

# White Bird

September 2009 Volume 33, Issue 1  
Sandy Artman, Editor  
Dan Artman, Dispatcher



www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

## 2009-10 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS:

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	George Ruby '10	941-423-0174
	Chuck Steele '11	941-875-9244
	Starr Zachritz '10	941-766-7686

**Next Meeting: September 17, 2009 at 6:30 PM**  
Speaker, Michael Weston

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

Michael Weston, a senior forester - Florida Division of Forestry, will talk about Prescribed Burns. He will discuss why they are needed and how they are scheduled. Please join us for this interesting and informative talk.



**October 6 Walkabout**  
**Prairie Shell Creek Conservation Lands**  
By Phyllis Cady

The first walkabout this season will be to Prairie/Shell Creek Conservation Lands, a SWFWMD property. This is a 300 acre+ piece of land that was purchased by SWFWMD in 2005. This property has several families of scrub jays and a pond with waterbirds. We'll also be looking for Northern Bobwhite, and there are hammocks of oaks for warblers and vireos. Bobwhite, jays, and a yellow-throated vireo were seen there this week. We will meet at 8 AM at the gate and walk the property together. Be sure to wear long pants and hiking shoes. Bring water and bug repellent.



Directions: The property is located on Hwy. 17, east of Punta Gorda. From Winn Dixie, at the corner of 17 and Bermont Rd., continue 4.2 miles on Hwy. 17 and you'll see a sign on the LEFT. Beware! There are several other properties that have a similar name, but this is NOT one of the new Conservation Charlotte properties. This is owned by SWFWMD and it is the first time that we have held a Walkabout there. If there are any questions call Phyllis Cady at 941-286-7638. Hope to see you there.

## A Message from the President By Cathy Olson

Wow, this summer seems to have passed quickly! The migrant shorebirds and hawks have already started passing through and the rest of the migrants will soon be passing by. Before you know it it will be time for the Christmas Bird Count! We are getting geared up for a good year of programs, field trips, walkabouts, a pot luck, a banquet/silent auction and even a canoe trip!



We start this new PRAS year with three new Board members: Larry Behrens, Jim Comfort, and Chuck Steele. Chuck has hit the ground running and has agreed to take over the role of program chair. Sandy is handing the editing of the White Bird over to Dave Lancaster. Special thanks to Sandy who has



been editing the White Bird for the last several years! Eleanor continues to plan the field trips and walkabouts and Bill continues to plan the photography trip. I would like to thank retiring Board member, Walt Williams, our treasurer for the past four years and thank Don Youso for stepping forward as the new treasurer. Please be sure to let a Board member know if you would like to volunteer for one of the jobs or if you think of something we should be doing. The banquet is an area where we always need volunteers.

Our monthly meetings will continue to be held at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on the third Thursday of the month. Our first meeting will be September 17 where Mike Weston, senior forester, will give a presentation on the use of prescribed fire in Florida ecosystems. I look forward to seeing you there.



**2009-2010 Program Schedule  
3rd Thursday of the Month at 6:30 PM**

September 17, 2009	Michael Weston <b>Prescribed Burns</b>
October 15, 2009	Tom Zinneman <b>Galapagos Photography</b>
November 19, 2009	Mike Owens <b>Fakahatchee State Preserve</b>
December 17, 2009	Christmas Potluck Andy Stevens <b>Florida Scrub-Jay Habitat Conservation Plan</b>
January 21, 2010	Tony Licata <b>Christmas Bird Count</b>
February 18, 2010	Bill Dunson <b>Myakka State Forest</b>
March 18, 2010	Audubon Banquet / Dennis Giardina <b>Florida Panther</b>
April 15, 2010	Gina Zimmerman <b>Swallow-tailed Kites</b>
May 20, 2010	<b>Film on life of James Audubon</b>

**PRAS Spotlight on Chuck Steele  
By Phyllis Cady**

Our spotlight this month is on Chuck Steele, a newly elected PRAS board member. Chuck was asked to join the board, after participating in several Audubon clean-up projects, field trips, and attending our general meetings. Chuck was born in St. Louis, Missouri but spent most of his life in Maryland, in the air force and then working for the federal government. Chuck and his wife, Bonnie, retired to Port Charlotte and have lived here for 3 years. Chuck volunteered for the Reads Program where he helped first and second graders with their reading. He volunteered for the Animal Welfare League where he was a cat hugger and a dog walker. He also volunteered at the Peace River Wildlife Center. Audubon is thankful that Chuck is willing to give his time to our board of directors.



