

# White Bird

January 2008 Volume 31, Issue 5  
Sandy Artman, Editor  
Dan Artman, Dispatcher



www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

## 2007-08 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

		(941)
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	Eleanor Marr '08	624-4182
	George Ruby '08	423-0174
	Sandy Artman '09	575-0651
	Cathy Olson '09	613-6753

**Next Meeting January 17, 2008 at 6:30 PM**  
**Speaker, Tony Licata CBC Coordinator**

*Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 2565 Tamiami Trail,  
Port Charlotte (just south of Midway)*

Tony Licata, the PRAS Christmas Bird Count coordinator, will give the summary and highlights of the annual Christmas Bird Count. Come see photographs from PRAS members and hear anecdotes from count participants. Several notable birds this year include three new species for the count area: painted bunting, house finch and goldfinch.

After Tony's presentation, we would like to show photos that CBC participants took during the count. So please bring along a cd and share with us.

**January Field Trip: Carlton Reserve**  
**Led by Stu and Louise Lewis**  
**Saturday, January 19, 2008**



We will spend about one hour at Carlton reserve where we should get a good look at several Red Headed Woodpeckers. Other birds we could see are the Pileated Woodpecker, blue birds, pine warblers, etc.. We may spend a little time at a surprise location near Carlton! The wetland just before the entrance to the landfill (water levels permitting) can be very productive. We could see spoonbills, snipes, bitterns, most of the herons and egrets, and other wading birds and ducks. Inside the landfill we will see hawks, several eagles, more waders, and song birds including meadow larks.

Meet at the North location near I 75 and Kings Hwy at 7:00. Bring a lunch. Questions call Stu or Louise Lewis at 235-2590.

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP UPCOMING EVENTS

The Photography Group offers several opportunities to take and share pictures of nature including birds, butterflies, dragonflies, flowers, reptiles, mammals and more. For further information, contact Bill Marr at 941-624-4182.

**January 19:** Look for photo opportunities with the Field Trip group at Laurel Landfill/Carlton Reserve. We will meet with the group at Peachland Promenade Mall, behind McDonald's at 7 AM for car-pooling. Bring your cameras and lunch!

**January 22:** We will meet to show and discuss photos taken at January trips (or others if you so desire) plus techniques and equipment. Look for time and place to be announced at the January PRAS meeting and also in Charlotte Nature Alert and PRAS UPDATES.

**February 12:** Photo Shoot. Meet at the wetland (not the retention pond) behind Wal-Mart on King's Hwy just past I-75 interchange 170 at 4:30 PM. We'll be there for the "golden hour" as birds leave, fly over, or come in for the night. Close parking is available near the wetland on the Liquor store side of the building.

**President's Message**  
**By Gregg Klowden, PRAS President**



I was recently contacted by a reporter who asked that I submit an "environmental wish" for PRAS to their newspaper for the New Year.

While there are so many possibilities, in keeping in line with our current year theme of water and energy conservation, the PRAS board settled on the following:

*We wish for you to become aware of the consequences your decisions have on our air, water, wildlife, and our overall quality of life. We hope you will take steps to reduce your impact. Use less energy by combining multiple errands into one trip and using compact fluorescent bulbs. Save water by turning your faucet to a trickle. Attract wildlife by planting native plants. Think about everything you do and how you could do it more efficiently. Together we can protect the quality of life we treasure and teach our children, friends, and neighbors to cherish and preserve our beautiful southwest Florida.*

Have a Happy New Year and thank you to all PRAS members for all you do help preserve our beautiful southwest Florida.

**February Field Trip: Stormwater Treatment Area #5**  
**Led by Eleanor Marr**  
**Saturday, February 16, 2008**

We will travel to Hendry County to STA 5, Stormwater Treatment Area 5, which is open to the public only twice a month by reservation. We will have amazing looks at the birds this 8 square mile facility has attracted. Four 1 x 2 mile ponds forming a larger rectangle have been set aside to treat agricultural runoff before the water enters the Everglades. We will join other birders to drive around one 1 x 2 mile pond on which driving is permitted, or you can walk along any of the dikes around any of the four ponds. We will participate in the Great Backyard Birding Count for STA 5 on that day.

### Please note the following:

1. Reservations are required. Use the sign-up sheet at the meeting or call Eleanor Marr at 624-4182 at least two days before the trip.
2. A special waiver of liability is required by SWFWMD.
3. We will meet EARLY at 6:30 AM at the Winn-Dixie parking lot, Rt. 17 and Belmont Road, to sign waivers and set up car pools. We want to be at STA 5 when they open at 8:30 AM. They usually ask us to leave around 1 PM, though it can be later.
4. STA-5 is completely exposed - no shelter. Bring sunscreen, hats, insect repellent, especially if you plan to walk.



