



2006-07 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

		(941)
President	Paul Holmes '07	833-3337
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Secretary	Mary Ann Hughes '06	637-7855
Treasurer	Walt Williams '07	235-3352
Additional Directors:	Phyllis Cady '06	575-4009
	Gregg Klowden '08	613-6753
	Michael Krzyzkowski '08	812-0764
	Eleanor Marr '07	624-4182
	George Ruby '08	423-0174
	Jan Walker '07	639-3879

Upcoming Events

April 18 General Meeting Program : Mark Renz and Babcock Ranch

Come join us at our monthly meeting and hear Mark Renz talk about the Babcock Ranch. Mark Renz has been leading tours and photographing the ranch and its inhabitants both present and past, for quite a few years. Portions of the Babcock Ranch (Circle B. Ranch), located in Charlotte and Lee Counties, were purchased in 2006 by the state of Florida and Lee County. The remainder of the ranch will be developed as a new town.

April 21 Field Trip to Fort De Soto Park by Eleanor Marr

We will travel about 80 miles north to the 1,136 acre Fort De Soto Park in Pinellas County to look for late spring migrants and shorebirds in breeding plumage. The park consists of five interconnected islands and includes beach, coastal strand, mangrove, and oak hammock. The variable native communities and its location make this park a wonderful migrant stopover. Bring a hat, sunscreen, picnic lunch, toll booth money, and beach shoes if you want to wade in marshy areas. Meet at the North meeting spot – Peachland Mall behind McDonalds, at 7 am.

May 1 Walkabout to Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park by Eleanor Marr

The final walkabout of the season will be to Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park which is located at 15801 S. Tamiami Trail, at Zemel Road. The environmental park is 486 acres of pine flatwoods, dry prairie, and permanent freshwater ponds. The walkabout will be led by Phyllis Cady and a representative from Charlotte County Parks and Recreation. Meet at the entrance at 8 am. Call Phyllis 575-4009 if you have questions.

An Evening with Audubon Summary



The committee worked the afternoon away setting out the silent auction items, decorating the tables, and arranging the backboards for the photo contest and auction. When they were finished everything looked very nice and there were many desirable auction items awaiting bids. The first of the 101 attendees arrived a little before six pm and the evening began. Our featured speaker, Rudy Gelis, arrived and mingled with the folks who wanted to chat with him before his presentation about Ecuadorian nature. Tables set around the room holding pictures and auction items were swarmed with lookers and bidders. Delicious dinners, served by candlelight, were complimented by everyone. After dinner, while the committees scurried to determine the winners of the silent auction items and the photo contest, Rudy Gelis wowed us with his tales and stunning photos of Ecuadorian wildlife.

The silent auction was a resounding success with more than 80 items auctioned and over \$2,000 raised. The photo contest was also a success with 40 entries that were judged by the audience and then placed in the silent auction.



The photo contest winners were:
1st Place: Eve Furner
2nd Place: Mary Ann Hughes
3rd Place: was won jointly by Ginny Diehm, Eve Furner and Gregg Klowden.

We would also like to thank the people who purchased entire tables. They were: Omni Waste (1), Gail Giles (2), Mary Ann Hughes (2), Pam Neer (1), and Joan Froman (1).

Extra special thanks to all those who donated and bid on items. Without you our fundraiser could not have happened. Special thanks also go to all the PRAS members who worked so hard to pull this event together, especially Phyllis Cady, Ginny Diehm, Mary Ann Hughes, Gregg Klowden, Eleanor Marr, George Ruby, Jan Walker, and our emcee and President Paul Holmes. And of course, a very special thanks to Rudy Gelis for coming all the way from Ecuador. I am sure he would make an excellent guide for an Ecuadorian adventure and can be contacted at rudygelis@yahoo.com.

Field Trip Reports

Photo Trip to Koreshan State Park

by Mary Ann Hughes

On Tuesday, March 13 we traveled to Koreshan State Park in Estero. It was a beautiful day with fog along the flatlands next to the highway which looked like white cotton candy. We arrived 15 minutes after the park opened and found ourselves alone on the nature trail that winds along the Estero River. The Cherokee bean (coral bean) was blooming in the



shade of lovely large live oaks and the Rosary Pea made itself noticed with its beautiful and lethal red berries. Enjoying the bird-song and snapping pictures along the way, we followed the trail to the settlement gardens and houses.

There, while we were

watching three great crested flycatchers flit around the bamboo, a ranger came up to us and offered to show us the gardens and some of the settlement houses. The history of these people who gave up all their worldly possessions to Cyrus Teed who promised to take care of them for the rest of their lives even after his own resurrection was fascinating. Even though they believed that the surface of the earth was on the inside of the planet, not the outside, they had a knack for growing things that still commands respect for their skill. To this day, the park rangers use John Watson's recipe to bake bread in a Dutch oven over a charcoal fire. We had some and it was delicious! By then the park was alive with campers and picnickers and we decided to wind our way to lunch and then home to download our pictures. All in all it was a satisfying day.

March 17 Field Trip Report to Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area

by Eleanor Marr

It was cold and still dark when 24 of us gathered by the pay station. We bumped along the dirt roads to red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCW) Cluster 1 on Oil Well Grade. We split into two groups and each went to one active roost tree.

While we waited for the RCW's to wake up, eastern bluebirds and pine warblers entertained us, though the chilly morning kept the bird songs we expected down to a disappointing level. The woodpeckers appeared just after sunrise, and we all got good looks. We continued on a mostly rectangular route. About 47 species of birds were seen, though some were seen by only a few of us.

