



DECEMBER 16—CHRISTMAS POT LUCK SUPPER

6:00 PM (not 7:00 pm)

Our Christmas Party and Pot Luck Supper on December 16 will begin at 6:00 pm (not 7:00 pm as listed in the Schedule of Events). Please bring a dish to share and plates, utensils, and napkins. Coffee, tea and other beverages will be provided.

Since this will not be the Christmas Bird Count affair we had in previous years, Laura DiGruttolo from the Parks Department will be our speaker.



Please join us at 6 pm for supper and the meeting afterward at:
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2565 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2004

The 2004 Peace River Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count is set for Saturday, December 18, 2004. 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 twelve (12) 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:*

*Tony Licata (941) 505-9775 or via email at alicata@dcwis.com or
Cathy Olson at (941) 613-6753 cathyolson@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 \$5.00 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.

The results will be presented at our regular meeting on Thursday, January 20 at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at 7:00 PM. Last year's Power Point presentation has been updated and will show not only the results of our 2004 Christmas Bird Count, but a five-year trend graph. Each species will be illustrated with a picture, most of which have been taken by members of our own Nature Photography Group.

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 boat which holds 40 people. So the first 40 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.

Ollie's Pond Field Trip Report—Missy Christie

There were 13 people on the field trip and a total of 30 species were seen at this 41-acre man-made drainage facility managed by Charlotte County. This pond is named in the memory of Ollie Hewitt, one of PRAS's best birders and volunteers.

The park is located east of Collingswood Blvd. and south of Wintergarden in Port Charlotte. The parking lot is located on the northern part of the site near the intersection of Avon Avenue and Gobron Street. To see the species of birds, mammals and herps, check the Peace River web site.

Audubon Pennington Park Update

We have finally gotten all the trails open in Pennington Park. Thanks to Ken Ferris and his trusty chain saw, and volunteers Roger Blackmore, Dave Lancaster, and John Leavy, we finished the last trail last week. You now have a good chance to see how hurricanes clear out the upper canopy, and what they can do to some very large trees.

The front entrance looks very different because of all the trees completely gone from the parking lot, but we have begun to use the scraps of railroad ties we can still find to define the parking area. Once we complete the parking area layout, we can begin to plant new trees. Most of us really miss all the oaks in the parking lot. We are seeing more and more birds, and the migrants are starting to arrive. We are seeing turtles laying eggs almost every week now, and not far from the front entrance, the 8 foot alligator can usually be seen (about the time we leave) sunning himself on the west bank of the canal.

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. **Larry Linn**

SPACE COAST BIRDING 7 WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

By Tom Zinneman

There are several birding festivals held throughout the fall and winter months in Florida. Probably the best of these is the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival, held in Titusville. This Festival features field trips, boat and kayak trips, photography outings, seminars, workshops, evening keynote presentations, an art and photo contest, silent auction, and vendor exhibits. If you are into birding and have never attended a festival, this should be on your list of things to do in Florida.

I attended this year's Birding & Wildlife Festival, which was held from November 17-21. This was one of the best organized festivals I've ever attended. During the five-day festival, I went on four field trips, attended five seminars and workshops, visited the vendor exhibits and art show, and three keynote presentations (Authur Morris, Jeff Bouton, and Kevin Karlson).

My first trip was on Wednesday, November 17th, the pelagic birding trip. About 75 people signed up for this trip, which was on the Miss Canaveral out of Port Canaveral. As we left the harbor, a juvenile Sabine's Gull, rare for this area, was spotted. Most of the pelagic species were observed about 30 miles offshore, along the west edge of the Gulf Stream, while following weedlines in about 200 feet of water. Although only small numbers of birds were observed, we did see several different species, including Northern Gannets, Masked Booby, Pomarine Jaeger, Red Phalarope, and three species of Shearwaters (Audubon's, Manx, and Greater). In addition, we all had good looks at two Cory's Shearwaters that were released by wildlife rehabilitators from the boat. This was an exciting trip with many people adding anywhere from six to eight species to their life list. Unfortunately, the water was a little rough with 5-7 foot swells, which caused about 10-15 people to spend most of the trip seated near the railings with little interest in looking for birds.

