



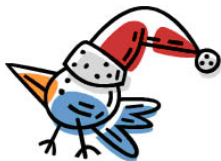
2005-06 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

		(941)
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Secretary	Mary Ann Hughes '06	637-7855
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	Gregg Klowden '08	613-6753
	Eleanor Marr '07	624-4182
	George Ruby '08	571-8046
	Jan Walker '07	639-3879

107th Christmas Bird Count
By Tony Licata, CBC Coordinator

On Saturday, December 16, 2006 PRAS volunteers will join over 50,000 individuals from all 50 states, Canada and parts of Central and South America to count and record every bird seen within their count areas. Last year, over 61 million birds, representing 652 species, were counted. These data show the winter distribution of birds which is vital in the monitoring of migratory and resident birds in the Western Hemisphere.

In 2005, 51 PRAS members saw 40,173 birds of 127 species. We saw record numbers of northern cardinals, gray catbirds, mourning doves, cooper's hawks, great-crested flycatchers, brown pelicans, Bachman's



sparrows, Eastern towhees, willets, and red-bellied woodpeckers. Unfortunately, we did not observe any least bitterns, indigo buntings, purple gallinules, American goldfinches, broad-winged hawks,

eastern kingbirds, limpkins or orioles as we have in past years. Your effort is needed to help find all the birds within our count area.

Please contact me at 941 505-9775 or via email at alicata@dcwis.com to volunteer. Please remember there is a \$5 fee per person that goes to the National Audubon Society to compile and analyze the data we collect.

Please note there is a change with the February and March field trips (see page 3).

December 13, 2006 General Meeting
Lions, Tigers and Bears: Lynn Wittmeier

Please join us at our monthly meeting to hear Lynn Wittmeier from Lions, Tigers and Bears, a large animal rescue and housing facility in Punta Gorda. These large animals have been taken in by this facility since they had no where else to go.

December 5 walkabout:
Ollie's Pond

Join PRAS members and Charlotte County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources staff on a walkabout around Ollie's Pond. Come join us on a tour of this water retention area located within Port Charlotte. This pond is named in memory of Ollie Hewitt, one of PRAS's beloved former members. We will likely see birds typical of pine flatwoods as well as water and wading birds. We hope to see pine, palm and yellow-rumped warblers, gray catbirds, eastern towhees, eastern phoebes, American kestrels, downy woodpeckers, northern flickers, moorhens, mottled ducks, snowy egrets, little blue herons, and more.

President's Message
by Paul Holmes, PRAS President

Here are a few of the items that have passed over my desk during the last few weeks.

One lady called me for advice on getting rid of muscovy ducks. Her neighbor feeds a large flock of 30 of these ducks every morning, then goes off to work, leaving the well fed ducks to be a nuisance for the rest of the day. I did some research: An adult muscovy duck creates 1/3 lb of 'Bird Poop,' every day. A flock of thirty ducks therefore distributes 10 lbs of 'poop' per day. When the ducks learn to associate people with food, this results in small children being chased by these large ducks looking for a handout. They also nest in the most inappropriate places.

Remember, they are not a Florida native, and have very few predators, so please don't encourage them.

First, it was the birds getting tangled up in fishing line. Then they got lassoed by the plastic rings that hold drink cans in sets of six. Now and it's hard to believe, I heard of a Great Blue Heron almost choking to death trying to swallow a toy alligator. So please watch what your grand kids throw out of the car window; not that any PRAS member's grandchildren would do that!

(continued on the next page)

President's message (continued)

Speaking of litter, I have on my recent visits to the Webb, noticed a considerable increase in the amount of litter, mainly beer cans and shotgun shells, which is not a good mix. I have started carrying a plastic bag with me. It only takes a second to pick up a bit of litter and it certainly improves the scenery for the next visitor.

A really interesting project has come to my attention: turning Mount Trashmore into The Eagle Encounter. The suggestion, which came from a professor at the Edison College, is that when the mountain of construction and demolition debris that resulted from Hurricane Charley, is finally sealed with a covering of topsoil, someone, should stick a few large dead trees, or snags at the top for the bald eagles, which frequent the landfill next door, to perch upon. A trail to the top from Zemel Road, would provide exercise and a close encounter with these magnificent birds. Let me know if you would like to be involved.

I have recently finished a mammoth 100 slide presentation called, 'Birding in Charlotte County'. It covers everything from a bird feeder through safety and comfort to bird identification. There are well over 100 pictures of birds, taken by members of our nature photography group and stars many of our members taking part in our birding activities.