Chuck and Bonnie have many interests that revolve around their love of wildlife. They enjoy kayaking and traveling, and have several great adventures planned in the near future. Chuck is currently a member of the Photo Adventures Camera Club and the Charlotte County Woodcarvers. While Chuck is on the Audubon Board, Bonnie will be a committee member of her local garden club. They have been married for 33 years and have 2 sons and 2 grandchildren. Congratulations on being a member of the 2009-2010 PRAS board. If you see Chuck, ask him what the responsibilities are of a cat hugger?

If you know a PRAS member who would make a good candidate to be in the PRAS SPOTLIGHT, please send their name to [ps\\_cady@yahoo.com](mailto:ps_cady@yahoo.com).

**May 2009 Field Trip Report  
by Mike Krzyzkowski**

On May 16<sup>th</sup> nine of us traveled to Highland Hammock State Park, which is just 4 miles outside of Sebring. This was quite an interesting trip and I highly recommend it if you've never been there before. This is one of Florida's oldest park opening to the public in 1931, and was established when local citizens came together to promote the hammock as a candidate for national park status. During the Great Depression, just prior to World War II, the Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) developed additional park facilities and the beginnings of a botanical garden. There is a \$4 entrance fee/car on entrance and if you wish to partake of a guided tram ride in the afternoon (highly recommended) pick up a ticket for another \$4. on entrance as they may go quickly – especially on a weekend.

We started by taking the Blair Oak Trail to gaze upon a huge oak reported to be over 1000 years old. Next we visited the Cypress Trail, which is an elevated boardwalk in an old growth cypress forest. This was birding by sound as most of the trees were 150 feet tall or better! We finished the morning up with the Fern Trail, which had some standing water at this dry season time of the year. The birding was only fair as most of the migrants had passed through, but the scenery was quite remarkable. Nevertheless we saw several species of vireos, swallow-tailed kites, northern parulas, great crested flycatchers and most of the woodpeckers.



Lunch was at the CCC Museum facility (there is a full service restaurant open on weekends), followed by a 30 minute film at the museum documenting the park with actual testimony of several surviving members of the CCC. A guided tram tour of sections of the park not open to the public followed. The ranger guiding us was quite knowledgeable although we had to stop the tour to allow a gator basking in the road to move off allowing us to pass. The tram tour parallels a waterway part way – during the dry season much of the waterbirds and reptiles are concentrated here. Orange ice cream at the restaurant finished off a most pleasant day! Mike Krzyzkowski / Jim Bonk.

**Banded Shorebird Resightings**

An international team of scientists have banded tens of thousands of shorebirds since the mid 1990's. The vast majority of these birds are red knots, semi-palmated sandpipers, ruddy turnstones, and sanderlings. Color-marking these birds has resulted in a growing database of sightings along the Atlantic Flyway describing their migration routes, nesting and wintering areas. Your observations will contribute greatly to this important information.

Red knots are returning and have been seen at Little Estero Lagoon, Bunche Beach, and Bowditch Point. Many of the birds that return to SWFL have lime green flags with lettering large enough that can be read at close range with binocs, or from a distance with a scope. If you do happen to run across any of the flagged knots, please use the following link to report your resighting. ([www.bandedbirds.org](http://www.bandedbirds.org))

## PRAS Photography Group

The PRAS Photography Group meets twice a month from January through April. Everyone is welcome.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month there is a photo shoot. The time depends on optimizing lighting for the particular shoot, and may be in the morning or afternoon. Time and place will be announced in the White Bird that precedes the event, as well as at the preceding PRAS meeting, and about a week in advance in the Charlotte Sun, PRAS Updates and CharlotteNatureAlerts. An e-mail list of interested persons is also maintained for notification of the occasional extra photo op.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month there is an informal workshop where techniques and equipment are discussed and photos are shared. Special projects are also undertaken, such as working on individual slide shows for our monthly PRAS meetings. Photography group meetings have taken place at 2 PM in the Watershed Building at CHEC, Burnt Store Road, Punta Gorda. A more central location is being sought. Be sure to check up-to-date information for a possible move.

