

Peace River Audubon Society

# White Bird

March 2009 Volume 32, Issue 7

Sandy Artman, Editor

Dan Artman, Dispatcher



www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

## 2008-09 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

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	George Ruby '10	941-423-0174
	Don Youso '10	941-235-1298
	Starr Zachritz '10	941-766-7686

### March 21 Field Trip—Babcock Webb By Dave Lancaster

Please join the Peace River Audubon Society for a field trip to Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area on Saturday, March 21, 2009. We will meet at the park entrance Pay Station at 7:00 AM. Our target birds will be the red-cockaded woodpecker who leaves the nest shortly after 7:15 (sunrise), brown-headed nuthatch and bachman's sparrow. We will also be looking for other birds and creatures of the Pine Flatwoods.



The park entrance fee is \$3.00 per person with a maximum \$6.00 charge per vehicle, Florida residence over 65 are free. Babcock- Webb is east about a quarter mile from I-75 at Tuckers Grade exit 158. For information call Dave Lancaster, phone 586-214-0203.

### PRAS Photography Group By Eleanor Marr



The February photo shoot at Port Charlotte Beach Complex was held in the morning before the crowds arrived to photograph resting gulls, terns and skimmers. Some in the group went from there to photograph nearby eagles nests. The group had an extra photo shoot the next week, when 39 Sandhill Cranes landed in a pond close to the foot path. Beautiful evening lighting made for a great photo op.

The next photo shoot will be at a private home in Immokalee, where several feeders attract a wonderful assortment of birds, including Painted and Indigo Buntings and White-winged Doves. Watch for announcements on PeaceRiverAudubonUpdate and CharlotteCounty-NatureAlert for time and place of meeting, which is currently scheduled for March 10, meeting in the parking lot of SweetBay supermarket on Rt. 41 south of Burnt Store Road in Punta Gorda, at 1:30PM. Weather or the convenience of the hosts may result in changes. Please let Bill know if you plan to attend.

The next workshop will be held at CHEC on Tuesday March 24 at 2PM in the Watershed Building. The group is working on a slide show for the May PRAS meeting.

### Painted Bunting Observer Team needs help from volunteers

Want to help the painted bunting? The Painted Bunting Observer Team project at the University of North Carolina Wilmington needs your assistance with these brightly colored migratory birds. The team is looking for volunteers to help with research in Florida to develop strategies to bring the bird populations up to healthy and sustainable levels.

The painted bunting's decline may be due to a variety of factors, including increased coastal development and new agricultural practices, both of which clear shrub-scrub brush vital to breeding birds. As coastal habitats continue to be developed and as more inland shrub is cleared, these beautiful birds are losing their homes.



In Florida, the team wants to recruit and maintain an active group of volunteers who can make observations and collect data at backyard bird feeders and help band and monitor buntings.

Last year, Rotenberg and his colleagues had more than 7,000 data hits to their Web site, [www.paintedbuntings.org](http://www.paintedbuntings.org), from volunteers in the Carolinas, and the team captured and banded more than 500 painted buntings. The banded birds allow the team to learn about migration, life span, survival rate, reproductive success and population growth, as well as the behavior of individual birds.

To become a Painted Bunting Observer Team volunteer or to learn more about the project, please sign up at [www.paintedbuntings.org](http://www.paintedbuntings.org), or e-mail the project coordinator at [pbot.mns@ncmail.net](mailto:pbot.mns@ncmail.net).

### Annual Banquet Photo Contest March 19, 2009

Bring your photos to the banquet on March 19 and enter them into the competition! Have fun and contribute to the success of the banquet! Attendees of the banquet will be the judges.

Rules are as follows:

- Entry fee: \$5 for one print or \$10 for 3 prints. Unlimited entries.
- 8x10 color prints or black and white prints
- Subject of your choice
- Photo Shop enhancements are allowed
- No signatures or identification on the print. You will be given an identification number from a master list for each picture entered.
- The pictures will be mounted for display on black foamboard for judging (provided).
- All pictures will be placed in the silent auction fundraiser. Please be ready to sign your pictures for the auction winners.



For further information, call Bill Marr, 624-4182.

