



DATE & MEETING 2005-06 CHANGES

The meetings will be held on the THIRD WEDNESDAY of the month from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. The December meeting will be held on December 14.

The Palm Room at the Charlotte County Cultural Center located at 2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte FL will be the 2005-06 meeting place.

November Events

Walkabout at Ollie's Pond

On November 9, more than 20 people met at Ollie's Pond

November 12 Phosphate Mine Trip

On Saturday, November 12, Audubon members and friends took a bus trip to the phosphate mines in central Florida. The trip was sponsored by The Mosaic Company and our goal was to see the mining process first hand. When we arrived, we viewed a slide presentation giving us an overview of the phosphate mining operation. Then we drove to the mining pits where we saw a demonstration of the crane-like drag line and hosing procedure that converted the excavated material into a slurry that was pumped to the processing plant. Next we drove to the processing plant where the sand, clay, and phosphate were separated. The phosphate was transported from there to a fertilizer manufacturer. Next we drove to the clay settling ponds where we saw clay slurry being pumped in. The slurry is held in the ponds until the clay settles out. This water is recycled for use in the processing plant, and the excess water is released into the Peace River. We stopped to view this outflow area, then headed back to headquarters for lunch and a question and answer session.

In the afternoon, we got back on the bus, to visit some of the re-claimed areas, that were once pits and settling ponds. In the distance, we could see the fertilizer manufacturing facility and the gypsum stacks which are the byproducts. We viewed grass lands, crop lands, and wet lands that had been reclaimed. After thanking our hosts for a very informative expedition, we returned to Punta Gorda.

Phyllis Doggett

November Events Continued

November 16 PRAS Meeting

Bill Byle, Environmental Specialist for Charlotte County, made an informative presentation concerning phosphate mining issues. Clay settling areas create a deposit of clay that covers a one square mile area to a depth of up to eighty feet. Each mining site contains numerous settling areas. The clay in these areas obstructs ground water flow and alters the natural flow of water to wetlands and rivers.

Reclamation puts land back into a usable form. Restoration returns land to its original state. The mining process reclaims land rather than restoring it to its original state. No wetland has been successfully restored. Animals do not return to re-claimed land. The mining process disturbs inorganic items in the ground and allows them to flow into the water supply. These items include: arsenic, chromium, copper, iron, nickel, and zinc. Also, radioactive materials such as radium and radon are found in soil used in reclamation.

A concern is that mining and reclamation activities will change the quality, quantity, and timing of the flow of water to the Charlotte Harbor estuary. This can have an impact on fish, birds, and crabs in the Peace River and Charlotte Harbor, and even affect the Tarpon in Boca Grande Pass.



December Events

Walk-About Tippecanoe Park

**Tuesday—December 6, 2005
8 AM—11 AM**

A Charlotte County Parks Department Naturalist will join us for a tour of this 380 acre park consisting of oak scrub, pine flatwoods, coastal hammock, floodplain forest, salt marshes and mangrove swamps. Boardwalks provide visitors the opportunity to observe the bird life within mangroves and marshes.

Meet at the park entrance.

Location: Port Charlotte

Travel west on 776 from the US 41/776 intersection. The park is located on the left side of the road behind the Charlotte Sports Park stadium. Enter at the main entrance and park beside the first pond on the right-hand side. The park can be wet at this time of year, and it may be necessary to walk through mud and/or water.

Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday—December 14
6:30 PM—9 PM
Cultural Center, Palm Room
Speaker: Jeff Bouton**

Christmas Bird Count

**Saturday—December 17
Coordinator: Tony Licata**

To sign up for the Bird Count, please contact Tony via e-mail at: alicata@dcwis.com. Provide him with your name, address, phone, and e-mail address.



Future Events

Charlotte Flatwoods Tuesday Jan. 3

Monthly Meeting Wednesday Jan. 18

Sanibel/Bunche Beach Field Trip Saturday Jan. 21

Buggy Ride at Corkscrew Saturday, February 18
Cost \$20.00, Limit 19 people. Reservations are required and there are a few spaces remaining. Check the web site at peacriveraudubon.org for more information.

