



### APRIL 15—MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Kathi Rader-Gibson, PRAS Vice President, will present "For the Love of Butterflies" at the April 15 meeting. Kathi works with Sarasota County Parks and Recreation as a Park Naturalist managing Lemon Bay Park in Englewood. She enjoys shorebirds and songbirds, as well as the bald eagles which nest in the park. Another love of Kathi's is plants, particularly Florida native plants, being active in the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society.

Please join us at 7 pm for social time and to view members' photographs; then our meeting will start at 7:30 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2565 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte.

### "AN EVENING WITH AUDUBON" REPORT

**Thank you, thank you, thank you!** You made a very successful "Evening with Audubon." Our 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet was open to the public and billed as a full-evening event and was deemed a great success. We had 120 seated guests, and raised over \$1,000 for our Scrub Jay Habitat Conservation Fund.



The results of the Peace River Audubon Nature Photograph Competition were as follows:

- Gold Winner--Bill Marr; Little Green Heron
- Silver Winner--Mary Ann Hughes; Yosemite Scene
- Bronze Winner--Paul Holmes; Early Morning Deer

Our very own Malcolm Simons had the most Florida birds on his Bird List; he started birding very young—his dad carried him to go birding (with his mother) some 87 years.

"Thank yous" must be extended to those who donated items for the Silent Auction and Photo Contest/Auction. Without their generous donations, we would not have been able to add to the Scrub Jay Fund. The bidders who participated and won the items, competing all evening, were wonderful.

Specific people who helped with our success were: Jeff Bouton and Elliot Kampert (who, with little notice, put together a well-received presentation). Jim Beever was unable to attend due to an injury, but sent his information along, trusting PRAS to use what was needed for the presentation to succeed. Jeff and Elliot really brought the problems and person-

alities of our Scrub Jay friends to life. We actually got to meet individual birds through Jeff's photographs and interesting comments, making it even more important for us to work diligently to save these great creatures from extinction.

A special thanks to:

- "Capn' and the Cowboy" restaurant who provided great food and a fantastic serving staff;
- Maple Leaf Estates for use of their Club House; and
- The PRAS Board members who worked in front of and behind the scenes to make the Banquet/Auction a success.

We were pleased to welcome County Commissioner Mac Horton as one of our guests.

Paul Holmes and Peggy Kampert



### NEW NEWS: APRIL 24 GARAGE SALE!

The Peace River Audubon Society will be hosting a yard and native plant sale on April 24, 2004 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.

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.

### PRAS Calendar of Events

(Meetings: Social time—7pm; program—7:30 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2565 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte)



(FT = Field Trips meet at 7:30 am;  
"N" meet at McDonald's in Peachland Mall;  
"S" meet in old Kmart lot at Burnt Store Road & 41)

- Apr 6 FT: Babcock/Webb WMA (Dillys Randall 941-627-4090)(S)
- 15 General Meeting - Kathi Rader-Gibson "For the Love of Butterflies"
- 17 FT (N) Emerson Point Park (Tom Zinneman 941-505-8826)
- 24 Garage Sale (Cathy Olson 613-6753)
- May 10 Lions, Tigers and Bears trip (Paul Holmes 833-3337)
- 20 Annual Member Meeting—"Stump Pass Birds" Jeff Bouton
- 22 FT to Lakeland (Tom Zinneman 941-505-8826) (N)

## 2004 BIRDATHON RESULTS

How did you spend your Saturday, March 20? Well, members of Peace River Audubon spent their Saturday racing around the area looking for as many different bird species as possible.

Competitive birding--a Birdathon--whatever you call it, it happens to be one of the ways Peace River Audubon raises money to support the educational efforts of Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. **A total of 133 bird species were counted.**

The winning team, Mangrove Cuckoos, saw 104 species according to team leaders **Joan and Chuck Froman**, and team members Charles Frogman, Stu and Louise Lewis and Jim and Barb Homme.

Second place Hawkeyes, led by **Lynn Bates**, with team members Dillys Randall, George Bates and Paul Holmes saw 103 species.

Third place team, Jaybirds, led by **Cathy Olsen**, with members Gregg Klowden, Norm Epiphany, and Betty Dennis saw a total of 84.

Where does the fund raising come in? Well, each team obtains as much sponsorship as possible; normally, a stated amount per bird species seen. For example, a "pledge" of \$.10 a bird times 133 birds seen nets the Peace River Audubon \$13.30, or if the "pledge" is \$1-a-bird species seen amounts to \$133. Other sponsors offer a fixed cash amount regardless of the number of birds counted. "That makes all the hard work worthwhile, not forgetting it is a lot of fun," said Paul Holmes, who, like the other teams, was up at dawn and spent the whole day searching places such as Babcock-Webb, Bayshore Oaks Park, the trails around CHEC and many other 'secret' spots. "We don't want to give away too many secrets," said Hawkeye's team leader Lynn Bates... "After all, there's always next year."

