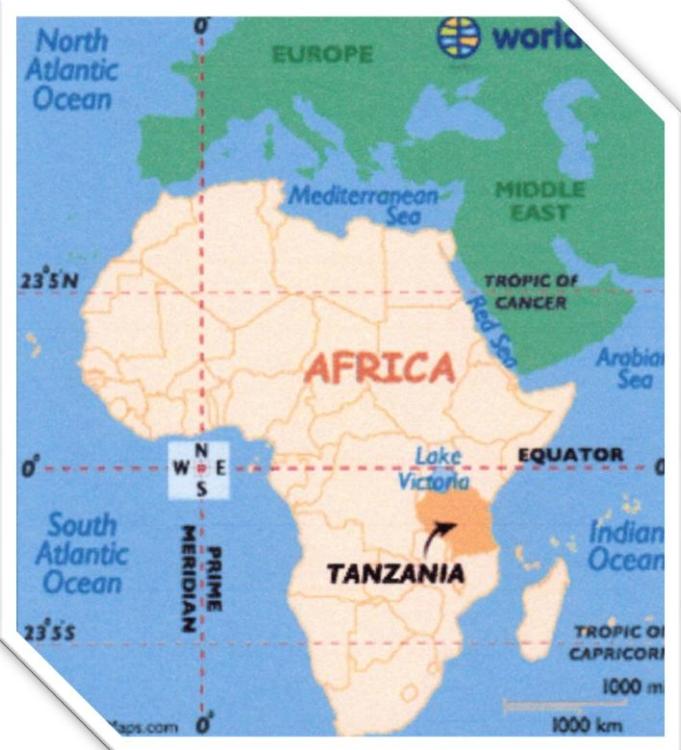
- Cynthia Kluss

Program Updates: January joint meeting, February Natures Notebook, March Neo-tropical Migratory Research

The first quarter of the 2014 Clearwater Audubon Society (CAS) programs has ended. We thank the speakers, the hospitality providers, and the meeting locations for sharing their knowledge, treats, and facilities with us.

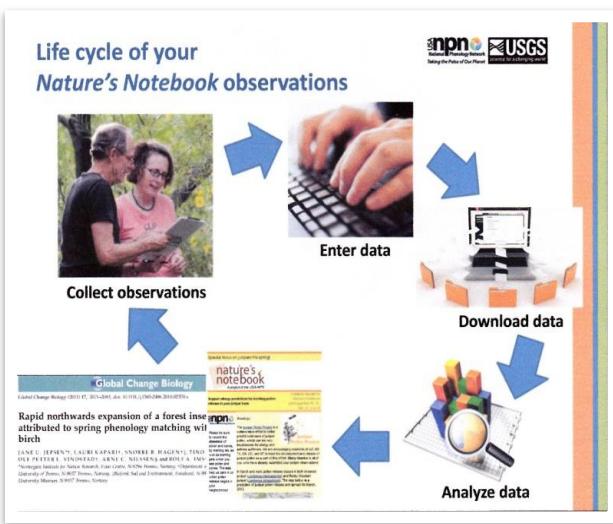
The January program was a joint effort between CAS and the St. Petersburg Audubon Society. Lindsay and Tom Bell presented Beautiful Birds, Migrations, and Babies. They shared experiences from their travels in Tanzania from 1986 and 2012. The program focused on the wildlife preserves of the Serengeti Plain and the

Ngorongoro crater. The Ngorongoro crater is a collapsed volcano that forms a low plain caldera about the size of Texas and Oklahoma. The animal migration in those areas follows seasonal water availability. The wet season, in January, finds massive herds of mammals in the southwest segment of the crater. The Bells shared a greeting sign that states Take Nothing from the Park but "Nourishment for the Soul, Consolation for the Heart, and Inspiration for the Mind." In 1986 the Bells experienced camping on the plain. That opportunity is no longer available to travelers. One of the leading questions from the audience was how the Bells were so successful obtaining amazing wildlife photos. Part of the secret was in using a Canon 7D, 100-400 mm stabilizer lens. Lindsay and Tom shared more than 300 photos of



bird species unique to Africa. These included winter residents that migrate to Europe and Asia. Among the species displayed were ostriches, vultures, coursers, cranes and herons, kingfishers and flycatchers, doves and sunbirds, eagles and kites, finches and starlings, owls, plovers, storks, and so many more.

