

White Bird

October 28, 2004

Volume 28, Issue 3



NOVEMBER 18 MEMBERSHIP MEETING WILMA KATZ—TURTLE PROTECTION

Wilma Katz, an Audubon member, will be our speaker at the November 18 meeting. Wilma will talk about our native turtles and the efforts to protect them.

Please join us at 7 pm for social time and find out what all your friends did over the summer. The meeting will start at 7:30 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2565 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte.

NOVEMBER 2 DING DARLING FIELD TRIP

On Tuesday, November 2, the Peace River Audubon Society will take a field trip to Sanibel Island to visit the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge was closed for almost two months due to damage from Hurricane Charley and has just recently been reopened. It will be interesting to see if and how the wildlife has rebounded.

The group will meet in front of the old K-Mart located on the southwest corner of the US41/Burnt Store Road intersection. The trip is open to everyone and will meet at 7:15 a.m. Bring a lunch. Please call Paul Homes who will lead this trip at 941-833-3337 with any questions.



NOVEMBER 16 NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY TRIP

On November 16, 2004 at 7:30 am, a group of photographers (amateurs welcome) will meet at the old K-Mart parking lot at Route 41 and Burnt Store Road to explore CHEC, i.e., Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. Remember to wear walking shoes; you can return along the trail at any point. Bring a bag lunch and beverage. Call Mary Ann at 941-637-7855 or cell: 732-979-4032 with any questions.

NOVEMBER 20 FIELD TRIP TO CHARLOTTE COUNTY BIRDING HOT SPOTS

On Saturday, November 20, we'll be visiting several birding "hot" spots in Charlotte County. They'll include Ollie's Pond, Kings Highway wetlands, and Tippecanoe. We should see wading birds, raptors, migrants, and, of course, Scrub Jays.

The group will meet in back of McDonalds at the Peachland Mall at 7:15 am. Bring a lunch. Tom Zinneman is the contact 505-8826.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT—DECEMBER 18

Keep this date free: Saturday, December 18 for the Christmas Bird Count. Once again, it will be in the capable hands of Tony Licata and if you would like to take part in this annual event, please let Tony know at 941-505-9775 or alicata@dcwis.com.

DECEMBER 7 ANNUAL BOAT TRIP

The PRAS Annual Boat trip on December 7 will be to the beautiful area around Placida. The highlight being the flock of White Pelicans that roost there (The reason it has to be at this time of day!) Thanks to the generosity of the NEP, we have again received a grant towards the cost of the trip, which means we can offer this trip to our members and their friends for \$6 (It is usually three times that amount). Depending on numbers, we will have either one or two boats which each hold 40 people. So the first 80 people who sign-up and pay their \$6 will get tickets. We will meet near the Fishery restaurant in Placida at 2:00 pm for a late Pot Luck Picnic lunch. If you have a picnic table and chairs, please bring them as the picnic area does not have enough for all of us. The boat will leave from Placida at 3:30 pm and return at 5:30 pm.

If you would like to car pool to Placida or would be willing to take people with you, please meet in the parking lot of the Town Center Mall on Murdock Circle between Regal Cinemas and CS Merchandise pickup at 1:30. Once again we will invite our friends, the volunteers from CHEC, to take part in this great trip. Any questions or to sign up, call Paul Holmes at 833-3337.

REPORT ON FIELD TRIP TO ALDERMAN'S FORD PARK AND MEDARD PARK

Sixteen members of the PRAS met at the Peachland Mall in Port Charlotte on Saturday morning, October 23. We formed into car pools and traveled north about 100 miles to Alderman's Ford Park and Medard Park. These Parks are located in Hillsborough County, east of Brandon.

Our first stop was Alderman's Ford Park. This Park consists of 1,141 acres. The north and south prongs of the Alafia River meet within the Park. The Park has nature trails, boardwalks, picnic areas, and a visitor center with restrooms. We walked the boardwalk that borders the area where the two branches of the Alafia meet. Some of the more interesting birds observed included a Bald Eagle, many Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Red-shouldered Hawks, Green Heron, Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe, American Redstart, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Black & White Warbler, and Carolina Wrens.