My next field trip was on Friday, a bus trip to Tosohatchee State Reserve and the Orlando Wetlands. Tosohatchee is a great area for observing tree birds. Species observed there included the Blue-headed and White-eyed Vireos, Indigo Bunting, Swamp Sparrow, Tufted Titmouse, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Sedge Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Bald Eagle, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. The Orlando Wetlands is composed of wetland cells, marsh, swamp, and a small lake. A large number of water birds can usually be found here. This area is closed from November 1st thru January 20th; however, the Festival had special permission to take field trips there. Some of the more interesting species observed included Roseate Spoonbills, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Greater Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe, Belted Kingfisher, Swamp Sparrows, and a Chipping Sparrow. A total of 57 species species was observed at both areas.

On Saturday, I tried something new, a butterfly trip. The day started with a seminar on butterfly identification and specialty butterflies of Brevard County. This seminar lasted from 9:00 to 10:30. We then gathered at the bus stop for a 11:00-5:00 butterfly trip to different areas of north Brevard County. Our first stop was at a private residence. The couple living there had a huge butterfly garden with quite a number of different species, including Sleepy Orange, Long-tailed Skippers, Clouded Skippers, Ceraunus Blues, Monarchs and Queens.

We then continued to spots previously scouted by the leaders, Buck and Linda Cooper and Marc Minno. These leaders were not only well versed in identifying butterflies, but also the plants on which they were found. Marc is also one of the co-authors of the Butterflies through Binoculars – Florida book, an excellent reference guide. Our final stop was along some marshy areas on Merritt Island. Additional species observed during the trip included the Mangrove Buckeye, Salt Marsh Skipper, and Eastern Pygmy-blue. The group observed a total of 36 species of butterflies during the trip.

On Sunday, the fifth and final day of the Festival, I chose to go on another birding trip, this time to the Viera Wetlands. The Viera Wetlands consists of a series of connected ponds created to treat wastewater from the central Brevard area. One usually finds a large diversity of birds in the area. Upon our arrival, the first birds observed were a pair of Crested Caracara, a good way to start the morning. Not long afterwards, several Sandhill Cranes flew directly overhead. An active Bald Eagle nest was also observed, along with a pair of Eagles. Several species of ducks were seen, including a family of Black-bellied Whistling ducks, Mottled, Ring-necked, Ruddy, Hooded Mergansers, Lesser Scaup and Blue-winged Teal. The usual wading birds (Egrets, Herons, and Ibises) were present. Some more unusual birds observed included Wilson's Snipe, American Kestrel, Belted Kingfishers, Savannah Sparrows, and Marsh Wrens. About 55 different species of birds were observed.

I had a great time at the Festival, met many interesting people and well-known birders, and added ten new bird species to my life list. I have posted many images taken during the field trips on my web site, www.zinnysworld.com, under the Field Trips tab.

January 22 Selby Gardens Field Trip

Our chapter is sponsoring a field trip to Selby Gardens in Sarasota on Saturday, January 22. The group will meet at the Peachland McDonald's at 9 a.m. before driving north to Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. We will tour the gardens at our leisure. Lunch may be purchased at Michael's in the Selby Garden Café or you may enjoy your picnic lunch on their patio. Cost of admission to the gardens is \$12.00 per person.

Regina Burke

NOVEMBER PRAS BOARD DOINGS:

- Final arrangements are made to have the Annual Banquet "Evening with Audubon" at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center.
- The March 11-13 Florida Ornithology Society plans are being developed by Paul Holmes, with lots of volunteers needed for preparation work and birding events such as the Charlotte Harbor 100 event.
- Possible scrub jay habitat land acquisition was discussed; money from fund raisers has been set aside.
- Monies derived from fund raisers, i.e., Silent Auction and Charlotte Harbor 100 will be split 75/25 for Youth Environmental Education Fund and PRAS respectively.
- The PRAS budget was belatedly approved as developed by Treasurer Larry Linn and the Finance Committee.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
2004-5 FIELD TRIPS

Tue/Dec 7/1:30 PM—Placida Boat Trip/White Pelicans

**Murdock Mall between Regal Cinemas & CS
Mdse—Leader Paul Holmes 941-833-3337**

Sat/Dec 18/7:00—Christmas Bird Count (Various)

- Leader Tony Licata 941-505-9775

**Tue/Dec 21/9:00—Photography:Special Christmas Trip to
Selby Gardens (N—Meet at 9 am!)**

- Leader Mary Ann Hughes 941-637-7855

2005

**Tue/Jan 18/7:00—Photography: Sarasota Jungle Gardens
(N)**

- Leader Mary Ann Hughes 941-637-7855

Sat/Jan 22/9:00—Selby Gardens (N)

