

MAY-JUNE 2020

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Conservation Through Education

The Newsletter of the Clearwater Audubon Society Vol. 94

Wing Beat

Spring is Still Springing!

You may have noticed that in the absence of the dense population of humans cavorting through natural spaces, the wildlife population has been able to flourish. Nests are safer, turtles hatch and crawl without fear and people are birding in greater numbers from their own windows or at least from a safer distance.

However, with the resurgence of beach and state park openings, we should be very diligent not to wipe out this new baby boom in our exuberance to be finally free.

In this issue, we highlight ways to become involved in conservation and how to continue to enjoy birds from home if you are remaining at a safe distance.

Our programs and local field trips have been cancelled for safety, but if you have questions about a trip in the future, contact Dale Goebel.

See a bird that needs rescuing? Call Kim Begay, our VP of Conservation & Advocacy at 727.480.9010, [Birds in Helping Hands](#) or [The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay](#).

<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org>

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!

COVID	CORVID
1 - FEVER	1 - FEATHER
2 - COUGH	2 - CAW
3 - SHORTNESS OF BREATH	3 - SHINY THINGS



eBird

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology



The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
GLOBAL BIG DAY
9 MAY 2020

Global Big Day—9 May 2020

One week from today is birding's biggest day of the year: Global Big Day. Wherever you are in the world, you can be a part of it—no need to even leave your home to participate!

Become a Bird Steward

One way to help Florida's beach-nesting birds is to become a **Bird Steward** at a beach or rooftop site. At beach-nesting sites, stewards who volunteer help ensure beachgoers do not enter fragile nesting areas and help educate visitors about the remarkable species that rely on Florida's shores for survival. Audubon will train you on the bird protections and biology you will need to be successful. Interested individuals should like spending time on the beach and interacting with the public.

Rooftop-nesting Birds

Due to increased development and human activity on beaches in Florida, many of our beach-nesting birds are facing a loss of suitable nesting habitat. In order to survive in human-dominated landscapes, some species of beach birds have taken to nesting on flat tar-and-gravel rooftops. Rooftops provide open nesting habitat similar to beaches and are free from human disturbance and mammalian predators like raccoons, dogs, and cats, but vulnerable to other threats. [Learn how Audubon Florida is working with rooftop-nesting birds](#) and building owners to monitor and protect these species.

Beach Docent

Audubon Florida chapters have become nationally known for initiating the bird steward program, now part of National Audubon's Atlantic Flyway Strategic Plan. As a complement to this highly acclaimed program, we have developed the "*Beach Docent*" program, offering alternatives ways to engage beachgoers with the ultimate goal of protecting our nesting and migrating shorebirds and seabirds. Docents are encouraged to lead fun and educational beach walks that focus on coastal birds and wildlife in light of a changing climate. [Download Audubon Florida's Beach Docent manual](#). This manual was made possible by a generous donation from the Jesse Ball duPont Foundation.

Project Colony Watch

Project ColonyWatch uses volunteer bird-watchers to adopt and protect local waterbird colonies. By recruiting and training volunteers to become the local "wardens", biologists, and advocates for a nesting colony, we can increase the effectiveness of our colony protection efforts across Florida.

If you are interested in becoming a Bird Steward or participating in any coastal conservation volunteer activity, please send an email with your name, telephone number, and general location to [Holley Short](#) or flconservation@audubon.org.

Downloadable Resources

- [Audubon Beach Docent Manual](#)
- [Beach Bird ID Guide - Shorebirds](#)
- [What to Do if You Hook a Pelican brochure](#)
- [Share the Beach with Beach-nesting Birds](#)
- [Be a Beach Hero](#)
- [Shorebird-friendly Photography](#)
- [Dogs on the Beach](#)
- [Gull and Tern Identification Guide](#)



Click image to view video on YouTube.