# Christmas Bird Count Results



Thank you to those who helped with this year's Christmas Bird Count. The total species seen rose to 124 (including 1 during count week) from 120 in 2006. We saw 26,565 birds down 34% from last year's 40,536. This is due in part to seeing only 676 lesser scaup compared to 12,542 in 2006. I guess it has been warmer up north and they just have not yet arrived. Tree Swallows also declined to 2,973 from 9,969 last year. Other species with noticeable declines are red-winged blackbirds, coots, scrub jays, and yellow-rumped warblers. Species seeing a noticeable increases are cow-birds, fish Crows, laughing gulls, glossy ibis, starlings, Forster's terns, and Sandwich terns. Birds which were seen for the first time on the PRAS Christmas Bird Count were painted bunting, goldfinch, and house finch. Be sure to come to the meeting on January 17th to see a presentation of the trends for all species seen since PRAS began participating in the Christmas Bird Count 21 years ago.

Anhinga (128)	Duck, Ring-necked (213)	Heron, Great Blue (129)	Parakeet, Monk (10)	Swallow, Tree (2973)
Bittern, American (1)	Duck, Wood (1)	Heron, Green (8)	Pelican, Brown (94)	Teal, Blue-winged (52)
Blackbird, Red-winged (140)	Dunlin (73)	Heron, Little Blue (162)	Pelican, White (7)	Tern, Forster's (152)
Bluebird, Eastern (12)	Eagle, Bald Adult (24)	Heron, Tricolored (61)	Phoebe, Eastern (14)	Tern, Royal (105)
Bufflehead (1)	Eagle, Bald Immature (7)	Jay, Blue (87)	Plover, Black-bellied (23)	Tern, Sandwich (34)
Bunting, Indigo (2)	Egret, Cattle (145)	Jay, Scrub (18)	Robin, American (897)	Thrasher, Brown (2)
Bunting, Painted (2)	Egret, Great (255)	Ibis, Glossy (136)	Sanderling (21)	Towhee, Rufous-sided (6)
Cardinal, Northern (47)	Egret, Reddish (1)	Ibis, White (1012)	Sandpiper, Least (39)	Turnstone, Ruddy (3)
Catbird, Gray (56)	Egret, Snowy (150)	Kestrel, American (36)	Sandpiper, Spotted (24)	Vulture, Black (465)
Coot, American (40)	Finch, House (6)	Killdeer (191)	Sandpiper, Western (13)	Vulture, Turkey (400)
Cormorant, Double-crested (1604)	Flicker, Northern (14)	Kingfisher, Belted (57)	Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied (1)	Warbler, Palm (248)
Cowbird, Brown-headed (641)	Gnatcatcher, Blue-grey (67)	Limpkin (1)	Scaup, Lesser (676)	Warbler, Pine (50)
Crane, Sandhill (120)	Goldfinch, American (2)	Meadowlark, Eastern (23)	Shoveler, Northern (1)	Warbler, Yellow-rumped (422)
Crow, American (28)	Grackle, Boat-tailed (1121)	Merganser, Hooded (127)	Shrike, Loggerhead (200)	Warbler, Yellow-throated (1)
Crow, Fish (538)	Grackle, Common (2840)	Merganser, Red-breasted (36)	Skimmer, Black (188)	Willet (14)
Dove, Common Ground (63)	Grebe, Horned (1)	Merlin (2)	Snipe, Wilson's (1)	Woodpecker, Downy (8)
Dove, Eurasian Collared (312)	Grebe, Pied-billed (33)	Mockingbird, Northern (266)	Sparrow, Bachman's (1)	Woodpecker, Pileated (3)
Dove, Mourning (2173)	Gull, Herring (9)	Moorhen (90)	Sparrow, Chipping (13)	Woodpecker, Red-bellied (91)
Dove, Rock (203)	Gull, Laughing (2197)	Night-heron, Black-crowned (11)	Sparrow, House (50)	Woodpecker, Red-cockaded (3)
Dove, White-winged (35)	Gull, Ring-billed (1562)	Night-heron, Yellow-crowned (23)	Sparrow, Savannah (26)	Woodpecker, Red-headed (1)
Dowitcher, Short-billed (5)	Harrier, Northern (3)	Nuthatch, Brown-headed (2)	Sparrow, Swamp (1)	Wren, Carolina (11)
Duck, Black Bellied Whistling (49)	Hawk, Cooper's (11)	Osprey (84)	Spoonbill, Roseate (11)	Wren, House (7)
Duck, Mallard (11)	Hawk, Red-shouldered (55)	Owl, Barred (2)	Starling, European (1142)	Yellowlegs, Greater (1)
Duck, Mottled (314)	Hawk, Red-tailed (8)	Owl, Burrowing (14)	Stork, Wood (122)	Yellowlegs, Lesser (8)
Duck, Muscovy (15)	Hawk, Sharp-shinned (3)	Owl, Great Horned (4)	Swallow, Rough-winged (cw) (3)	Yellow-throat, Common (4)