We then continued north for about six miles to Medard Park. This Park, a former phosphate mining site, consists of 1,284 acres, which includes a 700-acre reservoir. The reservoir is used for fishing and boating (no wake). The Park has picnic areas, restrooms, a camping area, and an equestrian trail. Some of the birds observed included American Coot, Limpkin, Osprey, Palm Warblers, Pine Warblers, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers.

Altogether, we saw about 40 different bird species at the two Parks. Thanks to Dave Smith for leading this trip, a first-time visit for most of us.

Tom Zinneman reporting

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The enclosed Schedule of Events has meetings and future trips that are scheduled for 2004 and 2005. Please remember that all dates and times for field trips and photography trips are subject to change, so please call the leader of an event to confirm it.

MEMBERSHIP CONTACT

Betty Talburt 766-0354 is the current Membership Chair—please contact her with any changes, etc.

OCTOBER PRAS BOARD DOINGS:

Unfortunately, there was not an official Board meeting in October so only a few items were discussed such as:

>> The Annual Banquet “Evening with Audubon” location and caterer—more research to be done.

>> The March 11-13 Florida Ornithology Society will be co-sponsored by Venice Audubon and PRAS, since there are no hotels or facilities for meetings on Punta Gorda. More details will be forthcoming.

>> Tom Zinneman has a binder with signed Field Trip Waivers from individuals who have gone on field trips—this is an insurance requirement for PRAS.

NEW MEMBERS—KEYS TO PRAS SUCCESS:

New National Audubon Members:

Bill & Shirley Eckoff
Burt Perone
Phillis Sadoff

Marianne Smedley
William M Wright

Pennington Park Update

Pennington Park (the 8 acre-nature park PRAS leases from the County) was hit hard by Hurricane Charley. Almost all the big trees were affected. But the County cleared the main grass road trail within a few weeks. Although there is still some small debris on the trail, it is easily passable. As of now, we have the first side trail cleared. The lower trails are still blocked with fallen trees, but we’re working on them. We expect to have all trails usable by mid November. Most of the trails have been rerouted a bit to go around fallen trees.

The parking lot got “creamed,” so the entrance to the park looks very different. There are only 3 trees left standing in the parking lot, and just a few of the railroad ties defining the parking areas are still there. Our intention is to square away the parking lot after all the trails are usable. We will have to plant new trees in the parking area.

The birds are starting to return to the park, and we’ve seen rabbits and a gopher tortoise. And best of all, the trees are starting to leaf out. It will take a while though, as we are missing most of our upper tree canopy.

If you want to help in the cleanup, we work from 8-10 AM on Wednesday mornings. The park is on Alton Road in Port Charlotte, between Midway and Peachland, about a mile or so west of Kings Highway.

Happy Fall!



Remembering Mac...

Francis G “Mac” McGovern

1917—2004

Monica Dorken, Educator at CHEC, wrote in the Punta Gorda Herald: “We are sad to say we have lost our chairman emeritus and founding father, Francis G. “Mac” McGovern....Mac was the first chairman of the board of directors for the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center back in 1987. He directed CHEC

through state incorporation and forged the by-laws which guide our center today. His dream was to have CHEC continue providing environmental leadership for generations ‘in perpetuity.’” Monica shared May 21, 1992, comments written by Professor Mac in her Punta Gorda Herald article and closed with, “Thanks to you, Chairman Mac, CHEC has the opportunity to continue to thrive.”

Liz Raterman: Mac did so much for us in Charlotte County through Audubon and CHEC and it would be impossible to list them all. Once he brought Marjory Stoneman Douglas, author of “The Everglades: River of Grass,” as the speaker at a special Audubon event. Mac was attentive to her precise and detailed requests, and was very impressed that she stood for her whole speech, particularly since she was 90-plus years young.