MONTY & ROSE

by *Mary Anne McLean*

In a story that ranges from a Lake Michigan beach in the heart of Chicago to our own Anclote Key, north of Honeymoon Island, we find a note of hope and cheer amid the flow of generally bleak environmental news. It is the tale of a pair of Piping Plovers, who arrived last May at Montrose Beach, perhaps the busiest on Chicago's lakefront, where they chose a centrally located spot, soon to be coveted by summer beachgoers, to create their scrape of a nest. Eventually named Monty and Rose, they were the first Piping Plovers to nest in Chicago in 55 years. They are known to have nested on a beach in Waukegan, Illinois, 40 miles north of Chicago, last year, a departure from the majority of Great Lakes Piping Plovers, who nest along beaches in Michigan. The population has been growing since it was added to the endangered species list in 1986, up from 17 pairs at the time to about 70 currently.

Their choice this year was not random. Thanks to 20 years of restoration work that began with the discovery of a few stalks of a native rush by a volunteer who recognized the potential for shorebird habitat, the environmental conditions were favorable. The area is now a Mecca for birds and birders, with dunes, meadow, trees and shrubs bordering the beach.

Less favorable for plover nesting are the other aspects and denizens of the area: the swimmers, the volley ball players, the unleashed dogs. Without the intervention of a corps of dedicated volunteers we would not have a happy ending to this story. But intervene they did, about 200 strong, under the leadership of US Fish and Wildlife, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Chicago Park District, and numerous environmental groups. Updates on the Chicago Audubon Facebook page tracked daily happenings in the life of the pair.

When the pair began to work on their mid-beach nest, the area was roped off, a cage built to protect the nest, and the volunteers organized into two hour shifts to gently reroute beachgoers, meanwhile introducing them to the plovers and gradually growing a legion of supporters. But it was not long before the first disaster loomed. In mid June, not long after Rose had laid four eggs, the usual number for the species, strong storms and flooding were forecast. There seemed to be no resort but for Fish and Wildlife personnel to remove the eggs and take them to Lincoln Park Zoo for incubation, ultimately unsuccessful.

Undeterred by this tragedy, Monty and Rose scraped out a new nest, this time on higher ground. Again safeguards were put into place, the volunteers continued their watch, and excitement among birders and an escalating number of fans grew when Rose again laid four eggs. One did not hatch, and one hatchling lived only eleven days, but two healthy chicks survived and prospered.



Notice the leg bands on this female piping plover. Information on migration, mortality rates and range expansion are just some of what researchers learn from banding.
Photo by USFWS: Vince Cavaliere

Great Lakes Population of Piping Plover

Status: Endangered, listed December 14, 1985

Habitat: Beaches along shorelines of the Great Lakes

Lead Region: 3

Region 3 Lead Office: East Lansing, Michigan Field Office

Summer Range: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin

Piping Plover Critical Habitat for the Great Lakes Population
Breeding Habitat: Designated May 7, 2001 in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin

Comprehensive Conservation Strategy
for the Piping Plover in its Coastal Migration and
Wintering Range in the Continental United States (Dec. 2012)

The Comprehensive Conservation Strategy synthesizes conservation needs across the shared coastal migration and wintering ranges of the three federally-listed piping plover populations.

Comprehensive Conservation Strategy (appendices not included) 125-page PDF; 1MB

Appendix 1 89-page PDF; 791KB

Appendix 2 17-page PDF; 980KB

Appendix 3 7-page PDF; 69KB



Piping plover in non-breeding plumage.
Photo by Sidney Maddock

[Click on image above to learn more]

Story continued on next page.

Meanwhile an alarming threat had arisen, the scheduling of “Mamby on the Beach”, a two day music festival expected to attract a following of fifteen to twenty thousand rocking participants per day, on the fourth weekend in August, just about the time the chicks were expected to fledge.

Faced with this dismaying prospect, environmental groups spun into action and launched a petition to the Park District to ban festivals of such magnitude, urging the district to withdraw the Mamby permit. 6,700 signatures were collected. Jam Productions Ltd, organizer of the event was encouraged to relocate it to a more suitable site. To this suggestion Jam boss Jerry Mickelson responded, “I have not considered relocating for one second. Why should we be forced to move from a park that we have every right to use?” The stage was set for a public hearing at the Park District, where spokespersons for the Chicago Ornithological Society and Chicago Audubon stressed the importance of protecting not only the plovers, but also of protecting the habitat now flourishing as the result of the twenty years of restoration work.