## 2009 BIRDATHON ALERT – Saturday April 4, 2009

PRAS has been holding Birdathons for a number of years to raise money for environmental education. Last year some of the funds were given to our new environmental science Scholarship as well as CHEC.



Participants have had lots of fun while raising money for a very worthy cause. We have four enthusiastic teams ready to go, but we need more! We have created two new categories of participants who want to do something different. Please consider joining us for a day of fun. If you can't participate, please sponsor one of the teams! See the invitation and entry form below for details

### INVITATION TO ENTER 2009 CHARLOTTE BIRDATHON, April 4, 2009

**Objective:**

To have fun while raising money for youth environmental education.

**Rules:**

1. **Category 1** teams may consist of two, three, or four members who will find bird species anywhere in Charlotte County. **Category 2** teams will have two members who will find birds in a specific location of their own choosing in Charlotte County (e.g. park, neighborhood, your back yard.). The location must be specified on the application. **Category 3** is for individuals who will photograph as many species as possible anywhere in Charlotte County
2. Team members should remain together and may not split into subteams.
3. Only bird species seen or heard by at least two team members can be counted. Photographs are the proof for Category 3 individuals
4. Only birds seen, heard or photographed within Charlotte County can be counted.
5. Only birds seen, heard or photographed between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 4 p.m. on April 4, 2009 can be counted.
6. No artificial aids, such as bird call tapes, can be used.
7. The Birdathon may start and finish at the time and place you choose between the hours of 12:01a.m.and 4 p.m. We typically have begun at 7 a.m.and ended at 4 p.m., but some have requested an earlier start to search for owls. All teams will meet at 5 PM at Bayshore Linear Park in Charlotte Harbor for post-Birdathon wrap-up and pizza (dutch treat). Details and changes, if any, will be posted on PRAS Updates and e-mailed to team leaders..

Teams will solicit sponsors and will collect contributions based on number of species seen by their team or the entire group, or a flat contribution. Members may sponsor themselves. Funds collected should be turned in to the Birdathon coordinator no later than the April PRAS meeting. Teams can be entered as late as April 3. However, if your entry is received by March 18, you can be included when we solicit sponsorship at the March 19th Banquet.

**ENTRY FORM**  
2009 CHARLOTTE BIRDATHON

TEAM NAME:		CATEGORY:	
		CATEGORY 2 LOCATION:	
Member 1	Email:	Phone #	
Member 2	Email:	Phone #	
Member 3	Email:	Phone #	
Member 4	Email:	Phone #	
I agree to abide by all rules of the 2009 Charlotte Birdathon		DATE:	
Leader _____			

Mail or e-mail your entry to Eleanor Marr, Birdathon coordinator, to be received no later than April 3, 2009  
175 Kings Hwy Unit 521 , Punta Gorda, FL, 33893.

**February Field Trip—Palm Island  
Led by Cathy Olson**

Twenty PRAS members, and a few islanders joined Kevin Edwards and Al Squires for a Palm Island Resort sponsored birding trip. Palm Island Resort generously waived the ferry fee, provided golf carts and naturalist Al Squires so that we could enjoy the birds at the Palm Island Resort. The morning started off chilly but the walk on the beach warmed us up. We



were first greeted by several snowy plovers, one that had been color banded. Kevin explained that he had found out that the plover had been banded on the panhandle. We also had a view of a beautiful male red-breasted merganser in the lagoon. A single spotted sandpiper and a sanderling also provided good views. A small group of loafing terns: royal, sandwich and forster's allowed a good comparison

among the three species. We also saw laughing, ring-billed and herring gulls. In total, we saw 33 species on the island. Stu Lewis then led nine other PRAS members to Gulf Cove close to the Myakka State Forest where we saw an additional seven species including three Florida scrub-jays, great horned owls, eastern meadowlarks and eastern bluebirds. The great horned owls were on a nest and included one adult and two downy chicks. It was a good morning for birding!

**February Walkabout at Yucca Pens  
By Eleanor Marr**

February 3 was cool and sunny when about 31 participants descended on Yucca Pens for our first walkabout there, finding about an equal number of bird species. Several wading birds flew over when we first arrived. The typical pine flatwoods contained the usual birds, such as Pine, Palm and Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy and Red-bellied woodpecker, and Eastern Phoebe. We passed one active Red-cockaded Woodpecker cluster, but the RCW's had flown out for the day by the time we arrived. We spent some time discussing their roost cavities and how you can tell if one is currently being used.

