



2006-07 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

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

Upcoming Events

May 16 Annual Member Meeting

You are the speakers for this one. You can have up to 15 minutes to 'Show and Tell' anything that will interest our audience. You can bring a disc with photos on it and show them on our digital projector or bring slides and show them on our slide projector. You can also bring pictures and lay them out on a table. So get your 'Act' together—we provide the room, the rest is up to YOU! It is also the night for our annual election. Come and vote! See you at 6:30 in the Palm Room of the Cultural Center of Charlotte County 2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte, 33952.



May 19 Field Trip Myakka River State Park by Eleanor Marr

The final field trip of the season will be to Myakka River State Park, where alligators will vie with birds for attention. The park has several attractions including a bridge over the Myakka River that usually has interesting wildlife, a nature trail that includes a short canopy walk and towers that afford a look down to the birds, and a short boardwalk to a lookout over Myakka Lake. After a picnic lunch, interested participants can schedule a narrated tram ride through the park or the large airboat ride on Myakka Lake. Jim Bonk will meet the group at 7 a.m. at the North meeting place (Peachland Mall behind MacDonald's) to set up car pools for the trip. The group will meet Mike Krzyzkowski at the park where he and Jim will lead the tour. There is a \$5 per car entry fee, and optional tram or airboat rides are \$10 per person additional. Canoes and kayaks can be rented as well.

In Appreciation

PRAS would like to acknowledge and once again thank all the businesses who generously donated items for our annual auction. Please be sure to frequent these businesses!

Babcock Wilderness Adventures, Backyard Bird Company, Bull Bay Clam Farm, Busch Gardens, Crosstie's Farm and Garden, Cypress Gardens Adventure Park, Florida Native Plants, Inc., Grande Tours, Historic Bok Sanctuary, King Fisher Fleet Cruise, Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, Nav-a-gator Riverboat Tours, Port Charlotte Florist, Progressive Health Club, Sea World Adventure Park, Sweet Scoops Homemade Ice Cream, Target Stores, The Florida Aquarium, Therapeutic Wellness Center, Walt Disney World, and Wild Birds Unlimited of Sarasota.

The Song is Over... Well folks, this is the end of the season and what a great one it has been. I hope you have enjoyed it as much as me. After this month's meeting and field trip, our next big event will be our 30th anniversary barbeque in September. Stay tuned for details in the midsummer Whitebird. Please take a moment to fill out and send back our survey on page 3 so we can make next season even better. Have a great summer and see you in September.



Farewell and Thank You, by Gregg Klowden

Two officers will be leaving the PRAS board at the conclusion of this season. Frank Walker served as a Director and newsletter editor in 2005-6 and Vice-president in 2006-7. His generous contributions to this organization are greatly appreciated. Paul Holmes served as a Director in 2003-4 and as our President for the past three years. His enthusiasm, creativity, and seemingly never-ending drive have been important to PRAS's success. In addition to his duties as President, at times Paul has also served as chair of the Conservation committee, organized field trips, meeting programs, and the Birdathon, arranged press releases, and started and moderated our email Nature Alerts group. His jovial British demeanor and computerized presentations have livened up meetings and he has been an emcee extraordinaire at our annual banquets. His recent children's birding book and World of Birding presentation have helped raise money and given additional exposure to our organization. His shoes will be hard to fill. Thank you Paul for all you have done. I hope you will both stay involved.



Please join us at our members meeting on May 16 for our annual elections. Three officer positions are currently open. The slate consists of Gregg Klowden for President, Stu Lewis for Vice-president, and Walt Williams for Treasurer. With member approval, Mary Ann Hughes will continue to serve as Secretary and Jan Walker for a 2nd term as a Director. Michael Krzyzkowski and George Ruby joined as Directors midterm 2006-7 and are requesting member approval to continue. Seeking member approval as incoming Directors are Sandy Artman and Cathy Olson. Alternate officer nominations or additional Director nominations (including self-nominations) are encouraged and will be accepted at the meeting.

Please consider that our activities would not happen and will not continue to happen without the generous help of volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering to help the Peace River Audubon Society in any way please complete the volunteer form on page 3 or contact Gregg Klowden at 941-613-6753 or klowdeng@peacriveraudubon.org.