Mark Your Calendar

PRAS Banquet and Silent Auction

The week of February 20. Specific Details will be provided in next month's "White Bird"

Birding Hot Spots

Rotonda Community Park

Description: Rotonda Park and Preserve is a 30.98 acres site within the center of Rotonda Circle, a residential and golf course community located on Cape Haze. The community is west of the waters of Charlotte Harbor and east of Lemon Bay. Public preserve lands owned by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Southwest Florida Water Management District lie to the south. The West Branch of Coral Creek lies partly in the preserve lands. Rotonda Park, an active recreation area, encompasses 10.69 acres of the site. Rotonda Preserve is predominantly comprised of oak scrub and xeric hammock habitats.

Location: From the intersection of US41 and CR776, drive toward Englewood and turn onto CR771. After about 10 miles turn onto Rotonda Blvd. E and proceed about 2 miles to Rotonda Circle. There is a sign for the Rotonda community park. The pavilion is a suggested meeting place.

Amenities: None available.

Animal Species: Florida Scrub Jays. A group of four Scrub jays has been documented utilizing the Park.

Reptiles: Gopher Tortoises

Audubon Education Programs

PRAS has been asked to help the Girl Scouts of Charlotte County with their birding program. We have set up 5 Saturday morning session at various birding spots throughout the county. We need volunteers to help the girls with binocular usage, use and organization of field guides, and bird identification skills. If you have an hour to share with the Girl Scouts on March 25th or May 13th, we still need volunteers for those dates. I have materials that will help you organize your presentation if you need them.

We will also be working with Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) to present a "Family Introduction to Birding" on Saturday, January 14th. This will be an opportunity to introduce people of all ages to the fun of birding. We need people to help with instruction, guidance in the use of binoculars, organization and distribution of materials, and guides on the trails.

These activities offer PRAS the opportunity to make a positive impact on the community and provide fun rewarding experiences for everyone involved.

To volunteer for either of these projects, call Jan Walker at (941)639-3879, or Email me at: walkerj@peacerveraudubon.org.



White Bird Online

For some time now your Board of Directors have been discussing the possible improvements to our white bird newsletter.

Unfortunately, printing and mailing costs prevent us from creating the kind of newsletter we would like to send out. However, creating a newsletter electronically would not only save us a lot of money, it would also enable us to introduce color and hyperlinks to interesting web sites.

Our decision, depends on you, our membership. Do you have a computer or access to a computer? Do you have an e-mail address. If the answer to these questions is yes, then we could produce a much better newsletter, with color photographs and direct links to interesting sources of information. Each month, when the newsletter is finished, you would receive an e-mail including a link which would take you directly to the latest addition of the newsletter on your computer where you could either just read it, print it out on your own printer, or save it.

If enough of our members agree to receive the much improved newsletter in this new way it would save the society considerable amounts of money.

To be part of this exciting experiment just send an e-mail which says, "Yes Please," to:

whitebird@peacerveraudubon.org

We promise your e-mail address will not be shared without your express permission.

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

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Punta Gorda, FL
Permit No. 100

View the White Bird on:
www.peaceriveraudubon.org



December 2005
White Bird



Printed on Recycled Paper
C & R Graphics (folding donated)

2005-06 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

(941)

President	Paul Holmes '05	833-3337
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	Betty Talburt '06	766-0354
	Frank Walker '07	639-3879
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Please:

Check the "Exp" date on your address label!

"0405" means your PRAS and/or National membership expires in Apr '05 (both organizations stop mailings after 2-3 months). To save the cost of sending reminder post cards, 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 / RENEWAL

Join us to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the wildlife we love...help us protect Florida. Members receive the "White Bird" newsletter with local news articles, local meetings, field trips, bird walks, and special events.

Visit our web site: www.peaceriveraudubon.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

To join National Audubon: Visit their web site: www.audubon.org