Further down the road several Brown-headed Nuthatches were sighted, and just about everyone got a good look at one. In a mixed flock of birds, one RCW was sighted briefly and seen by a few in the group before it disappeared. Eastern Towhees teased us with their call, but it wasn't until late in the walk when one was finally spotted. As we left on Zemel Road we stopped along the way to check out the action at the landfill. The good news was that the wind was behind us, so the odor was minimal. The bad news was, that kept the clouds of birds away from the road. Nevertheless, Bald Eagles, including juveniles, were easy to find.



**Walkabouts and Field Trips  
2008-2009**

- March 3: *Walkabout* Tippe II  
Stu and Louise Lewis
- March 21: *Field Trip* Babcock-Webb  
Dave Lancaster (meet at entrance station)
- April 4: PRAS Bird-a-thon  
Eleanor Marr
- April 7: *Walkabout* Shell Creek Preserve  
Eleanor Marr
- April 18: *Field Trip* Fort DeSoto  
Eleanor Marr \*North
- May 5: *Walkabout* TBA  
Phyllis Cady
- May 16: *Field Trip* TBA  
Mike Krzyzkowski/Jim Bonk

- \*NORTH—the parking lot by McDonalds at Peachland Mall near I75 and Kings Hwy in Port Charlotte (24133 Peachland Boulevard)
- \*SOUTH—the parking lot of Sweetbay on US 41 south of the Burnt Store Road intersection in Punta Gorda (10175 Tamiami Trail)
- \*EAST - the parking lot of Winn-Dixie on State Route 17 east of Punta Gorda (27680 Bermont Road)
- \*WEST the parking lot of Charlotte Stadium, Rt. 776

**2008-2009  
Speaker Schedule**

- March 19: Annual Banquet, silent auction and photo contest
- April 16: Gil MacAdam - Southwest FL Butterflies & their habitats
- May 21 : Members night: PRAS members present slides and stories

**Volunteer of the Month  
Phyllis Cady**

The PRAS Board has selected Phyllis Cady as volunteer of the month. Phyllis works hard behind the scenes. As membership chair, she keeps the membership list up to date, sorts through renewals and sends information on to National Audubon Society, reminds people that their membership has expired etc. She is also on the hospitality committee where she sorts through the name tags and welcomes PRAS members and newcomers alike to our meetings. She is a walk about leader and leads guided nature walks for the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. Thanks for these things and everything else you do!



**Welcome New**

- Jean Holder
- Roger & Geraldine Roy
- Penny Stiffler
- Gerald G. Klusich
- Merrill Horswill
- Pattie Mihalik
- Elizabeth Bergman
- M. Aslin
- Teri Mills



Members

- Amy Jewell
- Joan Kufrin
- Richard Gromada
- Gudrun Boatman
- Karen Sanderson
- Adrienne B. Reeves
- Judy Gilson
- Ruth Ola
- Wanda L. Reed

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



March 2009  
White Bird

Check the "Exp" date on your address label!  
"1209" means your PRAS and/or National membership expires December 2009. 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: membership1@peacriveraudubon.org

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



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

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.

Bird of the Month: Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) by Cathy Olson, PRAS Board President

This coastal shorebird can be found on sandy beaches and will forage on mud flats of North and South America, Africa and Eurasia. In North America, its breeding area is restricted to the Gulf and Pacific Coasts and scattered inland areas of the western interior. The belly and breast of this plover are white, while the upper parts are sandy brown. When sitting still in the sand, it is almost completely invisible to predators and birders alike. In Florida, breeding occurs in late March. Both sexes incubate the eggs, which are laid in a scrape in the sand. Once hatched, the female leaves the chicks with the male and often begins a new nest. Despite generally having two nests in a season, the North American snowy plover population is declining, primarily due to habitat degradation caused by human recreation and beach front development.



## 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: **C9ZE140Z**

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 (new members only, renewals \$35)  
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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_