Volunteer of the Month: April 2007, by Cathy Olson

The PRAS Board of Directors has selected Ellen Hawkinson as the volunteer of the month for her years of contributions to PRAS and protecting our local environment. Ellen has served as PRAS Director, President, Vice-president, newspaper editor, and for 10 years as our Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) representative. Ellen is a founding member of the CHNEP Citizens Advisory Committee and has participated since the first meeting April 15, 1997. She has spent countless hours trying to protect our local environment through actions including her activities with PRAS and CHNEP but also as a citizen by commenting on development proposals and new County ordinances. Thank you Ellen, for all of your efforts!



Birdathon Summary, by Eleanor Marr

Four teams, the Mangrove Cuckoos (Chuck and Joan Froman, Stu and Louise Lewis), the Feather Finders (Lynn Bates, Kathy Kelle, Don Youso, Patti Maggiore), Archaeopteryx (Cathy Olson, Gregg Klowden, Bob Repenning), and the Roadrunners (Bill and Eleanor Marr, Mike Krzyzkowski, Jim Bonk), participated in the annual Birdathon on March 31. We began shortly before sunrise with a goal of finding as many bird species as possible anywhere in Charlotte County in a six hour period. The weather was chilly at first, but developed into a gorgeous day. Although free to start wherever they chose, all four teams showed up at Babcock Webb at the same red-cockaded woodpecker cluster! From there, each team had a different itinerary but occasionally found themselves crossing paths. We finished with a picnic lunch at 1 p.m. on the grounds of the YMCA on Bayshore. We all had much fun and plan to do it again next year!



All four teams found over 70 species of birds each, an incredible feat considering the length of time involved. The Mangrove Cuckoos spotted the most species, 96, and Archaeopteryx came in second with 83. A total of 109 different species was found, a number not far from our Christmas Bird

Count total of 120, where there were more than double the teams and participants, and an entire day was spent on that count. Over \$1200 in pledges were obtained from sponsors. Archaeopteryx brought in the most pledges (\$657) followed by Feather Finders (\$330). Along with our silent auction, these two successful fundraiser have been a boon to our youth environmental education fund.

PRAS Donates \$2500 to the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center

Many of us may not realize but PRAS was a founding member of CHEC and maintains a seat on the board. As CHEC has grown we have strived to maintain a PRAS connection. Each year CHEC runs a 1 day environmental education course for all 4th grade children in Charlotte County. PRAS strongly believes that youth environmental education is critical for instilling a lifelong appreciation of our natural world and responsible environmental stewardship. We salute CHEC in its efforts and are putting our money where our mouth is. Please join us at our May 16 members meeting as we present \$2,500 from the PRAS Environmental Education Fund to CHEC. We encourage you to visit this wonderful preserve and environmental education center and participate in CHEC functions.

Field Trip to Fort De Soto Park, by Eleanor Marr

Eighteen lucky people took part in our March 21 field trip to Fort Desoto Park on a beautiful sunny day. After a slow early season, the migrating passerines were just arriving at the park in numbers. Reports from previous days were exciting, and we hoped that some of the birds would still be around. We were not disappointed. The migrants were so plentiful that most of us didn't head to the beach to look for shorebirds. We birded the mulberry tree area, East Beach woods, Arrowhead Picnic Area, the North Beach oak area and pond, and the picnic area at the Fort where a WWII reenactment did not stop some of us from finding a cerulean warbler in a fig tree. Everyone stayed till late in the afternoon, returning to the mulberry tree where some of the birds were taking a late afternoon bath at the fountain. Many of the birds were close at hand, and everyone got close looks at many of the colorful birds. We saw orchard and Baltimore orioles, males, females and immatures. There were ruby-throated hummingbirds, scarlet and summer tanagers, rose-breasted and blue grosbeaks, and indigo buntings, usually male and female and often immatures as well. It was a most colorful display. And then there were warblers. Our group saw 19 different warbler species! We saw over 80 species in all. Several from our group, and other birders also present, said it was their best birding day ever.



Walkabout Report to Amberjack, by Phyllis Cady

An early morning nature walk at Amberjack Environmental Park is a great way to start the day. Phyllis Cady from PRAS and Tina Powell from Charlotte County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources led the 22 participants. First, we headed over to the freshwater ponds where we were greeted by an alligator and many noisy boat-tailed grackles nesting in the cat-tails. We saw an immature white ibis and little blue heron, green heron, and great egret, but the favorite was a flock of wood storks, soaring over the pond, then landing feet first into the trees. We walked along the pond, then back into the pine flatwoods where we saw cardinals, ground doves, and several immature bald eagles. Along the trail there were many wildflowers blooming which always adds to the beauty of the walk. Just before the few stragglers piled into our cars, we saw the most exhilarating sighting of the day; a swallow-tailed kite, with a mature bald eagle following close behind. Join us again in the fall!