Bill Coombs: In the ‘80’s, when Mac was president, he ran a number of field trips each year lasting several days to nature centers all over Florida. They were named the “O.B.T.” which stands for “One Big Trip.” One in particular I remember was to Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park. (If you have not visited you should.) We stayed at the Wakulla Springs Lodge which is the original Ball home and we ate (where else?) in the Ball Room. Remember Ball Mason jars?

Mac and his wife Leila and Betty and I sat together that night and by chance, he and I ordered the same entree. To the surprise of the other members present, we both ordered quail! It was many years before we lived that one down!

Charlie Derrick: One of Mac’s greatest assets was his perseverance. Whenever he decided to do something, it got done! That included getting people to volunteer for all sorts of things.

One of his projects was Audubon-Pennington Park. Mrs. Pennington had bequeathed 2 lots to Audubon in the Cleveland section of East Punta Gorda, but they were basically swamp land and had no birds! A tree had been planted in Mrs. Pennington’s memory on one lot. Mac pursued deeding those lots to the County.

At about that time, the space where Audubon-Pennington Park exists, which was an old spoil area, was given to the County by General Development. Mac persevered in getting that lot for Audubon with a 99-year lease with the caveat that General Development had to restore it with uplands and lowlands. The original tree from the old Pennington property was transplanted; and privately, someone moved Mrs. Pennington’s ashes to the same area. (The memorial sign was destroyed by vandals and will be replaced.) Then Mac got the idea to name the park after Mrs. Pennington and he organized a proper dedication with TV coverage.

Larry and Joy Linn: When Larry (one of the folks who volunteers to maintain Audubon-Pennington Nature Park) returned from the Park after Hurricane Charley, he had many pieces of the sign that used to be at the entrance to the Park. In order to get it replaced, he was piecing it together last week on our driveway to take a picture (Originally done with lasers and paid for by PRAS, according to Charlie). We were so pleased to notice the carved sign (shown on page 2) showed Mac as the PRAS President when the Park was dedicated in 1989:

- The Charlotte County logo is on the left; and on the right:
- The Peace River Audubon Society logo with the following words:
“Initiated and Maintained by the Peace River Audubon Society, Inc. 1989
Francis G. McGovern—President”

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

www.peacriveraudubon.org

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2004-05 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

(941)

President	Cathy Olson '05	613-6753
Vice President	Paul Holmes '05	833-3337
Secretary	Peggy Kampert '05	639-7791
Treasurer	Larry Linn '05	637-8160
Additional Directors:	Regina Burke '06	639-4627
	Phyllis Doggett '06	575-4009
	Mary Ann Hughes	637-7855
	Joy Linn '05 (editor)	637-8160
	Betty Talburt '06	766-0354
	Tom Zinneman '06	505-8826

PLEASE:

Check the "Exp" date on your address label!
If an "Exp" is "0704," it means your PRAS or National membership expires in July '04 (both PRAS and National Audubon stop mailings after 2-3 months). The "Exp" line saves the cost of sending post cards, so if your expiration date has or will expire, **please** use the application below to renew your membership.

MEMBERSHIP

Please direct all membership changes, etc. to Chairman Betty Talburt at 766-0354.

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.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION — (Choose A or B below)

(A) ___ I/we want to join or renew membership in the local PEACE RIVER AUDUBON for \$10!

Join us to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the wildlife we love...help us protect our Florida. 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

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____
Phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

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

(B) ___ I/we want to join or renew National Audubon for:

___ \$15 = 1-yr Student/Senior Rate (62+) ___ \$1,000 Individual Life
___ \$20 = 1-yr Introductory National Audubon Rate ___ \$1,500 Dual Life
___ \$30 = 2-yr Special National Audubon Rate

Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society

___ My check is enclosed or ___ Please bill me

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____ **E14-7XCH**
Phone: () _____

Mail to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center,
P.O. Box 51003, Boulder, CO 80323-1003

Note: National Audubon members receive 6 bi-monthly "Audubon" magazines/year and some discounts at Audubon Centers across the US A, **PLUS, you automatically** receive the same 10 "White Bird" issues as PRAS members do in Option A.

Check here if you do not wish to receive "Audubon" Magazine