

Peace River Audubon Society

White Bird

February 2007

Volume 30, Issue 5

Cathy Olson, Editor

Dan Artman, Dispatcher



www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

2006-07 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

		(941)
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	Gregg Klowden '08	613-6753
	Eleanor Marr '07	624-4182
	George Ruby '08	423-0174
	Jan Walker '07	639-3879

Come Celebrate Our 30th Anniversary at the Annual 'An Evening with Audubon' Banquet & Environmental Education Fundraiser*

Join us Wednesday March 21st, 2007 on a
photographic journey through the Ecuadorian cloud forests & lowland Amazonian rainforest
when naturalist, researcher, and guide Rudy Gelis presents "Ecuador Gone Wild"

Dinner - Catered by the Cultural Center of Charlotte County
Menu Options: Chicken Macadamia or Mahi-Mahi

Auction - Silently bid on many wonderful items

Photo Contest – For your favorite unique nature shots (see rules on page 3)

*Seats are limited so
make a reservation today!*

**Non-members welcome
Please bring a friend or two**

At the Cultural Center of Charlotte County
2280 Aaron St, Port Charlotte, 33952

Cash Bar - 6:00 pm / Dinner - 7:00 pm

For more information contact
Phyllis Cady at 941-575-4009 or
banquet@peacriveraudubon.org
or visit www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

*50% of proceeds will be used to benefit our
Youth Environmental Education Program and
50% for PRAS operations.



Reservation deadline is March 12th
Tickets NOT available at door

Mail check for \$25/ person to:
PRAS c/o Phyllis Cady
425 Fireball Ct / Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Please include Name(s), Phone, & Meal choice

Sponsor a whole table (8 people) for \$200 and receive special recognition

February 17, 2007 Field Trip: Stormwater Treatment Area, Hendry County

Preregistration is required by February 15 by e-mail at fieldtrip@peacriveraudubon.org or by calling Eleanor Marr (624-4182). One of the most exciting new birding locations in Florida, Stormwater Treatment Area 5, is one of several constructed wetlands created to treat agricultural runoff before it enters the Everglades. This one is 8 square miles of shallow ponds, now home to a large and diversified bird population and more. We should see some birds we don't normally find on our field trips, as well as familiar ones. As it is only open for birding once or twice a month, we will join groups from all over the state as we drive around one of these ponds. We'll stop for a picnic lunch (bring your own) by Lake Okeechobee before returning home. Meet to carpool at our EAST location, the Winn-Dixie parking lot, at the corner of US 17 and Bermont Road (State Road 74). Be there by 6:45AM so we can leave promptly. It is located about 20 miles south of Clewiston, about an hour and 45 minutes to get there. We'll all be asked to sign a waiver of liability.

February 21, 2007 General Meeting Red-cockaded woodpeckers: Brooke George

Brooke George, a biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, will give an illustrated talk about the red-cockaded woodpecker and the work she does to assist this endangered species in its struggle to survive locally in the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area.

Join us at 6:30 pm at the Cultural Center (2280 Aaron St, Port Charlotte).

March 6, 2007 walkabout: Hathaway Park

Hathaway Park is located about halfway around Washington Loop Road, which is off the east side of US 17, before the DeSoto County line. Tina Powell of the Charlotte County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department will lead the walk, and Eleanor Marr will identify the birds. Hathaway Park offers several habitats, including Shell Creek. Washington Loop Road also often has great birds.

President's Message

by Paul Holmes

I'm pleased to report that quite a few of our non-active members decided the January meeting would be a good time to get active. Afterwards, several people told me how interesting and entertaining it had been and they would come more often. If you're interested in red-cockaded woodpeckers, please join us at the next meeting on February 21.

Please, join us for our 30th anniversary 'An Evening with Audubon' banquet and fundraiser. Our speaker this year is a bird photographer, author, guide, and naturalist. Especially exciting is that he lives and works in Ecuador, where both the Andes Mountains and the Amazon Basin provide exciting bird watching and beautiful scenery. So come and join us and invite one or two of your friends, particularly those with an interest in travel to exciting countries.

I would also like to remind everyone that we are actively collecting items for the silent auction also held at the banquet. Please bring donations to the next meeting or call George 941-423-0174 and he will collect them.