Did you know that PRAS has 2 Email Groups?

Keep up with PRAS Activities

Subscribe to 'PRAS Update' to receive 2 or 3 monthly email reminders of upcoming meetings and field trips.

To sign up or for more information contact web@peacriveraudubon.org or visit <http://www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org/>

Stay in touch with our conservation community

Subscribe to 'Nature Alerts' to communicate with others concerned with nature, wildlife, and protecting the environment in the Charlotte County area.

Member Survey

Please take a few moments to help us improve our chapter.

Send the completed survey to Gregg Klowden at 1522 Dewitt St, Port Charlotte, FL 33952

If you prefer to print a copy visit our website at <http://www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org>

1. Would you be able to attend if the monthly membership meeting was changed to the third Thursday each month?

a) Yes b) No c) I don't come to meetings

2. Please tell us how much you like each of the following PRAS activities. Please include additional comments on an additional page.

1= Like a lot | 2= Is okay | 3= Don't like | 4= Never participated but may next year | 5= Never participated and probably never will

a) Monthly Members Meetings - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

b) "Walkabouts with Audubon," in a local park or nature reserve - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

c) Field trips to an established birding hotspot - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

d) Annual "An Evening With Audubon" banquet, silent auction fundraiser, and photo contest - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

e) The Charlotte Birdathon - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

f) The Christmas Bird Count - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

g) The 'Members evening,' where members show a short presentation of their own photographs or trips - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

h) The annual kick off the season potluck picnic at the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

3. If you do not currently participate in some of the above activities, what changes would make you more likely to participate?

4. Please help us decide how money raised by the Peace River Audubon Society should be spent.

Write a 1, 2, and 3 next to your top 3 choices only

___ Supplies for PRAS adult environmental education

___ Supplies for PRAS youth environmental education

___ Donation to Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center for youth environmental education

___ Audubon Adventures classroom education kits

___ Donation to land trust for purchase of new preservation land

___ Donation to land trust to help manage (exotic species removal, controlled burn, etc) preserved land

___ Other (please specify):

5. A. The board has discussed the idea of purchasing a permanent PRAS building. Do you think this is a good idea? ___Yes || ___No

B. If we decide to purchase a building, would you make a sizeable contribution to help make this happen? ___Yes || ___No

6. If you have attended the annual banquet this year or in the past, please tell us what you liked, did not like, or suggest to improve future banquets. If you did not attend please tell us why:

7. Is there a speaker you would like us to invite or presentation topic you would like to hear?

(if you know a speaker and will contact them, leave your contact info or tell us on the tear off below)

8. Are there any specific places you would like us to schedule for our walk-about or field trips?

9. Are there any activities you would like us to do that we currently do not?

10. Please give us any other comments, compliments, constructive criticism, or suggestions about our meetings, fieldtrips, website, or other PRAS related topic (use additional sheet if necessary):

-----If you prefer to remain anonymous please tear off the following and mail separately-----

11. Our activities would not happen and will not continue to happen without the generous help of volunteers.

Please circle any of the following activities for which you may be willing to lend a hand:

a) Fund raising b) Environmental education c) Conservation d) Publicity e) Hospitality table f) Annual banquet

g) Silent auction h) Birdathon i) Lead walkabout j) Lead field trip k) Website l) Christmas bird count

m) Newsletter n) Mailing o) Volunteer coordinator p) Archivist q) Maintain membership roles

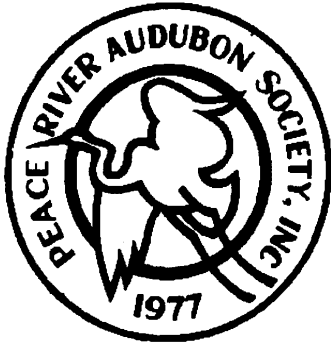
r) Other:

12. If you are willing to lend a hand or would like more information, please provide your:

Name, _____, Email _____, Telephone _____

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



May 2007
White Bird



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

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: Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

by Cathy Olson

The black-bellied plover is a common winter resident and migrant on the Gulf Coast of Florida. During the winter this shorebird is gray-brown on the back with a white belly. In breeding plumage, however, they obtain black feathers on their belly, throat, and face. This bird is a particularly wary shorebird and acts as a sentinel for other shorebirds. They are most often found along coastal beaches, however in fall and winter they are also often found in large flocks in agricultural fields. This is North America's largest shorebird and the only American plover to have a hind toe on its foot.



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.