Among the more interesting ones seen were brown-headed nuthatch, Wilson's snipe, Bachman's sparrow, barn swallow, and several sandhill cranes. We had a picnic lunch by Webb Lake. A limpkin eating a mus-



March 6 Walkabout Report to Hathaway Park

by Eleanor Marr

It was quite chilly but sunny when twenty-seven people gathered to explore Hathaway Park. Early birds got off to a great start as several birds including yellow-bellied sapsucker were calling and visible. A limpkin in the reeds across from the Shell Creek overlook was apparently building a nest. As we walked the trails, singing white-eyed vireo and great crested flycatcher were cooperative. The highlight of the trip occurred when at least three painted buntings were spotted in the reeds across the creek.



April 3 Walkabout Report to Amberjack Environmental Park, by Louise Lewis

On April 3rd, Dave Mathewson of Charlotte County Parks shared his usual abundance of knowledge and good humor with a group of seven (two were new to birding). Due to the lack of rain, the front half of the pond was a complete mudflat but the upper part still retaining some shallow water. Despite the shrunken pond, we were very glad to see that birds were still there!



To those who, in the past, have enjoyed the wonderfully pristine pond at Amberjack Environmental Park, alas, it was a shocking sight to come around the bend onto the boardwalk and now see the construction of condominium units lining the far shoreline. The "remote" feel has dramatically changed, but the good news is the birds don't seem to mind.

We saw or heard 48 species between 8 and 10 am, a very productive walk. Among others, 8 spoonbills, not far from the upper observation deck, 3 rails (Virginia and sora), greater and lesser yellow legs, white and glossy ibis, blue-winged teals and, just before we left, the bright pink legs of the black-necked stilt touched down right in front of us. A merlin flew overhead, we saw several prairie warblers, and one scrub jay. The red bellied woodpecker, northern flicker, and downy woodpecker were in the group of dead trees near the entrance.

Board Nominations Needed

The PRAS board has selected a nominating committee consisting of Gregg Klowden, Phyllis Cady, and Walt Williams. This committee is responsible for seeking nominations for the 2007-2008 PRAS President, Vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. If you are able to serve your chapter or can think of someone who may be, please send nominations to the committee chair Gregg Klowden at klowdeng@peacriveraudubon.org or call 941-613-6753.

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

- **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

- **May 1** (Tues): Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park
***Meet at the park entrance at 8 AM ***

PRAS Field Trips

- **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

- **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).

In Memory of Arthur Bailey

Thank you to Betty Bailey, Thomas Broki, M.J. Curry, James and Kathleen Grindeland, Carol and James Hersman, Cathy and Richard Jacobson, Mark and Valerie Larson, James Olsen, and Ken and Jan Severud who made donations in memory of PRAS member Arthur Bailey. These funds will be important as the Peace River Audubon Society moves into it's 31st year of pursuing its conservation, education, and recreational goals. If you would like to make a donation please contact Walt Williams at 941-235-3352 or williamsw@peacriveraudubon.org.

Horseshoe Crab Observations are Requested

Biologists at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute need help from the public in identifying horseshoe crab spawning beaches throughout the state. The best time to find horseshoe crabs spawning is around a high tide right before or just after a full or new moon. Observant beachgoers can report the time, date and location of horseshoe crab sightings through one of the following convenient options.

- Fill out an online survey at: http://research.MyFWC.com/horseshoe_crab
- E-mail information to horseshoe@MyFWC.com
- Dial toll-free 1-866-252-9326



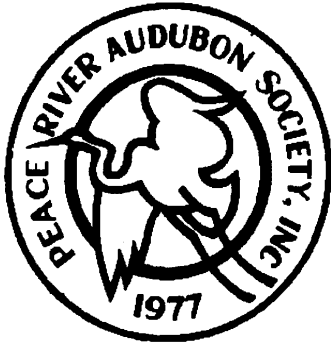
Biologists also want to know how many horseshoe crabs observers see and whether the horseshoe crabs are spawning.

Migrating shorebirds feed on the eggs of horseshoe crabs. Horseshoe crabs benefit humans in several ways. For instance, research on the compound eyes of horseshoe crabs led to better understanding of the human visual system, and horseshoe crab blood is useful in the biomedical industry. In addition, manufacturers use the material that makes up the horseshoe crab's shell (chitin) to make contact lenses, skin creams and hair sprays.

Many citizens have responded to the horseshoe crab nesting beach survey since it began in 2002. Biologists regularly update the survey results. Visit http://research.MyFWC.com/features/view_article.asp?id=20822 to see how many reports have come from individual counties.

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

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April 2007
White Bird



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Check the "Exp" date on your address label!
"0607" means your PRAS and/or National membership expires June 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: Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*)

by Cathy Olson

The great crested flycatcher is a familiar bird in this part of Florida during spring though fall. Its loud, repetitive call alerts us to its presence. Great crested flycatchers are cavity nesters and will readily use nest boxes (or unprotected dryer vents like at my house) in suburban settings. Nests are bulky and often contain snake skin sheds or other crinkly materials like plastic and onion skins. They catch insects and small vertebrates by sallying from perches or hovering over leaves. This bird rarely is observed on the ground, instead keeping to the upper canopy levels.



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: _____

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Visit our web site:
www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

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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.