March 31st, the date for our annual Birdathon, is fast approaching and we really need you to take part, as it is our other major fund-raising effort for the year. For the past three years under the banner 'Charlotte Harbor 100', we have attempted to make the Birdathon competitive in order to draw expert birders from out of town for our members to compete against. Unfortunately, this appears to have deterred most of our members from entering. So this year, we will run a more conventional Birdathon, where each team just tries to see as many species as possible and collect as much sponsorship as possible. If you don't want to participate on "bird" day then please consider sponsoring a team. Stay tuned for more details...

10th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

Join With Thousands of Citizens February 16-19, 2007

- It's for people of all ages and levels, and is fun, easy, and free!
- Your tally helps us understand more about birds and support their conservation.
- Count birds anywhere: including your backyard, a park, schoolyard, or refuge.
- Teachers and (grand) parents: show children a new world of natural wonders.
- See your results immediately online, and compare to those from across the U.S.
- Help us set a new record for participation!
- For more information visit <http://www.audubon.org/gbbc/index.shtml>

Conservation News

by Gregg Klowden - Conservation Chair

On January 13, Paul Holmes and I attended the SW Florida Audubon regional conservation meeting. About 30 representatives from different SW FL Audubon chapters gathered in a most unique location in Lee County....a ferry boat. We were treated to manatees rolling in the water as we discussed Audubon conservation priorities and strategies to improve our chapter.

In other conservation news, the PRAS board has voted to add the PRAS name to two initiatives. The first is the 'Clean Energy Blueprint Resolution' drafted by the Union of Concerned Scientists. With so much talk about global warming, this seemed to make sense to us all. For details see <http://www.ucsusa.org/> and search for "Clean Energy Blueprint".

Second we added our name to a letter drafted by the National Wildlife Federation requesting federal agencies to initiate a Clean Water Act permit review of the South Lee Conveyance/Agripartners ditch. This ditch could have a devastating effect on Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and the wood storks that breed there.

Volunteer of the Month: January 2007

by Cathy Olson

Bill Coombs 1924 - 2007

Bill Coombs was voted volunteer of the month for January by the PRAS Board of Directors for his years of active commitment to our organization. As many of you know, Bill died unexpectedly on January 4, 2007. Bill was an accomplished sailor, exceptional volunteer, and all around good guy.



Before retiring with Betty to Punta Gorda he had a career with Bausch & Lomb where he played a principal part in the introduction of the soft contact lens. Prior to that he earned a BS from University of Rochester and a MS from MIT.

Bill was on the PRAS Board of Directors for at least 7 years where he served terms as President, Treasurer, and Nominating Committee Chair. He served as our CHEC representative, webmaster, on the Membership committee, conducted fund raising sales, served on the bylaws committee, and on the Coalition for a Livable Environment and Neighborhoods. Most recently he was compiling the history of PRAS and organizing the archives to be stored at CHEC. PRAS and CHEC owe much of their success to Bill. He will be missed!

On a personal note, I will always associate burrowing owls with Bill. He loved to watch the Punta Gorda burrowing owls, especially the ones in his front yard.

A tree has been donated in his name by Gregg Klowden and Cathy Olson. A tree dedication will be held in the upcoming months where PRAS members will be able to come and share their memories as we plant the tree. Look for the date in a future White Bird.

Walkabout to Audubon Pennington Nature Park

by Dave and Jackie Lancaster

On 1/2/07 a group of about 20 assembled at Pennington Park. Some were from PRAS, some from the neighborhood, and others just happened to stop by. We were greeted with the new park sign and the nicely marked trail signs. Thanks to Larry Linn and CHEC for making this happen.

As we started to walk, we were greeted by a red-shouldered hawk and a few yellow-rumped warblers. The birding was a little slow as it was overcast and the birds weren't moving or singing. The usual zebra longwing butterflies were not to be seen. A Carolina wren sang, but the resident barred owls didn't give a hoot.

Roger Blackmoore, our co-park keeper with Larry Linn, introduced us to air potato, an invasive exotic plant that grows in the park, and his efforts to control them. He is at the park most Wednesdays at 8 am if you want to help him gather potatoes and learn about the restoration of native plants.

The trails were well maintained and it was a nice day for a walk in our beautiful nature park.

Helpful Reminders

Subscribe to 'PRAS Update' to receive 2 or 3 email reminders per month of upcoming meetings and field trips. For more information see <http://www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org/>

Calendar

PRAS General Meetings

- **February 21** (Wed): Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Brooke George, Babcock Webb
- **March 21** (Wed): Annual Banquet "An Evening with Audubon"
- **April 18** (Wed): Babcock Ranch, Mark Renz
- **May 16** (Wed): Annual members meeting where we all share our 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).