If you would like to see it, I will show it at the January members meeting after the 'Christmas Bird Count' slide show.

Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Project Feeder Watch

Project Feeder Watch needs your help to keep track of the birds at your feeders this winter. Count birds as often as two days each week from November 11 to April 6. Your counts will help scientists monitor changes in feeder bird populations over the entire winter. New participants receive a kit with a handbook, a bird-identification poster, calendar, and instruction booklet. For more information or to sign up, please visit <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/> or call (800) 843-2473.



Volunteer of the Month: November 2006

By Phyllis Cady

Congratulations and thanks this month go to Dan Artman, who has volunteered to be on the team. Dan will be in charge of the White Bird. His job up the newsletter from the membership lists to mailing guidelines, printing labels, and taking the news-office. That sounds like thanks for all your hard



White Bird of distribution of will include picking printer, organizing comply with the and applying the letter to the post quite a job, so work, Dan.

Environmentally Sensitive Lands Referendum Passes

by Gregg Klowden, Conservation Chair

On November 7th, the citizens of Charlotte County spoke and their message will be heard for generations to come. Charlotte County now joins 27 out of 67 counties in Florida that have decided it is worth spending a few dollars each to ensure there are green spaces in our future and to protect our environment by reducing the impacts of growth on our most special places. Over the next 20 years, 70 million dollars will be spent on the purchase and management of numerous environmentally sensitive lands. This is a huge victory for us and future generations. Many thanks should be bestowed upon the Political Action Committee board Valerie Gunther, Ed Freeman, Dave Sumpter, and Perry Cook, the Nature Conservancy and its representative Sue Mullins, and a host of other volunteers, organizers, sponsors, and people who took the time to vote and without which this success would not have been possible.

Education Committee by Jan Walker, Education Chair

The two Girl Scout "Introduction to Birding" sessions have been scheduled and have girls enrolled. Thank you to Bill and Eleanor Marr, Cathy Olson, Gregg Klowden, and Joan and Chuck Froman for volunteering to help with the girl scouts.

Family Day at Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) will be held on March 10th from 9 A.M. - 3 P.M. as part of CHEC's month long 20th anniversary celebration. Since PRAS was a part of CHEC's beginning, it is appropriate that we are a part of this event. We will be needing people to take families on the trails and introduce them to birding. If you are available for any part of the day, please Email me: education@peacriveraudubon.org with the times you will be available to help.

Are you interested in becoming more knowledgeable about our environment? We have the opportunity to be part of a Master Naturalist program in Southwest Florida. There are classes being held in Collier County over the next few months. These classes are \$200.00 per module and there are 3 modules. However, there is an opportunity for scholarships through Southwest Florida Audubon. If you are not interested in traveling to Collier County, there may be the potential for these classes to be held in Charlotte County sometime next year. This sounds like an excellent opportunity to become more knowledgeable about the environment in which we live. More information about the Master Naturalist program can be found at <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu> and more information about the upcoming classes will be published as it becomes available. If you're interested in participating or would like more information email me: education@peacriveraudubon.org.



PRAS Walkabouts

- **December 5** (Tues): Ollie's Pond
- **January 2** (Tues): Audubon-Pennington Park
- **February 6** (Tues): Oyster Creek Environmental Park
- **March 6** (Tues): Hathaway Park
- **April 3** (Tues): Amberjack Environmental Park
- **May 1** (Tues): Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park

***Meet at the entrance at 8 AM ***

PRAS Field Trips

- **December 16** (Sat): Christmas Bird Count
- **January 20** (Sat): Prairie Pines Preserve * South (limit 15 People, contact olsonc@peacriveraudubon.org to sign up)
- **February 17** (Sat) Stormwater Treatment area *East Hendry County
- **March 17** (Sat): Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area. Meet by pay station (Tuckers Grade: I-75 Exit 158, head 1/4 mile east).
- **April 21** (Sat): Fort Desoto Park *North
- **May 19** (Sat): Myakka River State Park *North

***Meet at designated place (*see below) at 7 AM unless otherwise noted**

PRAS Nature Photography Trips

- January 9** (Tues): Sarasota Jungle Gardens *North
- March 13** (Tues): Koreshan State Park *South
- April 10** (Tues) Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center *South

Meet at designated place (*see below) at 7 AM

PRAS Field Trip / Photography Meeting Sites

North: Parking lot behind McDonalds at Peachland Mall near I-75 & Kings Highway in Port Charlotte (24133 Peachland Blvd).