The Park District did not withdraw the permit, but efforts to derail the project got an assist when abundant rains caused lake levels to rise, which would have required relocating the festival venue to an area further inland. Environmental groups were threatening a suit, citing violation of the Endangered Species act, and public pressure from the growing legion of plover advocates was soaring. On July 22, not long after the chicks hatched, the organizers canceled Mamby on the Beach, citing rising lake levels and “the presence of Great Lakes Piping Plover shorebirds, a federally endangered species”. The chicks had won a chance to fledge in relative peace, with time to take ever lengthening practice flights in preparation for migration.

As the chicks matured, the faithful volunteers continued to deter human and canine interlopers and ward off hungry raccoons, gulls, falcons and other predators, ably assisted by Monty and Rose who were even seen to chase off a Great Blue Heron.

As of August 19 Rose was off on her own, preparing for migration and soon was seen no more. Piping Plover moms are traditionally the first to head south to wintering grounds along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and as far west as Texas and Mexico, leaving the dads to continue rearing the young for a period of several weeks. By the end of the month Monty and the chicks had also departed.

In order to avoid causing them stress, the chicks were not banded, so no one will know for sure, but if two plovers without ID show up at Montrose this month, there is a good possibility that it will be Chicago’s favorite chicks returning to the place of their birth.

Anclote Key became a part of the story in October, when it was announced at a celebratory event for all the Montrose advocates and volunteers that Rose had been spotted and photographed there by a passing kayaker. She had made the journey of 1,180 miles from Chicago and may have remained to become one of the group of twelve Piping Plovers recorded there in February on an annual census of wintering shorebirds. Monty, who had been identified in Texas in 2019, is thought this year to have wintered in Mexico. Chances are good that he and Rose will reunite shortly on an Illinois beach, maybe even Montrose.

If so, they are likely to encounter one less threat to peaceful nesting, finding a beach much reduced in size due to rising lake levels, quite adequate for their needs, but not for any large public events. And efforts by environmental groups to permanently protect the sensitive habitat of Montrose from any future Mambys continue as representatives of the Chicago and Illinois Ornithological Societies, together with Chicago Audubon, hold promising conversations with the Park District.

News coverage of the intrepid Plovers who, against all odds, nested and successfully raised chicks on a crowded urban beach, and of the passionately dedicated humans who helped them, has gone nationwide with an article in the [Spring issue of the Nature Conservancy magazine](#) and the making of a 20-minute documentary, with a trailer that may be found on YouTube.

BREAKING NEWS: Monty and Rose are back! Monty, who was thought to be wintering in Texas, has rejoined Rose at Montrose Beach, where they were spotted May 1st, and are now engaging in courtship behavior, making scrapes in the sand, preparing to nest.

YOUR CLEARWATER AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD

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Dale Goebel
Méichelle Long
Cuneyt Yilmaz

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Clearwater Audubon Society
<http://clearwateraudubonsociety.org/>
Supporting our community since 1959 Our Motto: Conservation through Education
For more information call us at 727-442-9140



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.

Past Issue of Wing Beat

[click issue to view](#)