Preceding the program, Howard Miller was honored by Audubon of Florida with the Conservationist of the Year. Howard and his family donated Little Bird Key in Pinellas County to Audubon of Florida. He coordinated ownership transfer with his family. Audubon of Florida will manage this parcel as a bird nesting sanctuary.



The February program was an update on the National Phenology Network and Natures Notebook. The who, what, where, when, why, and how of phenology were introduced to the membership. Training was offered at Brooker Creek Preserve but due to low overall turn-out it was cancelled. We did see four fully grown wild turkeys while driving into the preserve. Lara Miller offered to provide onsite training at MLNP with a core of ten participants. You can contact Cynthia Kluss about exploring a citizens' science project observing and recording seasonal changes at Moccasin Lake Nature Park.

The March program was conducted by Jim McGinity. His neotropical migratory bird research at Dunedin Hammock, a 90 acre wooded and light recreation facility, will begin on March 23. This commences Jim's third full year of banding and species tracking under the permit of master bander, Mariane Korosy. Jim shared some findings from the early stages of his research project. Goals for the early stages of the project include team building and key site development.

2011 Fall covered 1 day: 8 birds
2012 Spring 15 birds, 6 species
2012 Fall 36 birds, 15 species
2013 Spring 73 birds, 20 species
2013 Fall 60 birds, 19 species

2014 Spring planned dates on Sunday mornings March 23 and 30, all Sundays in April.

A warm welcome is extended to all early birds starting at 8AM on the Kettle Trail using the San Mateo entrance to the Dunedin Hammock. Signage will help with locating the banding station.

You can forward program ideas to Cynthia Kluss at programs@clearwateraudubon.com or call 727-539-1321.



CynthiaKluss



Birding Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

-Dale Goebel



We had six Greater Yellow-legs actively feeding next to the road and 3 Reddish Egrets (1 White Morph) dancing in the distance. The overcast sky made it difficult to identify the many shorebirds across the lagoon. As we idled down the drive, we came to stopping place where we had Pied-billed Grebe, Green Heron, Ring-billed Gull, another Reddish Egret, Tri-colored Heron, Snowy Egret, Northern Harrier, and a Savannah Sparrow.

The wind began to pick up, and we ran for cover as the rain began to fall. We saw several types of ducks during this time. The beautiful Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, and Northern Shoveler gathered in front of a large raft of American White Pelicans. On our left, we

we drove over the bridge to get to Merritt Island, we watched for the American White Pelicans as they headed out to their feeding grounds, checking each gull as they rested on the causeway. As a local Pinellas County Birding expert always says, “look for the one that is different”, so we did. Looking at the many shorebirds, and gulls we hoped for the prize find but none was found...yet. Upon arriving at the refuge, our first point of interest was *Black Point Wildlife Drive*, and it did not disappoint.





heard the distinctive scold of a Belted Kingfisher.

Only a little farther down the drive, we stopped to stretch our legs. We reminded everyone that we had seen and heard an Eastern Meadowlark from one of the lookout towers at this stop last year, and we were again rewarded with the song of three meadowlarks. As we came to the end of *Black Point Wildlife Drive*, we could hear American Robins overhead, always a winter favorite.



Our next stop was the *Scrub Ridge Trail*, a highlight for experienced as well as the less seasoned birders alike. As we headed down the trail, one of the group caught the movement of an American Kestrel, then there was the first sighting of a Scrub Jay, and in the same direction, we had an Eastern Towhee calling. We soon counted three Scrub Jay in our line of sight.



Because the researchers feed the jays peanuts in order to catch them for banding and other purposes, all you have to do is raise your arm with your palm up and they fly right to you. They often land on your head, and today was no exception.

After a couple quick pictures, we headed back to the vans with lunch on our minds.

After a picnic lunch outside the visitor's center, the group was given a chance to check out the gift shop and the center's feeders with hopes of seeing Painted Buntings, and their hopes were met. Everyone took long looks and many pictures.



Next, we headed straight to *Peacocks Pocket Road*, and from the start, we saw bird after bird: Eastern Phoebe, juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk, Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbills, American Coots, Blue-winged Teal, Great Blue Herons at every turn, another Reddish Egret, Dunlin, Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, and more American White Pelicans that looked like the swan boats of Boston amidst the much smaller Lesser Scaup.