South: Sweetbay parking lot on US 41 south of the Burnt Store Road Intersection in Punta Gorda (10175 Tamiami Trail).

East: Winn-Dixie parking lot on US 17 east of Punta Gorda (27680 Bermont Road).

PRAS General Meetings

- **December 13** (Wed): Lions, Tigers and Bears, Lynn Wittmeier
- **January 17** (Wed): Christmas Bird Count results
- **February 21** (Wed): Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Brooke George
- **March 21** (Wed): Annual Banquet
- **April 18** (Wed): Babcock Ranch, Mark Renz
- **May 16** (Wed): Annual meeting where members share photographs

General member meetings are held from 6:30– 9:00 pm in the Palm Room of Charlotte County Cultural Center (2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte, FL).

Fort Myers Beach Field Trip Report

by Jan Walker

A group of ten people, led by Jan and Frank Walker, trekked south on Saturday November 18 for a birding adventure in Fort Myers Beach. Our day started as two wood storks flew over us as we waited to leave the parking lot in Punta Gorda. Once in Fort Myers Beach, we were rewarded with wonderful weather and a variety of wildlife in a relatively small area.



It was a good day; we identified 39 species of birds and three butterfly species. Some of the avian highlights included roseate spoonbills, American oystercatchers, a reddish egret and an immature red-shouldered hawk which stumped us for quite a while. A good variety of waders, shorebirds, and other familiar species were seen. The photographers among us were able to get in some great close-ups of birds in the lagoon.

As a bonus we were able to wander among some absolutely amazing sandcastles that were part of a competition and festival from the previous weekend.



Do you have an announcement or story that you would like to share? Please contact the editor at 941 613-6753 or whitebird@peacriveraudubon.org

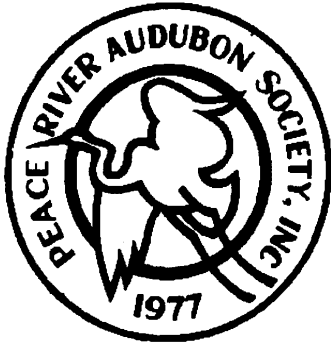
November Walkabout at Tippecanoe Environmental Park by Paul Holmes

A small group of dedicated birders attended the Tippecanoe walkabout despite the rainy weather. The rain did not appear to affect the birds, particularly the Tippecanoe regulars; Florida scrub-jays and woodpeckers. At one point we must have seen at least a dozen scrub-jays most of whom could be seen without binoculars.

I look forward to the next walkabout at Ollie's Pond. This will be a great opportunity for members who have not had the opportunity to bird with us. The path at Ollie's Pond is level and smooth and you are never more than a few minutes from your car. This will be a trip for those of us who are older and get tired. We should be lucky and get to see some great birds!

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

Non-profit Organization
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December 2006
White Bird



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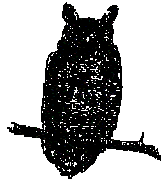
Check the "Exp" date on your address label!
"0407" means your PRAS and/or National membership expires April 2007. To save the cost of sending reminders, please use the application below to renew your membership. If you have questions please call Phyllis Cady at 575-4009 or send an email to: membership@peacriveraudubon.org

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.

Electronic White Bird: If you would like to receive the White Bird via e-mail, please send a request to : whitebird@peacriveraudubon.org

Bird of the Month

The Great Horned Owl is one of the most common and largest owls in North America. They commonly prey on large species including nestling raptors and skunks.



Great Horned Owls often nest in old or usurped bald eagle nests. In our area they are still quite common and can even be seen and heard from Kings Highway!

The sex of this owl can be determined by listening to the pair call to one another. The smaller male has a deeper call than the larger female.

ABA Birding Etiquette: Group Birding Part 2

1. Keep groups small enough so that you are not impacting the environment or scaring the birds.
2. Respect the individuals in the group who may have different abilities. Pass on your knowledge of birds and birding areas.
3. Follow all rules where you are birding (i.e. stay on marked trails).

Peace River Audubon Family Membership Application / Renewal

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

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

E-mail: _____

Visit our web site:
www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

E14-7XCH

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

To join National Audubon: send the form above and a \$20 check to National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 51003, Boulder, CO 80323-1003. You will receive the White Bird and 6 bi-monthly issues of "Audubon" magazine and discounted admission to Audubon Centers across the USA.