

Wing Beat

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.

Birders Take Washington: Check out our Field Trips!



[Click here to download](#)  a copy of CAS Field Trips and Programs for 2012-13
ONLINE EXCLUSIVE: Read about the trip, birds sighted, and photos! [Click here.](#)

Clearwater Audubon Society

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>

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Supporting our community since 1959

Our Motto: Conservation through Education

For more information call us at 727-442-9140





4-D Birding Experience

Anastasia Steinbrunner

We set sail from Clearwater Marine Aquarium with high hopes and lots of binoculars. My first birding by boat trip had mostly recreational birding adults and a couple of young children. The morning was beautiful and sunny. Light winds lofted some Least Terns onto the pylons at the dock. The female waited as her mate brought dainty silver fish to her beak. We pulled out into the harbor for a few good looks at a Green and a Yellow-crowned Night Heron then chugged out into the intercostal waterway. The usual suspects were about; Laughing Gulls, Turkey Vultures soaring above, Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons lining the shore. As we went, the little tykes on board kept shouting out, "Peter! There's Peter!" I didn't think much of it at first.

We did not encounter many more birds until we pulled up to a small island with a giant Audubon sign that read "NO LANDING." This tiny spoil island was covered in birds. The great cacophony of nesting Double-crested Cormorants drew the rapt attention of the boaters. We were treated to Great Egrets displaying and a few loafing Brown Pelicans. As we cruised around to the back of the island, the Captain informed us we were about to have a 4-D birding experience. I found out why. After a few brief moments, the air around the boat was saturated with the unmistakable smell of rotting and excreted fish. We quickly turned back to the fresh air and headed towards the Aquarium. The two young children perched up on the bench seats as we passed under the causeway and once again called out, "I see Peter!" I approached to see a lone Great Blue Heron observing us as we passed. I must have looked puzzled because their mother explained to me that they had a Great Blue Heron living in their back yard. The children would see it every day and had given it the name Peter. "Now all Great Blues are called Peter," she said. It was a very sweet ending to a lovely trip.

The next tour I led was in mid-April but it felt a lot more like April in Chicago than April in Florida. It was chilly and gray. Temperatures were in the lower 60s and it was very windy. I was happy to see folks had come prepared. I didn't pass out too many binoculars. This was a much more serious birding crew than the last. In spite of the bad weather we had four species before we even left the harbor,

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4-D (cont.)

Anastasia Steinbrunner

including a very handsome Belted Kingfisher in the mangroves. We headed through Island Estates to cut down on some of the headwind. Captain Miles shared some great information about the area and then took us out into the intercostal. Our first mangrove island gave us looks at some Willets, Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Great Blue Herons (Peter!) and an actively fishing Osprey. We left the relative calm of the leeward side of the island and began to press towards the Dunedin causeway. The wind was steady, blowing straight at us. We had to go slowly to avoid spraying everyone onboard. In spite of the wind, a small flock of least turns kept pace along side the boat. We marveled at how the little birds seemed completely undeterred and just kept diving for fish as they flew against the wind.



Captain Miles informed me that at our current pace it would take us nearly 45 minutes just to get to the Dunedin causeway. The group was getting chilled so we turned back and initiated plan B; stop by the Osprey nest at pylon 12 and head to "Bird Island." We got great looks at the adult Osprey but the chick shuffled down into the nest as we approached. Undaunted we pressed on to Island 25 also known as Bird Island. We were not disappointed. On our approach, I noticed long white fuzzy arms reaching towards the sky up in the mangroves. The Brown Pelican chicks, covered in fuzzy white down, were stretching their featherless wings and toddling about in the branches. On the beach, much to everyone's delight, were four Roseate Spoonbills waiting patiently. They were a dull pink which seemed odd for the season until we saw a bright adult fly in and feed one of the youngsters. We were treated to a least a dozen more fly by the boat over the course of our stay. Some landed on the beach to feed, others flew back into the mangroves. Shouts filled the boat for our other sightings, many of which flew eye level past the boat. White Ibis! Great Egret! Snowy Egret! Tri-color Heron! But what about the mystery bird sleeping on the beach? A group of ladies pointed it out to me and I said, "It might be an American Oystercatcher but until we see that bright orange bill I can't be sure." As if on cue the bird lifted its head and there it was, a bright orange bill. We enjoyed the show a few minutes longer and then headed back to the Aquarium. We were rather chilled but very satisfied with the experience.



Officers of Clearwater Audubon Society

Membership

[Membership Application](#)

Size : 141,717 Kb

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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 8

Past Issue of Wing Beat



*click issue to view
April- May 2012-2013*

"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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Programs:

Jeweled Wings, Scrub Jays, Avian Motifs, and Exotic Cuba

Programs, Cynthia Kluss

Those attending the closing segments of the 2012-2013 Clearwater Audubon Society (CAS) program season enjoyed presentations from amazing and dedicated ornithological experts. We thank all who are committed to educating our birding community. Below are some highlights from those programs. The 2013-2014 program season planning is underway. Recommendations are welcome. You can share your passion for birds and birding by using the following contact points :

programs@clearwateraudubon.com or by calling 727-539-1321. We encourage everyone to develop a program to share with the CAS membership and guests. Doing so is important and rewarding for you and our community.

In February, Fred Dietrich, a research and banding expert, shared his knowledge and experiences with numerous hummingbird species. His photos of Ruby Throat, Rufus, Allen's, Black Chinned, Buff-Bellied, Calliope, Broad Billed, and Costa hummingbirds were spectacular.