PRAS Walkabouts

- **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 park entrance at 8 AM ***

PRAS Field Trips

- **February 17** (Sat) Stormwater Treatment area 5 *East Hendry County. Meet at 6:45. Preregistration required.
- **March 17** (Sat): Babcock–Webb Wildlife Management Area. Meet by pay station (Tuckers Grade: I-75 Exit 158, go 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

- **March 13** (Tues): Koreshan State Park *South
- **April 10** (Tues) Charlotte Harbor Enviro Center *South

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).

Silent Auction Donations

The silent auction during our banquet is our major fundraiser each year. Please donate items, gift certificates, etc. Contact George Ruby: 941-423-0174 or banquet@peacriveraudubon.org

Girl Scout Outing

by Jan Walker, Education Chair

On Saturday, January 13th, 10 Girl Scouts and 3 leaders arrived at the Port Charlotte Beach Complex from as far away as South Ft. Myers and as close as Punta Gorda to learn about birding. After a short introduction by Eleanor Marr about the importance of bird characteristics, habits, habitats, and field guides, they were off exploring the beach. Under the guidance of Eleanor and Cathy Olson, they identified a variety of gulls, terns, doves and grackles, as well as the black skimmer, brown pelican, willet and white ibis.

The absolute highlight of the trip was an active bald eagle nest, where the girls were able to view an adult and eaglet in their nest up close and personal through a spotting scope. According to one of the leaders it was the main topic of conversation for the trip home.

Photo Trip to Sarasota Gardens

by Mary Ann Hughes

To kick off the year, the Nature Photo Group had an interesting trip to the Jungle Gardens on 1/9/07. The location has great photo opportunities of which everyone took advantage. The flamingoes cooperated by posing, swimming in their pool, and even spreading their black tipped pink wings. They were joined by a beautiful wood duck and many common but nevertheless beautiful mallards. Two black swans watched while pelicans put on a show splashing in their pond and the exotic birds on perches posed and preened for our benefit. These demonstrations were well within the range of any pocket digital camera and while some of us carried tripods and long lenses around, we didn't really need to. Even the jungle vegetation presented unique opportunities for photography. Everyone agreed that it would be a wonderful place to bring grandchildren next time, but probably not with cameras along. Some of us finished our day with lunch on the deck at Marina Jacks on Sarasota Bay. The sun was just right and the slight breeze was a perfect complement to the water view. All in all, a good day! Why don't you join us next time on March 13th to Koreshan State Park. We'll have a great time.

Annual Banquet Photo Contest Rules

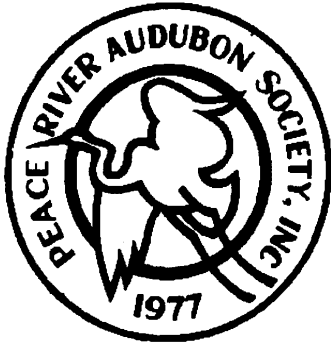
Enter your latest and greatest pictures in our annual photo contest! After the judging, all the pictures will be placed in the silent auction fundraiser. Please be ready to sign your picture for the auction winners. Banquet attendees will judge the competition.

Rules are as follows:

- 8x10 color or black & white print of any nature oriented subject
- Minor Photoshop enhancements are allowed
- No signatures or identification on the print.
- No frames. PRAS will provide black poster board for display.
- Entry fee: \$5 for one or \$10 for 3 prints. Unlimited entries.

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



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

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

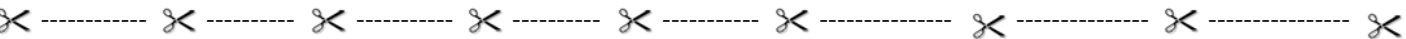
Bird of the Month: White-winged dove by Cathy Olson



Loop and in Deep Creek. This year we had a high count of this non-native bird during our Christmas Bird Count. Gregg and I even had one show up in our backyard in January, a first for our Port Charlotte yard.

There is debate regarding the initial introduction of this species in the late 1950s. Some say a few made it to the Florida Keys from the Caribbean, while others say captive doves were released in Homestead. Regardless of the initial introduction, they were spread by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission in the 1970s to numerous locations in the central and southern parts of the state. The white-winged dove is a bit stouter than the native mourning dove and is easily identified by the white line on the wing when it is perched or a white wing patch in flight. The white-winged dove also has a squared off tail, unlike the pointed tail of the mourning dove.

The white-winged dove is increasingly found in neighborhoods throughout our area. A few years back they were only common off Washington



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.