If you would like to support Peace River Audubon's efforts to help ensure Charlotte Harbor's students receive a good environmental education, it is not too late to sponsor the event. Please send your donations, which are tax deductible, to PRAS at PO Box 510760, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0760.



## April 17-- Field Trip to Emerson Point Park

On Saturday, April 17, we will travel to Emerson Point Park, which is about an hour's drive north of Port Charlotte. This 365-acre state-owned, county-managed park is located at the west end of Snead Island (northwest of Palmetto) in Manatee County.

This Park is home to the Portevant Temple Mound, the largest remaining Indian Mound on Florida's west coast. The Park has a variety of native ecosystems including beaches, lagoons, salt marshes, mangrove swamps, grass flats, hardwood hammocks, and semi-upland wooded areas. We can expect to see a variety of both land and water birds. There are also a lot of flowering plants that attract butterflies.

We'll meet in back of McDonalds in the Peachland Mall at 7:30 am. Please bring a bag lunch. Tom Zinneman (941-505-8826) will be leading this trip. If time permits, we will make a quick stop at the Celery Fields, which we pass on the way back to Port Charlotte.

## A REMINDER FOR YOU.....

Your label on the White Bird includes information you should check...I include your Expiration Date (as I know it) for **BOTH** local AND National memberships.

**HELP!!** Please check your label...

**Exp: 0304** means your membership expires in March 2004. We do NOT send cards or reminders of your expiration. **SO, you must renew your membership yourself!**

And, yes, as a National Audubon member, you automatically receive the White Bird. PRAS subscriptions receive only the White Bird (no Audubon magazines or National reminders.)

Another note: The White Bird is sent using "bulk mail" and is usually not forwarded along with first-class mail. PLEASE let me know your US mailing address (up North or wherever you go to escape the heat) so I can send issues to you there.

If you have any questions, please call me at 941-637-8160.

Thank you! Joy Linn, Editor

## Boreal Conservation Framework Lays Out Vision for Protecting Vital Breeding Grounds for Billions of North American Birds

Stretching from Alaska to the Atlantic Ocean, Canada's boreal forest is one of the world's largest forests. It accounts for 25 percent of the earth's remaining intact forests, covers 1.3 billion acres, and is larger than the Brazilian Amazon. With more fresh water than any place on earth, Canada's boreal forest supports some of the largest populations of wildlife such as grizzly bears and wolves, and provides vital breeding grounds for up to a third of North America's land birds and 40 percent of its waterfowl. Want to help protect the forest, go to the Boreal Songbird Initiative website at [www.borealbirds.org](http://www.borealbirds.org).

## BUYING BABCOCK RANCH

Carie Call of Ft Myers News-Press on March 24 wrote:

“A group of about 30 environmental leaders, politicians and heads of governmental agencies promised Tuesday to do everything possible to preserve the 91,361-acre Babcock Ranch and create a wildlife corridor from Lake Okeechobee to the Gulf of Mexico.

Buying the property, which straddles the eastern part of the Lee-Charlotte county line, for land and water preservation has Gov. Jeb Bush’s approval, said Stephanie Culp, who represented the governor at the meeting held at the ranch. We would like to see the corridor completed, Culp said.

Henry Dean, executive director of the South Florida Water Management District, said his agency can see the value in protecting the ranch as an aquifer recharge area. He said it could be a western link to the \$8 billion wetland restoration for the Everglades. This could be one of the grandest and most noble endeavors for public ownership for all future generations, Dean said. It is the general agreement of all parties, environmental groups and other agencies to successfully acquire the ranch for public use.

The group was summoned by Lee County Commissioner Bob Janes to talk about how to raise money to buy the ranch. Though members of the Babcock family have never said what price they would accept, Janes said it could cost between \$300 million and \$650 million. It’s hard to look at the magnitude of this place and not be stunned and in awe of the potential of this for our family and grandkids, Janes said.

Babcock family attorney Earl Drayton Farr Jr. of Punta Gorda said the family always has been interested in preserving part of the property, which is lush with native pines and oaks and is home to endangered Florida panthers, threatened gopher tortoises, alligators, turkeys and white-tailed deer. We have everything in the Everglades and 80 species of birds that live here all year, said Stephen Tutko, a biologist who works at Babcock Ranch. Four years ago, the plan was to conserve about 43,000 acres and leave that untouched and restrict development to 19,000 acres, Farr said. There are also watermelon and tomato farms on the property and a motel...Farr would not discuss what price the family will accept for the property. This wasn’t our party, Farr said while standing in the two-story Cypress Lodge next to the alligator-laden Telegraph Swamp, which feeds into the Caloosahatchee River. We’re not going to participate today. There is no family here.

Lee and Charlotte officials don’t want any of the land lost to development. The Charlotte County commission already has received a developer’s request for rezoning of the property, and Lee County has been unofficially approached by builders, too. Charlotte Commissioner Adam Cummings said a development would create a small city in what is now wilderness. That city would need water and sewer services as well as fire and police protection, and that’s something neither Lee nor Charlotte is prepared to offer. If this group can put together a proposal that the family can accept, I expect my board would support it, Cummings said.”