## Volunteer of the Month

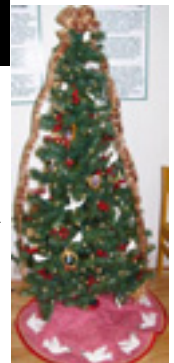
### Gil MacAdam

Congratulations to Gil MacAdam who is our volunteer of the month. Since moving to the area last year, Gil has become an active member of PRAS. In the last two months Gil has presented a talk on gardening to attract wildlife and led a field trip at our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, co-led our recent walkabout to Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park, and was our featured speaker at our December meeting. Thanks to a recent grant awarded to PRAS by the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, Gil has also volunteered to help PRAS put together a brochure on gardening to attract and benefit wildlife in Charlotte County. It is members like Gil who make organizations like ours able to function as an important part of the community.



## Symphony of Trees a Great Success

Many thanks to Mary Ann Hughes, Sandy Artman, Phyllis Cady, and Louise Lewis for donating a tree and decorations and creating a beautiful Christmas tree to display at the Historical Society's Symphony of Trees. There were many beautiful trees on display and the PRAS tree stood out among the best and received a \$75 silent auction bid. Thanks for shining a light on PRAS.



## PRAS Garage Sale to benefit CHEC Saturday, January 26, 2008

After quite a few delays, the PRAS garage sale benefiting the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center will be on **Saturday January 26, 2008**. Please drop off any items at Cathy and Gregg's house (**1522 Dewitt Street, Port Charlotte**) or call 613-6753 and we'll pick up the items. Thanks to all those who have donated already. Volunteers are needed to help with the setup and during the sale. Please contact Cathy at 613-6753 to help.



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](mailto:web@peacriveraudubon.org) or visit  
<http://www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org/>

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

## Arthur Bailey Memorial

Last year, a number of donations were made to PRAS in the name of our recently deceased member Arthur Bailey. To honor Mr. Bailey we have decided to use these funds to purchase 6 children and 5 adult binoculars and a spotting scope to help further the PRAS environmental education goals. Thank you to all who donated and to Carson Optical for their generous discount.



## December Walkabout Report by Stu Lewis

On Sunday, Dec. 4, a cool, 55 degree morning, 21 people joined Stu Lewis on a loop-walk along Myakkahatchee Creek in Northport. The birding was somewhat quiet - we saw 15 species, including an American Goldfinch and Blue-headed Vireo. The water level, like everywhere, is very low but walking among the many beautiful old live oaks dripping with spanish moss was a very pleasant experience. Gil McAdam, native-plant expert, accompanied the group, identifying and telling interesting details about many of the plants along the trail. He states, "Among many other plants, this is a very good area to see numerous dull-leaved wild coffee shrubs with large clusters of colorful fruit, a good food source for fruit eating birds".

## Florida Master Naturalist Program Taught by Stu & Louise Lewis

On December 8, in conjunction with the Florida Master Naturalist Program, PRAS volunteers Stu and Louise Lewis taught basic birding to about 30 eager adults at Ollie's Pond. The birds were apparently willing to participate as well and great looks were had of many species including a bufflehead which is not often seen in Charlotte County. For more information on the Florida Master Naturalist Program visit <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/> or if you would like to participate in the next course visit <http://charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu/seagrant/sg-08-naturalist.htm> or contact Roger DeBrueler Jr. of the Charlotte County Extension office at 941.764.4340.

## Audubon Pennington Park

Our beloved Audubon Pennington Park needs your help to maintain the trails and keep out non-native plants. Please join other Audubon volunteers every Wednesday from 8 to 10 am for a bit of gardening. If you can, please bring along gloves and gardening shears.

Audubon-Pennington Park is located in central Port Charlotte on Alton Road, between Midway Blvd. and Peachland Blvd.

