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*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*

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**Clearwater Audubon Society**

May, June, July 2012

Vol. 47 No. 1

Supporting our community since 1959

Our Motto: Conservation through Education

For more information call us at 727-442-9140 or visit us at [www.clearwateraudubon.com](http://www.clearwateraudubon.com)

Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Clearwater-Audubon-Society/118246831609090>





### Boater's Guide for Clearwater Harbor and St. Joseph Sound

This guide invites you to explore the spectacular boaters' destinations, special habitats and high quality natural history resources of Clearwater Harbor and St. Joseph Sound. It has information on areas of critical importance for birds and other wildlife, habitat protection strategies, wildlife protection guidelines for dolphins, manatees, sea turtles, and fish, and a resources section with contact information.

Published by Audubon of Florida

## My Last Hurrah?

It's been an interesting fourteen years, including four years as Society President. Much has occurred, much awaits to be accomplished.

Pathos, angst, and triumph filled my presidential plate. Pathos over Society Member departures, some never to return for a variety of reasons, some for the final 'taps'. Angst over objectives deferred, some abandoned, some still under consideration. Triumphs celebrated over achievements and improvements, some now permanent parts of Society endeavors and management, some acknowledged for their excellence in the conservation cause, some ignored or abandoned.

No matter how well or ill distinguished was my presidency; it was all accomplished by the team effort of every volunteer member who offered their time, skills, and passion in support of the Society's Purpose. Time and future Society Members will be the final judge of those achievements and misfortunes.

To all who walked those paths with me, gratitude is my offering. Unlike the 'old soldiers' who fade away, I'll still be around to support conservation, to raise some eyebrows, to assault old and new frontiers.

So Long, It's Been Good To Know Ye!

Mike MacDonald, Immediate Past President!

## Paradise Found

Seven members of Clearwater Audubon recently returned from an 8 day trip to Puerto Rico. 18 of 19 Puerto Rican endemics were seen and 10 Caribbean regional endemics were also seen. A trip to an incredible bioluminescent lagoon was included. One could stamp on the bottom of the boat and see the bioluminescent trails of the fish as they swam away. The flora, mammals, and herptiles were also quite interesting. Mangrove cuckoos were seen daily and the recently discovered elfin-woods warbler was seen several times. The Puerto Rican screech owl sounds like 2 chickens fighting. The favorite bird of the trip was the Puerto Rican Tody (below) – an adorable puffball with an emerald green back and a bright red throat. The total species count was 108.

There are 2 openings left for an 8 day trip to Yosemite and Morro bay at the end of June.

Contact Paul Trunk

[fieldtrips@clearwateraudubon.com](mailto:fieldtrips@clearwateraudubon.com)





## The beach-nesting birds of Three Rooker Bar need your help!

The Gulf Islands State Parks is a Globally Important Bird Area based on rigorous scientific criteria about bird populations. A significant percentage of the world's population of the tiny, federally endangered Piping Plover uses these islands – especially Three Rooker Bar. More than 5,000 pairs of seabirds and shorebirds nest on the island, including several state-threatened species.

Last year Clearwater Audubon Society began a bird steward program during the nesting and chick-fledging season on Three Rooker Bar. This involves having volunteers set up stations adjacent to the nesting areas with equipment including binoculars, spotting scopes, bird identification guides, and literature. The volunteers talk with people on the beach about respecting the space needed by nesting birds and then show them the birds and their tiny, flightless chicks. We also attempt to limit intrusion into the colonies by people or dogs. Stewards are present on Saturdays and Sundays from about 10AM till 4PM.

Last year the program was challenged by lack of boats for transportation of bird stewards to the island. This year the Park will provide boat transportation 2 weekend days a month. This leaves us with 6 days to fill. The program will cover weekends and holidays from May 1<sup>st</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup>. The number of volunteers to be transported would be from 4 to 8 depending upon boat capacity.

The Park requires that the boat remain within 15 minutes travel to the island so that the volunteers could be quickly evacuated in case of inclement weather (our summer afternoon thunderstorms) or medical emergency. Clearwater Audubon is asking for boat owners to help in providing transportation for this worthy project. Volunteers for bird stewarding are welcome also. Thanks for your consideration.

For more information contact John Hood  
[jhood2@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jhood2@tampabay.rr.com) or 727-461-4762



Dave Kändz



## Officers of Clearwater Audubon Society

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### Membership

#### [Membership Application](#)

Size : 141,717 Kb

Type : pdf

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### Monthly Meetings

September – May

The first Monday of each month  
at Moccasin Lake Nature Park:

Meet and Greet @ 6:30PM

Public Program @ 7:00PM

(Unless otherwise noted)

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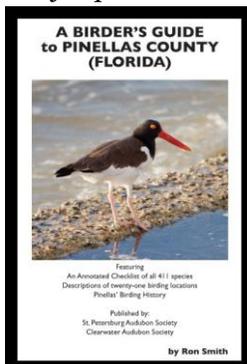
### Past Issue of Wing Beat



*click issue to view*  
*Feb, March, April 2012*

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**"A Birder's guide to  
Pinellas County"** is now  
available for purchase.