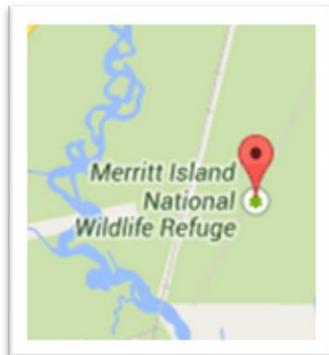
There was a good showing of gulls: Bonaparte's, Ring-billed, and Laughing. Peacocks Pocket is a dike road and is marvelous for viewing and photographing; many in our group filled their digital



cards. As we rounded a corner, we saw a pair of Loggerhead Shrike's on a snag.

With the sun getting lower as well as my gas gauge, we headed to the beach to look for Great or Lesser Black-backed, Herring Gulls, scoters, and Northern Gannets. We set up a couple scopes and began to looking down the beach for gulls and out to sea looking for gannets. We found both gannets and a Great Black-backed Gull, lifers for several of the group.

After a group photo overlooking the Atlantic, we headed home feeling fortunate to have experienced all that is Merritt Island National





Learn more...

Summer Film Festival

Back by popular demand CAS will again host a summer film festival with free popcorn and top shelf nature films from the BBC, Nature and Audubon. We will also have a 3-5 minute historic Woody the Woodpecker or Roadrunner cartoon. The place and time is the usual – Moccasin Lake Nature Park the first Monday of the

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Big Birds for Beginners | Sun April 6th 4:00pm
Dr. Lynn Sumerson

Educational Chair, Clearwater Audubon Society

Wine Tasting & Seminar: Citizen Science:
Making a Difference for Florida's Birds
Fri April 25th 7:00pm **Marianne Korosy, Ph.D.,**
Jay Watch Coordinator for Florida Audubon



We're having a YARD SALE!

Clearing out your closet? Downsizing your house?
Kids heading off to college? Want to get organized? Great!

Whatever your reason might be, if you have too much stuff, consider donating it to the Annual Clearwater Audubon Society's Community Yard Sale. The CAS Yard Sale, held each spring, attracts more than 1,000 shoppers. All proceeds benefit CAS conservation projects and local organizations we support.

Donating items for the sale is easy. To schedule a pickup from your house, call our Pickup Hotline (AKA John Hood) at 727-461-4700. We also accept donations at our monthly meetings on Mondays from 6:30-9 PM.



Least Tern Nesting Rafts

- Lorraine Margeson

Thanks to Dr. Beth Forsy Eckerd College and an incredible team of volunteers, our NEWEST Least Tern nesting raft got built and floated today on the Eckerd campus. Our ongoing project has engendered two rafts being built on a National Wildlife Refuge in Texas last year using oil mitigation money from an oil rigging company, and I have been contacted by a new partner in the San Diego, California area this season seeking our

advisement to build rafts using our model of habitat creation for the Least Tern. We are most assuredly getting ready for this shorebird nesting season!



Our nesting raft brain trust Clearwater Audubon President John Hood and Tampa Bay Refuges leader Dave Howard starting the hard work of assembling our rafts early this morning. (left)

Don
Margeson and
John Hood putting some of the separate panels together to
build this large nesting raft, a created habitat for the Least
Terns. (right)



The project
is starting to come together.... (left)



made before we add the nesting gravel.....some Eckerd College students in the mix, they were GREAT volunteers today!

(right)

Final
attachment
s being





Some of Dr. Beth Forsys students working hard for the birds.... (left)

Myself and Dr. Forsys putting the final touches on the raft habitat gravel depth including creating some habitat atop the chick shelters. (right)



Dr. Forsys and I got elected to be the kayak tugboat to drag the raft out into this pond on the Eckerd College Campus for anchoring. (left)

There it is,
all we need
are 40+ Least Terns to like this new home for a breeding ground! (right)