Steve Small, a Boston lawyer for the Landowner Planning Center in Massachusetts, said he is working indirectly with the Babcock family

on the sale of the property. There is no real estate developer that can bring anything to the table that a conservancy group or a consortium of conservancy groups can’t, Small said.

Bill Hammond, a Florida Gulf Coast University professor, said Lee County has a deplorable record in setting aside public land for conservation and recreation. He said Miami-Dade County has set aside 60 percent...Collier and Charlotte counties...40 percent. Lee County... only 9 percent, Hammond said. That’s a wake-up call to me, he said.

Last year, the Florida DEP tried to acquire the land but couldn’t swing the deal, and negotiations between the state and the Babcock family ended in December. The state got caught up in legalities. The Babcock family, who got hit heavily with estate taxes after their matriarch and patriarch died about three years ago, wanted the state to buy the company’s stock and motel as well as the land. But the DEP cannot buy companies and the deal failed. County officials said they would be allowed to buy the motel and stock if they needed to.

Lee County’s Smart Growth Director Wayne Daltry said the multi-agency group needs to work fast to find the money to buy the ranch. He is scheduling another meeting in two weeks to talk about compiling a list of people who are willing to contribute financially to the project. Never think small, Daltry said. This is our opportunity to do something big.

“...We don’t have months, Janes said. There are developers out there now swooping around. We have a very serious problem with time.”

## WHAT YOUR BOARD IS DOING...

- \* Continued scrub jay land acquisition plan discussion; Eric Draper and Audubon of FL are supporting the issue.
- \* Web site birding area templates are not finished (Cathy will do Ollies Pond; Larry will do Ponce De Leon and Audubon Pennington.
- \* Nominations for next year will be published in the May White Bird for voting at the May meeting.
- \* Bylaw change to allow PRAS Chapter members to be on the PRAS Board and to hold office.
- \* Newly announced garage sale to be held April 24 at Cathy and Gregg’s home.
- \* Paul Holmes reported the Peace River Boat Trip was a success with \$45 going to the scrub jay habitat acquisition fund.
- \* Larry Linn reported the Columbus McLeod Memorial is progressing —a spot at Ponce de Leon Park has been selected and approved by the City of Punta Gorda; awaiting State approval for a Florida historical marker.

**Happy Spring!**



The Peace River Audubon Society  
 PO Box 510760  
 Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0760

www.peacriveraudubon.org

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2003-04	OFFICERS:	
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Vice President	Kathi Rader-Gibson '04	474-3065
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	Chuck Froman '04	743-5204
	Joan Froman '04	743-5204
	Paul Holmes '05	833-3337
	Dennis Hungerford '05	627-5405
	Joy Linn '05 (editor)	637-8160

**KEYS TO PRAS SUCCESS...NEW MEMBERS:**

**National Audubon:** (no report this month)

**PRAS:**

Sandy Artman	Jackie Prince
Marlene Brenhouse	Norma Remson
Raymond & Phyllis Doggett	Paul & Cheryl Rockhill
Peggy Kampert	Malcolm Simons
Clifford Meacham	Kathleen Trimble
	John Zack

The Peace River Audubon Society is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Our Federal tax ID number is 59-2190872. We do not engage a professional solicitor and 100% of the funds generated by this request will be used to support our Chapter programs. Our registration number with the FDA Division of Consumer Services is SC-040701.

**2003/2004 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE (Choose A or B below)**

**(A) \_\_\_ YES, I want to join/renew my membership in PEACE RIVER AUDUBON now for \$10!**



As individuals we can do very little, together we can do much more. Join us to protect the air we breath, the water we drink, and the wildlife we love. In short, help us protect the Florida lifestyle. Members receive 10 issues of the "White Bird" newsletter with local news articles, local meetings, field trips and bird walks.

Visit our web site: [www.peacriveraudubon.org](http://www.peacriveraudubon.org)

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**MAIL \$10 CHECK WITH THIS FORM DIRECTLY to:**  
 PRAS, P O Box 510760, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0760.

**OR, (B): \_\_\_ Yes, I want to join National Audubon \* ...**

- \_\_\_ \$15 - 1-year Student/Senior Rate (62+)      \_\_\_ \$1,000 Individual Life
  - \_\_\_ \$20 - 1-year Introductory National Audubon Rate      \_\_\_ \$1,500 Dual Life
  - \_\_\_ \$30 - 2-year Special National Audubon Rate
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**Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to:**  
 National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center,  
 P.O. Box 51003, Boulder, CO 80323-1003

- A National Audubon member receives 6 bi-monthly issues of "Audubon" magazine/year, and some discounts at Audubon Centers across the USA. As a National Audubon member, you are automatically a member of Peace River Audubon Society and receive 10 issues of the "White Bird."
- Check here if you do not wish to receive "Audubon" Magazine