- Leader Regina Burke 941-639-4627

**Sat/Jan 29—Charlotte County Nature Festival
(Charlotte Sports Center, Route 776)**

- Leader Maran Hilgendorf 239-995-1777 x240

Tue/Feb 1/7:15—Field Trip TBA

- Leader Tom Zinneman 941-505-8826

Tue/Feb 15/7:00—Photography: Venice Rookery (N)

- Leader Mary Ann Hughes 941-637-7855

Sat/Feb 19/7:00—Shark Valley (S)

- Tom Zinneman 941-505-8826

Mon/Mar 7/7:15—Bunche Beach & Estero Lagoon (S)

- Leader Lynn Bates 941-639-7277

Sun, Mar 13—Charlotte Harbor 100 (Various)

- Leader Paul Holmes 941-833-3337

Tue, Mar 15/7:00—Photography: Corkscrew Swamp (S)

- Leader Mary Ann Hughes 941-637-7855

Mon, Apr 4/7:15—Fort DeSoto (N)

-Leader Eleanor Marr 941-624-4182

**Tue, Apr 19/7:00—Photography: Seaboard in the Web
(S)**

- Leader Mary Ann Hughes 941-637-7855

Sat, Apr 23/7:00—Kissimmee Prairie Preserve (N)

Tom Zinneman 941-505-8826

Tue, May 17/7:00—Photography: Sanibel/Ding Darling (S)

- Leader Mary Ann Hughes

Sat, May 21/7:15—Myakka State Park (N)

- Leader Dave Mathewson 941-629-6376

NOTE: Trips leave PROMPTLY as follows:

Trips marked (N) are NORTHbound and meet at McDonald's in Peachland Mall.

Trips marked (S) are SOUTHbound and meet in the old Kmart parking lot on Burnt Store Road @ 41.

**Happy
Holidays**



2004-5 MEETINGS

Membership Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from September to May, beginning with social time at 7 and the meeting at 7:30 pm (unless noted otherwise).

Meeting site is: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2565 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte

Dec 16, 2004—Members Christmas Party & Pot Luck

**Supper (bring covered dish/see article p1); Speaker:
Laura DiGruttolo, Charlotte County Parks Department;
Contact: Paul Holmes**

Jan 20, 2005—Christmas Bird Count Presentation:

**Speaker: Matt Bixler, Environmental Policy Specialist
Conservancy of SW FL on "Babcock Ranch
Purchase"; Tony Licata reporting Bird Court**

Feb 8, 2005 at 5:30 pm—Special Event:

"An Evening with Audubon"

(Annual Banquet/Silent Auction/Talk):

Florida Environmental Speaker: Jim Beever, Florida
Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Location and Caterer: The Port Charlotte Cultural
Center, 2280 Aaron St; contact Tom Zinneman

Feb 17, 2005—Shells: Joyce Matthys,

Sanibel Shell Museum

Mar 17, 2005—Saving Cranes and Chassowitka

population: Pat & Jack Casselberry,
Whooping Crane Project, Crystal River

Apr 21, 2005—Kissimmee Birding: Paul Miller,

Kissimmee Prairie Preserve

May 19, 2005—Annual Membership Meeting:

Paul Holmes

PRAS SECRETARY CHANGE

After serving on the Peace River Audubon Society Board of Directors as Secretary for 31/2 years, **Peggy Kampert** has stepped down from her position and the Board. Although she regrets the timing, she is stepping down for personal reasons. Thank you, Peggy for all your efforts on the Board of Directors and as a PRAS member. Although no longer on the Board, we know you will continue to be an active PRAS member. Luckily, the Board of Directors has filled the secretary position with an equally enthusiastic person. The PRAS Board of Directors elected **Mary Ann Hughes** as the new secretary at the November 9 Board meeting. Mary Ann, we look forward to working with you as the new secretary!

New National Audubon Members:

Michael Brown
D L Gardner
Phyllis Pirner
Joan w Rice
Candace R Smith

Kathryn Davenport
Ron Kohler
Nita Renner
Mr & Mrs Fred Ryner
Mary S Stone

New Peace River Member:

Adam J Martin

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

www.peacriveraudubon.org

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 White Bird



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2004-05 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

(941)

President	Cathy Olson '05	613-6753
Vice President	Paul Holmes '05	833-3337
Secretary	Mary Ann Hughes '06	637-7855
Treasurer	Larry Linn '05	637-8160
Additional Directors:	Regina Burke '06	639-4627
	Phyllis Doggett '06	575-4009
	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 "0105," it means your PRAS and/or National membership expires in Jan '05 (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