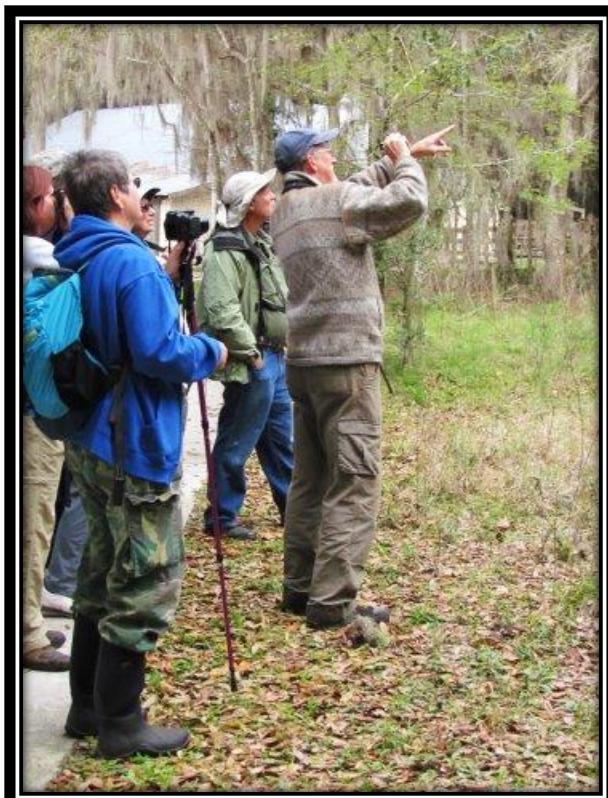
Thanks are once again required for our hardworking heroes of engineering and the best volunteers on the planet John Hood and Dave Howard (left) who basically engineered this entire venture.

YOU GUYS ARE THE BEST!



Payne's Prairie Scrapbook

- Dale Goebel





Officers of Clearwater Audubon Society

Membership

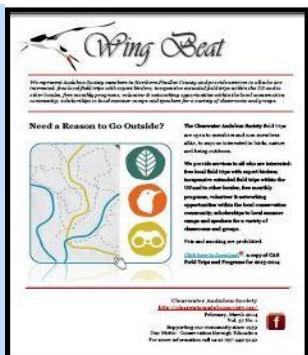
[Membership Application](#)

Size : 141.717 Kb
Type : pdf

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)
First meeting is October 7

Past Issue of Wing Beat



click issue to view
Feb-March- 2014

"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

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Audubon FLORIDA

Wing Beat

April- May 2014 Vol. 58 No. 1

Share This Video:



Like most Floridians, I'm sure you are familiar with the line of seaweed that accumulates on the beach at the high tide mark. This natural debris is called "wrack" - and it is a *cornerstone* of the beach ecosystem.

Julie Wraithmell, Director of Wildlife Conservation, Audubon FL

Why is wrack important for Florida's coastal ecosystem?



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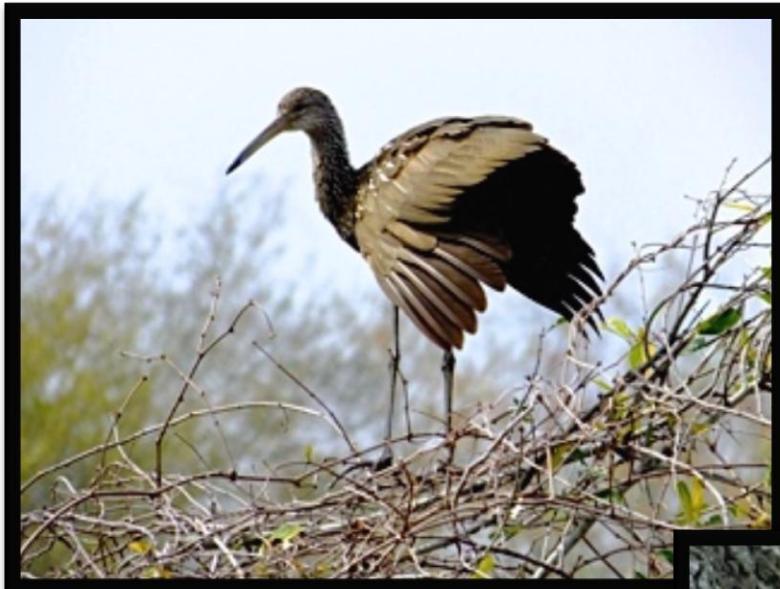
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Shutterbug Spotlight

- Lynn Sumerson



Limpkin *Aramus guarauna*



sounds

Great horned owl (nesting)
Bubo virginianus

sounds



Ibis
Eudocimus albus



sounds



The first neotropical migratory banding session on Sunday, March 23rd was amazing with over 35 birds, 19 of which were white-eyed vireos and several hooded warblers!

Photos by Anastasia Steinbrunner.

Hooded Warbler



Eastern Screech Owl



Jim showing the kids a Downy Woodpecker

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher





Organizations We Support



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