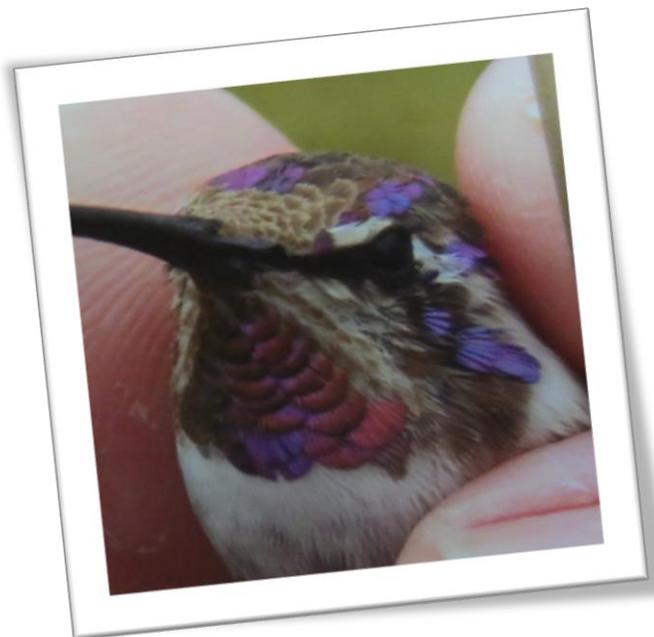


Photo credit: Fred Dietrich

Part of his sage advice is “if you drive 600 miles to see a bird, check around the neighborhood because the bird you are looking for may be right next door”. Mr. Dietrich is a member of the Hummer Bird Study Group, Inc. which can be explored through and supported at www.hummingbirdplus.org.



Programs (cont.)

In March, Marianne Korosy, Important Birding Area (IBA) and Jay Watch coordinator for Audubon of Florida updated the membership on the status of the Florida Scrub Jay. “Found nowhere else in the World” and considered to be an umbrella or indicator species for 56 other plants and animals that share similar Florida scrub habitat. The decline in numbers and territory for the Florida Scrub Jays is attributed to habitat loss and fragmentation of breeding areas. The Jay Watch survey starts June 15. Those interested in supporting Jay Watch partnerships or IBAs can contact Marianne Korosy at mkorosy@audubon.org.



Photo credit: Cynthia Kluss

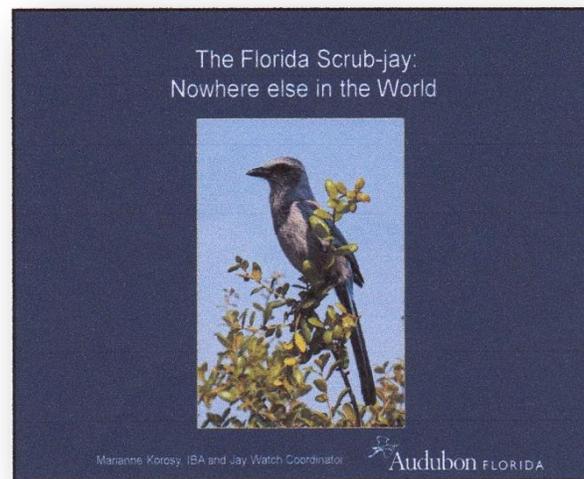


Photo credit: Marianne Korosy

In April, Lynn Sumerson shared his discoveries of Birds in Classical Music. Lynn demonstrated how European composers, from Vivaldi’s Goldfinches to Respighi’s Birds to Saint Saens’ Carnival of the Animals, used the sound, interpretive image, and habits of birds to captivate listeners. Literally scores have been written and entertained by the musical images of birds. Lynn’s masterful coordination of sound and message carried the audience through the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods into Modern musical concepts, like an appreciation for iTunes. There were more than a few humming tunes on the way home.



(note: image of O. Respighi from muswrite.blogspot.com/2012/03/respighi-birds.html)



Programs (cont.)

The May program, presented by Lindsay and Tom Bell, focused on the unique qualities of bird life in Cuba. Its endemics species like the Bee Hummingbird and Cuban Tody include some of the smallest avian species in the world. Lindsay and Tom shared findings from a recent Caribbean Conservation

Trust (CCT) survey of Cuba's IBAs. Even the national bird, the stunning Cuban Trogon, stands as a model for Cuba's national flag. All the amazing photos beg the question, how do they do that? Tom complemented the program with a riveting experience from 40 years ago. The most recent report from the CCT is available through www.downeastnaturetours.com/cubareport_nov2012.pdf.

Additional reports from Cuba can be found in a 2012 National Geographic article, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/11/new-cuba/gorney-text>.



A big "Thank You" and appreciation for the skills and good taste of the hospitality committee. The meet and greet finger foods, sweets, beverages, and presentation start the evening off just right. The guest appetites were quenched successfully.

Summer Programs Note: We will be showing movies twice in the summer evening programs. Start is 6:30PM with a second showing 7:30-7:45PM depending on the length of the movie.

- June 3: Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air for Audubon (special PBS:Nature presentation)
- July 1: Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time
- August 5: Legacy of the Weeks Act: A History of Forest Conservation in the United States
- September 2: (special wildlife movie to be announced)

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 to Clearwater Audubon**
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 mention Clearwater Audubon Society.*



Friends, we can't thank you enough for your help with the garage sale (donating, sorting, spreading the word, buying, manning the sale, cleaning up, etc.). It was a great success! We raised a total of \$600.

One of the best parts of our garage sale was getting to speak with so many kind people who were interested in our conservation efforts.

As you find yourself wondering what to do with that (fill in the blank) from (you know who), please remember us for next year's yard sale!