*click book to see details*

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## Clearwater Audubon Society Program Snap-Shots

If you missed the Clearwater Audubon Society (CAS) 2011-2012 program season, be sure to examine the upcoming 2012-2013 programs and field trips brochure. There are some great educational programs being prepared for you. An enormous Thank You to the Hospitality Excellence provided by Dorothy Fritzinger and Team Hospitality. Another good reason to attend the monthly meetings is to enjoy the treasures prepared by great cooks.

Now is an opportunity for those interested in training for program planning and preparation. The program chairmanship is open in 2013. Contact Cynthia Kluss at [programs@clearwateraudubon.com](mailto:programs@clearwateraudubon.com) to start your on-the-job training. You will communicate and meet with amazing people who enjoy the fun and possess expert knowledge of wildlife and natural habitats.

2012 programs (errata: Wing Beat 2011Dec\_2012JanVol.45 #6 [www.floridabluebirdsociety.com](http://www.floridabluebirdsociety.com) not .org)

January CAS/St. Petersburg Audubon Society joint meeting highlights:

Ron Smith provided amazing photos of local birds by local wildlife photographers. The species pair and propagate in Pinellas County. These particular birds are often difficult to view. Thanks to Ron's book, *The Birds of Pinellas County*, sightings will be made easier because of the collective knowledge of sighting frequencies. Locations and maps show where to find the bird species you strive to study.

Ron's program presentation included a history of how he became a birding expert. He finds the best times to bird are early in the morning. Keeping your ears attuned to the call of the birds you enjoy seeing helps.

There are no definite plans for a sequel. So keep up with Ron Smith and his network of birding experts at [www.pinellasbirds.com](http://www.pinellasbirds.com)

February CAS meeting highlights:

Jeanne Murphy and Brian Lane of Sensing Nature ([www.sensingnature.com](http://www.sensingnature.com) and [www.masternaturalist.org](http://www.masternaturalist.org)) provided a look at the University of Florida—Florida Master Naturalist Program, which is for adults 18 years of age or older. Jeanne's 10 years of experience as a wildlife biologist makes continuing education for citizen scientists for all ages over 18 years. Brian's experience as an ecologist specializing in marine science and the mitigation of restoration projects completes the team at Sensing Nature. There are numerous areas of study available through the Florida Master Naturalist programs. The core modules consist of Freshwater Wetlands, Coastal Systems, and Upland Habitats. Additional programs are available in Conservation Science, Wildlife Monitoring, Habitat Evaluation, and Environmental Interpretation. All programs are developed and organized through experts from the University of Florida. Field work composes half of the curriculum for each module. Jeanne and Brian also support the work of the Florida Bat Conservancy.



### CAS March meeting highlights:

Rebekah Apple, adjunct professor of bioethics at the Tarpon Springs campus of St. Petersburg College, provided an interactive program on the basics of ethical decision making. Ethics is defined as determining the right thing to do versus being right. One's ethics is part of decision making and allows for different ways of looking at things. As Rebekah explained, the major components of ethics are: a. autonomy or self-governance; b. nonmaleficence or "do no harm"; c. beneficence or doing good; and d. distributive justice or equality. Different decision making scenarios were used; such as, helpful language to use when bird stewards on pet restricted barrier islands interact with visitors with pets in tow. It was great to see so much audience participation.

### CAS April meeting highlights:

Jeanne Dubi, president of the Sarasota Audubon Society [www.sarasotaaudubon.org](http://www.sarasotaaudubon.org) for the past six years, introduced the Celery Fields past, present, and future. Sarasota County may be famous for its Black-Bellied Whistling Ducks but soon it will be famous for the Celery Fields natural area. A 400-acre parcel boasting 216 wildlife species and found east of Interstate 75 at exit 210. In the past, the Celery Fields was known as a coal-black soil, saw-grass marsh turned into a prolific celery farm. Fossilized bones of prehistoric animals taken during farming excavations are on display in the Sarasota County Fruitville Library. In 1992 extensive flooding took place at the Celery Fields site after a 22-inch downpour. By 1995 several ponds and canals were excavated to control storm water collection. This created the highest earth works in Sarasota County at 80 feet above ground level. Managing the Phillippi Creek watershed was the goal. The present wetlands restoration goals include ensuring continuity in land management, attracting more birds, attracting more birders, and attracting more nature tourists. This sounds like the makings of an Important Birding Area. In May, 2011 over 20,000 native seedlings, cuttings, scrubs, and trees were planted. The results surprised even the experts by the return of Least Bitterns, Purple Gallinules, Limpkins, and Black-Necked Stilts along with other species of insects, reptiles, and amphibians. More planting will take this year. Future plans include a one-acre visitor center complex, and a second boardwalk along Raymond Road. Funding for the water and sewer lift station will cost about \$100,000. Sarasota County is helping with several hundreds of thousands of dollars. The full project is estimated at \$1.36 million.

