



October 28, 2002

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NOVEMBER 21 MEMBERSHIP MEETING - 7 pm social/7:30 meeting
“Conservation Priorities for Audubon of Florida”

Eric Draper will be the PRAS speaker for the November 21 membership meeting. Eric is the Director of Conservation for Audubon of Florida. He is directly in charge of the overall planning process that culminates in the Audubon Assembly recently held on October 24-26.

Eric is a terrific motivational speaker with firm roots in grass-roots involvement and has a long track record of active chapter work in Audubon. He will discuss the goals and conservation priorities for the upcoming year for Audubon of Florida. He can be reached at: edraper@audubon.org or 850-224-7546.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2002

The 2002 Peace River Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count is set for Saturday, December 14, 2002. We will be counting the number of birds and bird species within an area defined by a 15-mile diameter circle, the center of which is located at US 41 and Henry Street in Punta Gorda. To facilitate the count, the circle has been divided into twelve areas. A team will be assigned to each area. We are now in the process of appointing team captains and assigning team members to each of the ten teams. If you participated in the count last year, your name will already be on the list. Your team captain will be contacting you in late November or early December with details on when and where to meet. You will only need to call in if you want to change your area or cannot participate this year. If you did not participate last year and would like to be a part of our count this year, please contact Cathy Olson at (941) 613-6753 or via email at cathyson@comcast.net.



Obviously, we will need to begin early if we are going to see lots of birds and most teams will begin counting by 7:00 AM. Hopefully, the weather will be good and we will have a delightful day in the field counting and watching our local wild birds. As before, team captains will collect a \$5 fee from each participant which will be forwarded to National Audubon to fund the compilation of the results on a national basis and make the results available in published form.

A Christmas Social will be held on Thursday, December 19 with desserts and refreshments. The social will be at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at 7:00 PM. (The location and time of our regular meetings). At the social, the team captains will turn in their tally sheets and we will determine the number species counted. All count participants and interested members are invited to the social. Please bring a dessert; coffee and soft drinks will be provided.

November Field Trip—Carlton Reserve in Venice

Our November field trip will be into the back country of the Carlton Reserve in Venice on Sunday, November 10. Charlie Sample, Venice Audubon Society's President, will meet us in the Carlton Reserve parking lot at 7:30 am for our morning's excursion. We will then gather into as few cars as possible for this special driving tour. The trip will cover 9-18 miles of Carlton's beautiful, Old Florida back country, stopping along the way to observe the bird life. The trip will end around 12:30 pm when we will gather back at the pavilion for lunch—for those who decide to bring a lunch.

Folks from the Port Charlotte area will meet at 7 am behind the McDonald's at Peachland. For further information, please call Kathi Rader-Gibson at 474-3065 (daytime) or 475-0329 (nights).



FIELD TRIP TO FORT DESOTO PARK

At 7:30 AM on October 19, nine avid birders left from the Peachland Boulevard McDonald's and drove north to a rendezvous at Fort DeSoto Park. After a rest stop on the Sunshine Skyway Bridge where two Venice Audubon guests joined us, we proceeded with anticipation to the park. An internet report the evening before alerted us to the sighting of a Banaquit and several Bay-breasted Warblers that day.

Armed with detailed directions on the printout, we sleuthed our way through the "jungle" near Arrowhead Picnic Area. Alas, we found some familiar species, but none of the aforementioned exotics. Not to be discouraged, we headed for the north beach where waders and shorebirds were always in abundance. With our scopes, we identified American Oystercatchers, Black Skimmers, Reddish Egrets, Royal and Caspian Terns and a Long-billed Curlew among many other species. The birds of the day, however, were a Great and Lesser Black-backed Gull seen in the same area.

After checking out the ponds on the west side of the road just outside the Park, we came up with a total of sixty-six (66) species, not bad on a day when the migrating warblers took another route.

Guided Walks at Deep Creek Preserve - 11/2 and 12/3

Attention all nature lovers! Free guided walks will be conducted at the Deep Creek Preserve at 10 am on Saturday, November 2 and Tuesday, December 3, 2002.

Deep Creek Preserve is a 1,988-acre parcel acquired by Southwest Florida Water Management District to preserve and protect sensitive wildlife habitats, provide flood control and offer a site for passive recreational opportunities. The Preserve is located in the southwestern corner of Desoto County, approximately 15 miles southwest of Arcadia and 8 miles northeast of Punta Gorda on Southwest Peace River Street off County Road 769 (Kings Highway).

The walks will take participants into the Preserve's pine flatwoods, home to redheaded woodpeckers and bobcat, as well as to wetland habitats, important to our water supply and sites of diverse vegetation and wildlife species.

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, Inc. (CHEC) is organizing and conducting the guided walks. For additional information, please phone (941) 475-0769 or (941) 575-5435 or email bobbi@sunletter.com.

YARD AND NATIVE PLANT SALE - JANUARY 11, 2003

The Peace River Audubon Society will be hosting a yard and native plant sale on January 11, 2003 to benefit Florida Scrub-Jay Land Acquisition in Charlotte County. The Florida Scrub-Jay is a state and federally threatened species. The principal reason for the decline of this species is loss of habitat. Acquisition of Florida Scrub-Jay habitat will also protect other native plant and animal species, protect our watersheds, and add to the quality of life in Charlotte County by providing additional open space. Proceeds from the sale are anticipated to be matched by the State, furthering your contribution.

Please start looking for items that may be cluttering your house. We will gladly accept these unwanted items. Florida Scrub-Jays are dependent on your generosity! Please contact Cathy Olson at 613-6753 if you have items to donate or would like to volunteer your time at this PRAS event.

WHAT YOUR BOARD'S BEEN DOING.....

- ⇒ *Cathy Olson, with Larry Linn and Peggy Kampert, are working on the Land and Water Conservation Fund Application.*
- ⇒ *Letters to advertise the Scrub-Jay Garage Sale (1-11) have gone out.*
- ⇒ *Need for volunteers for the Garage Sale and the Nature Festival (2/1) was discussed .*
- ⇒ *Co-sponsorship of CHEC's Family Caring and Sharing Night was discussed—not possible this year since that is the Audubon Assembly weekend; maybe next year.*
- ⇒ *Field trips have been added and clarified—Cyndi Marks will prepare brochure.*
- ⇒ *PRAS membership is 464 members, 107 non-members and 16 White Bird subscribers.*

- ⇒ *SWF Regional representative Larry Linn reported that PRAS's position on phosphate mining has been distributed to Greg Martin at the Sun, and to SWF Regional Committee.*
- ⇒ *Caloosa Regional representative George Marks reported that two resolutions are going to be presented to the Audubon of Florida Assembly: (1) SWFL land use and growth and (2) Expansion of panther habitat through conservation easements and other means.*
- ⇒ *PRAS Website is most easily accessed by going to www.Audubon.org and*

Peace River Audubon Society:

President: Cathy Olson..... 613-6753
Vice President: Kathi Rader-Gibson..... 474-3065
Secretary: Peggy Kampert..... 235-3160
Treasurer: Larry Linn..... 637-8160

Other Directors: John Aspiolea, Betty Coombs,
Chuck Froman, Joan Froman, Dennis Hungerford,
Joy Linn, Cyndi Marks, George Marks

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