## A Hearty Welcome to the following New Members

Raymond & Lynn Day  
Jim & Bobbie Haehlen  
Joseph & Jettie Minucci  
Ms. Eileen Forte  
Ms. Christel Gerdel  
Ms. Diane Hughes  
Ms. Marianne Schenkel  
Ms. Edith M. Wilbonr



Ms. Delores Thompson  
Mr. Thomas Borowski  
Ms. Janet Rommel  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Muha  
Ms. Annette Coughlin  
Mr. Tim Norment  
Mr. Charles Hensler

## Speaker Schedule

January 17 : Tony Licata - Christmas Bird Count results  
February 21: Pascha Donaldson - Burrowing Owls  
March 20: Annual Banquet, silent auction and photo contest  
April 17: Missy Christie - Sea Turtles & Shorebirds  
May 15 : Members night: PRAS members present slides

## Field Trips and Walkabouts

January 8: *Walkabout*: Cedar Point Environmental Park  
Eleanor Marr 941-624-4182  
January 19: *Field Trip*: Laurel Road Landfill & Carlton Reserve  
Stu & Louise Lewis 941-235-2590 (North carpool)  
January 26: Garage Sale at Gregg & Cathy's  
February 5: *Walkabout*: Lemon Bay Park  
Stu & Louise Lewis 941-235-2590  
February 16: *Field Trip*: Station # 5 Stormwater Treatment Area  
Eleanor Marr 941-624-4182 (East carpool location)  
March 4: *Walkabout*: Hathaway Park  
Eleanor Marr 941-624-4182  
March 15: *Field Trip*: Babcock Ranch Preserve  
Paul Holmes 941-833-3337 (East carpool location)  
April 1: *Walkabout*: Audubon-Pennington Park  
Dave Lancaster 941-625-0979  
April 13: *Shorebird identification* at Bunche Beach  
Kevin Edwards (South carpool location)  
April 19: *Field Trip*: Corkscrew Swamp  
Eleanor Marr 941-624-4182 (South carpool location)  
May 6: *Walkabout*: Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center  
Phyllis Cady 941-575-4009  
May 17: *Field Trip*: Fish-Eating Creek  
Mike Krzyzkowski 941-812-0764 (East carpool location)

\*\*\*For Walkabouts: meet at the park entrance at 8 AM \*\*\*

\*For Field Trips meet at designated place (\*see below)  
at 7 AM unless otherwise noted

### Carpool locations:

**North:** Peachland Mall:24133 Peachland Blvd., Pt Charlotte  
**East:** Winn Dixie lot: 27680 Bermont Road, Punta Gorda  
**South:** Sweet Bay lot: 10175 Tamiami Trail, Punta Gorda

## Bill Coombs Memorial Tree Planting February 4, 2008 at CHEC

Come witness the planting of a tree in honor of the late Bill Coombs on Monday, February 4, 2008. A tree will be planted a 9:45 am at the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, 10941 Burnt Store Road. Bill Coombs, who died January 4, 2007, was an active member of Peace River Audubon Society and the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. 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 also 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. He also began the compilation of the PRAS history and organized the archives. PRAS and CHEC owe much of their success to Bill.



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



January 2008  
*White Bird*

Check the "Exp" date on your address label!  
"1208" means your PRAS and/or National membership expires December 2008. 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](mailto:membership@peacriveraudubon.org)



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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](mailto:whitebird@peacriveraudubon.org)

**Bird of the Month: Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)**  
by Cathy Olson, PRAS Board member

Arguably our most colorful bird, male painted buntings are a mix of blue, green, yellow, and red yet are hard to see since they often skulk in thickets. During the breeding season, they use their stout bill to catch insects and spiders while in fall and winter pick at seeds making them often seen at winter feeders. There are two distinct populations. Those wintering in Florida and the Bahamas breed from north-central Florida to North Carolina. Others winter from Mexico to Panama and breed from southern Missouri through Mexico. Breeding males are highly territorial sometimes battling to the death. The overall population has declined consistently since 1965. Males are often trapped in Mexico and sold as pets.



## Peace River Audubon Society Membership Application / Renewal

Join us for some fun and birding. Help protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, & the wildlife we love...help us protect Florida.

New Membership  
 Renewal

Chapter Code: **E14-7XCH**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) \$20 Local Audubon Membership Only  
Includes the "White Bird" newsletter with local news articles, local meetings, field trips, bird walks, & special events.  
All proceeds stay within local chapter
- ( ) \$20 Local and National Audubon  
Includes all of the above plus National Audubon magazine.
- ( ) Additional Gift for PRAS  
Please help PRAS continue our educational and conservation programs with a tax deductible contribution.

**MAIL CHECK WITH THIS FORM TO:**  
PRAS, PO box 510760, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0760

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_