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Wing Beat' newsletter cover for the March-April 2020 issue. The cover features a photograph of a bird in flight and the title 'Wing Beat' in a stylized font. Below the title, it says 'Meet Lindsey Day, Board Member at Large'. To the right of the newsletter is an Instagram post from the account 'birds_and_rakes'. The post features a photo of Lindsey Day with a falcon and text that reads: 'Lindsey Day, Falconer Instagram: @birds_and_rakes. Becoming a Master falconer takes at least seven years; finishing your apprenticeship alone will take at least two. Your hawk requires a significant amount of time, every day, 365 days a year, and a bird in training requires substantially more time. Of all sports in America, falconry is the only one that utilizes a trained wild creature. Falcons, hawks, eagles and owls are essential elements of our wildlife. The competent falconer takes care to follow sound conservation principles in the pursuit of the sport. Even though the federal government's environmental assessment states falconry has "no impact" on wild raptor populations, a careless, uninformed individual, attempting to satisfy a passing fancy, can do great harm to one or more birds and cast the shadow of discredit on the sport of falconry itself. Most falconers, therefore, before they will agree to help anyone newly attracted to the sport, will require evidence of a serious, committed interest in falconry. They just don't have time for anything else. The ethics of practicing quality falconry are an important part of a falconer's every day life.'

Membership

[Membership Application](#)

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)

[Pinellas County Birding Checklist](#)

JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT MEETING
First Monday of the Month unless otherwise noted.



CLEARWATER AUDUBON

Conservation through Education

Board Positions Available 2020 Elections Postponed until Fall

According to our Constitution, elections for certain positions fall on even years. These elections usually occur at the end of our fiscal year which is March. However, due to the social distancing guidelines, we decided to postpone these elections until the fall. Of the even-year positions (President, Treasurer, Media, and Membership), the following positions are vacant. Please see the list of board and committee positions that are available and their descriptions in the following linked documents. If you are interested, please complete the interest form (online or print) so that we may begin the process of welcoming nominees.

Current Board positions available:

- Community Science (new)
- Media (print, digital, and social)
- President
- Programs

Committee positions:

- Budget & Finance
- Community Science
- Conservation & Advocacy
- Education and Outreach
- Field Trips
- Media
- Membership
- Programs

Board Invitation Letter: [Board Invitation-Clearwater Audubon](#) (includes descriptions of board positions and committees).

Board Interest Form: [CAS Board Interest Form](#) (includes an online option or print and mail back to us).

Board Expectations: [CAS Board Member Expectations](#)

Become a Member

Membership in National Audubon also includes membership in Audubon of Florida and Clearwater Audubon. In addition, you will receive the award-winning National Audubon magazine.

[JOIN NOW](#)

Renew your Membership

You can save trees, time and money by renewing your membership online. It's fast and safe with a click of a button.

[RENEW](#)

If you don't feel comfortable paying online, either for joining or renewing, please make out a check for \$20.00 to: National Audubon, and send to: Clearwater Audubon Society, PO Box 97, Clearwater, FL 33757

KIM BEGAY, CAS BOARD VP **TAKING ACTION** >> *Conservation & Advocacy*

Science

[Seagrass Protection](#) Mission Blue
Osprey Watch
Nest Watch (counts and rescues)

Advocacy

[Seagrass Protection](#)
[Arborists' Best Practices](#)
Hooked Birds
Water Quality/Red Tide

Network

Birds In Helping Hands
City and County Officials
Duke Emery Avian Specialist
Friends of the Pelicans
FWC Officers & PCSO
Golf Courses
HOA Boards and Neighborhoods
Owl's Nest Sanctuary for Wildlife
Raptor Center of Tampa Bay
Seaside Sanctuary

Click on a video below to see how Kim advocates for the birds and their habitat.



TAKING ACTION >> *National Audubon Conservation*

Science

[Understanding the Science of Conservation and Climate](#)

Audubon pioneered the idea of Citizen Science with the first Christmas Bird Count. Today the longest-running wildlife census in the world continues to shape and inform our approach to conservation.

[Explore our science initiatives](#)

Advocacy

[Standing Up and Speaking Out for Birds](#)

Audubon is a respected and influential voice on public policy issues, from town halls to the U.S. Capitol. We have the power to convene diverse stakeholders to solve even the toughest problems.

[Policy issues & action](#)

Network

[The Most Effective Conservation Network in America](#)

No other conservation organization matches the size, reach, scale, influence, diversity, and creative energy of our chapters, nature centers, volunteer leaders, and partners.