Jeanne provided a suggestion to travelers to the Celery Fields, try the Old Packing House Café at the interstate exit. You will enjoy real Florida roadhouse style eating.

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## Celery Fields Forever

By Madeleine Bohrer

Some birding days are so idyllic that you could swear they fell from the pages of a storybook—too wonderful to be real. A dozen of our Saturday birders led by Merle Hubbard travelled south of Pinellas to the Skyway and beyond, the “never-never land” better known as the Celery Fields and Cockroach Bay.

The day was forecast to be cold, cloudy, and blustery—it had rained the previous night—and was the kind of weather that makes colors crisp and eyes sharp and open for things flying by or bobbing in choppy water.

Our stop near the Skyway brought the first gifts of the day: a Common Loon rearing up in the water to bear its white breast; a Brown Pelican whose back was so silvery as it flexed its wings that it looked more like its white cousin; a Reddish Egret on the shore with some Snowy Egrets, all hunched against the stiff wind.

We then blew over the Skyway over a lake where Scaups, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, and Gulls (Laughing, Herring, and Ring-billed) added to our dreamy visions, some in breeding plumage, some eclipsing, all whispering “spring is near...” A lone Glossy Ibis flew in with a Caspian Tern while a Limpkin called; perhaps looking for the two others we spotted across the road.

Next stop: the Celery Fields—a water retention/recreational area that seems to have grown over the past several years. The marsh was rich with dozens of Glossy Ibis, Coots, Little Blue and Tricolor Herons. A Kingfisher hovered amidst swirls of Tree Swallows while a pair of Hooded Mergansers played “now you see me, now you don’t.” A Northern Harrier was pestered by a Fish Crow and later, a Bald Eagle in all its adult glory graced us with its yellow bill and legs glinting in the delicious sun that finally peaked through the clouds. A flock of Blue-winged Teal burst into the air, and Marde Hornsby so perfectly described them a “fireworks.”

Merle mentioned that a Fork-tailed Flycatcher had been spotted for over three weeks in the Cockroach Bay area near Ruskin—would we like to venture there to try our luck? It was unanimous—every one of us was up for the quest! As with many accidental species, one must brace oneself for the possibility of taking hours to find it or deal with just missing it. We are birders. We prepare ourselves—hoping in our heart, but expecting nothing. First we saw Joan Brigham with her son Rick—that was a nice surprise! Then, not two minutes later, Dale Goebel called out, “There it is!” Ten feet away, doing its flycatcher thing, up in a branch, down on the ground, this bird from South America was in plain sight and came to rest on a nearby tree—perfect for viewing with a scope: a bright eye shining from its black head which it turned and tipped to show three or four yellow feathers on the crown; a soft gray mantel draped over dark wings and in contrast, a white chest gleaming in the sunlight. Its tail, tapered and flowing like a brush stroke, was missing some feathers but when it dipped to the ground, it opened into a fan! Was this a fairy tale or real? It was indeed a perfect “happy-ever-after” to a dreamy day!

Want to become a member of the National Audubon Society? [Click here to apply online](#)

To learn more about birds in Pinellas County, visit [pinellasbirds.com](http://pinellasbirds.com) [click here](#)

For inquiries about placing an ad in *Wing Beat*, e-mail: [newsletter@clearwateraudubon.com](mailto:newsletter@clearwateraudubon.com)  
Business-card size ads cost \$150 for 4 issues each year.



## Participant Observer: Birding by Webcam

The Clearwater Audubon Society, in conjunction with other organizations, sponsors the Dunedin Osprey Webcam project. There are currently two chicks in the nest <http://ospreynest.info/ospreycam.phpviewable> along with a third egg that seems to be infertile. Barbara Walker, who is very active in raptor conservation, was instrumental in developing an educational program for this project.

Other webcams/nestcams of interest:

Decorah Eagle Nest Cam: Raptor Resource Project 3 eaglets with sound <http://www.ustream.tv/decoraheagles>

Phoebe Allen: Hummingbird Nest Cam: 2 chicks <http://phoebeallens.com/>



## Birding Apps

There are an increasing number of apps for birders available. If you are considering one of these new apps, but are not sure about the variety of features, someone has done the research for you. iBird has published a detailed comparison chart of current birding apps.

<http://www.ibird.com/compare> images below are previews of apps



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