Bird Cam Video Highlights

The [Cornell Lab Bird Cams](#) connects viewers worldwide to the diverse and intimate world of birds. We work to make watching an active experience, sparking awareness and inspiration that can lead to conservation, education, and engagement with birds.

Our viewers tell us that watching the cams is a life changing experience: an unprecedented learning experience that they liken to virtual field trips or field biology in their living room. We're excited to continue sharing and learning with the community as we watch the world of birds together.



[Click an image below to view video]



Pileated Woodpecker Samples Suet At
Cornell Feeders – May 4, 2020



Carolina Wren Visits Cornell Feeders
After Sunrise – May 4, 2020



OGK Visits and Feeds #RoyalCam
Chick, May 2, 2020 | NZ DOC | Cornell
Lab



Iris Reveals First Egg of 2020 | Hellgate
Ospreys Nest Cam | Cornell Lab |
University of Montana



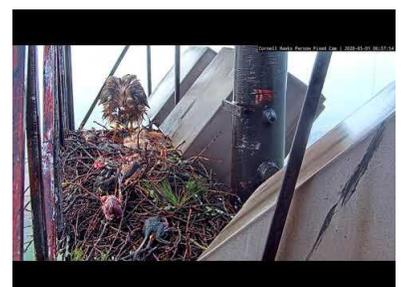
Live Birds at the West Texas Feeders,
Sponsored by Perky-Pet | Cornell Lab



Male Black-chinned Hummingbird Dips
And Sips In West Texas – May 1, 2020



Squirrel Wanders Up The Wrong
Nesting Pole | Hellgate Osprey Cam –
May 1, 2020



Waterlogged Big Red Feeds Chicks On
Foggy Morning At The #CornellHawks
Nest – May 1, 2020

Nest Box Building

Who else is feeling creative during this time of social distancing?

ALL ABOUT BIRDHOUSES **Right Bird, Right House**



moderate

American Kestrel

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

SPECIES IN DECLINE

Bewick's Wren

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

SPECIES IN DECLINE

Common Tern

[see this plan](#) →



kid-friendly

American Robin

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Brown-headed Nuthatch

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Eastern Bluebird

[see this plan](#) →



complex

Barn Owl

[see this plan](#) →



complex

Canada Goose

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Eastern Phoebe

[see this plan](#) →



kid-friendly

Barn Swallow

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

SPECIES IN DECLINE

Carolina Chickadee

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Eastern Screech-Owl

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Barred Owl

[see this plan](#) →



kid-friendly

Carolina Wren

[see this plan](#) →



complex

Great Blue Heron

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Great Crested Flycatcher

[see this plan](#) →



kid-friendly

Great Horned Owl

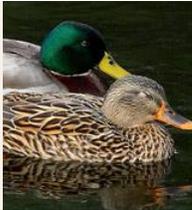
[see this plan](#) →



moderate

House Wren

[see this plan](#) →



complex

Mallard

[see this plan](#) →



kid-friendly
simple

Mourning Dove

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

SPECIES IN DECLINE

Northern Flicker

[see this plan](#) →



complex

Osprey

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Pileated Woodpecker

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

SPECIES IN DECLINE

Prothonotary Warbler

[see this plan](#) →



complex

SPECIES IN DECLINE

Purple Martin

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Tree Swallow

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

Tufted Titmouse

[see this plan](#) →



moderate

White-breasted Nuthatch

[see this plan](#) →



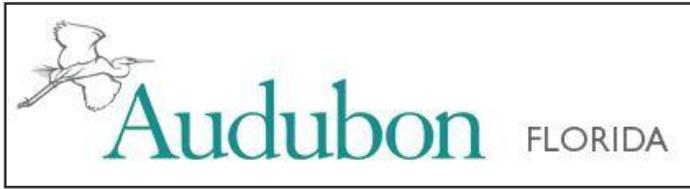
moderate

Wood Duck

[see this plan](#) →

NestWatch is a Cornell Lab of Ornithology Project
Clicking on an image or link will navigate you directly to their site.

Organizations We Support



[Audubon of Florida](#)



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