### Donate to PRAS and give a gift to future generations

Your gifts are tax deductible and will help PRAS carry out its mission to protect the air we breathe, water we drink, and wildlife we love.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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College Scholarship Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
To encourage exceptional college students interested in a career in the environmental sciences.

Audubon Adventures \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Environmental educational materials for area grade schools.

PRAS Environmental Education Programs \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Such as Girl and Boy Scout birding programs, Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, lectures to schools and organizations, etc...

PRAS General Needs \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Such as Audubon-Pennington Park, festival displays, literature printing, or based on need any of the funds above.

Send this form along with your gift to  
PRAS at P.O. Box 510760, Punta Gorda, FL 33951  
or call Cathy Olson at 941-613-6753

## Walkabout & Field Trip Schedule 2009-2010

Please check the Whitebird close to the trip date for additional information, including directions to Walkabout sites, and for POSSIBLE CHANGES. Announcements will also be made about a week in advance in the Charlotte Sun, PRAS Updates and CharlotteCounty-NatureAlert.

October 6: *Walkabout* Prairie Shell Creek Conservation Lands  
Phyllis Cady 941-575-4009

October 17: *Field Trip* Celery Fields  
Don Youso \*North

November 3: *Walkabout* Ollie's Pond  
Don Youso

November 21: *Field Trip* Harms Marsh  
Cathy Olson \*South

December 1: *Walkabout* Amberjack Environmental Park  
Chuck and Joan Froman

December 19: Christmas Bird Count  
Tony Licata

January 5: *Walkabout* Desoto County Env Learning Center  
Stu and Louise Lewis

January 16: *Field Trip* San Carlos Bay-Bunche Beach  
Eleanor Marr \*South

February 2: *Walkabout* Tippecanoe Environmental Park  
Dave Lancaster

February 20: *Field Trip* Myakka State Forest  
Stu and Louise Lewis \*West

March 2: *Walkabout* Sleeping Turtle Preserve South  
Stu and Louise Lewis

March 20: *Field Trip* Babcock-Webb Wildlife Mgmt Area  
Dave Lancaster (meet at entrance station)

April 6: *Walkabout* Yucca Pens  
Eleanor Marr

April 17: *Field Trip* Fort DeSoto Park  
Eleanor Marr \*North

May 4: *Walkabout* TBA  
Phyllis Cady

May 15: *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

## Welcome to New Members

WELCOME



Ann Caron  
Angela Smith  
Patricia A. Wright  
M.J. Nolen  
Katy Barclay  
Kenneth Corregan  
Aiden Marcel

Brian Grant  
Frances Pooser  
Edward Farrow  
Robert Frederick  
Jack La Plante  
Theodore Spiero  
Mrs. Carmen B. Denny

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



September 2009  
*White Bird*

Check the "Exp" date on your address label!  
"1210" means your PRAS and/or National membership expires December 2010. 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: Northern Mockingbird by Cathy Olson, PRAS President**

The northern mockingbird is a nonmigratory bird that is found throughout the continental United States and northern Central America. This is a species which has expanded its range along with suburbia. They do quite well in suburban areas where there are open lawns along with shrubs. Although quite common now, they disappeared from some parts of the east in the 1800s when people were collecting young from the nest to keep them as caged birds. Male mockers are highly territorial and will face off with one another with outspread wings. Male mockers mimic other birds as well as other noises, adding to their repertoire throughout their life. In Florida quite a few mockers have added the Cuban tree frog call to their repertoire, which may reach over 200 songs. Both sexes sing and each phrase is typically repeated three times. Mockers call throughout the day and even into the night, to the joy of insomniacs and the chagrin of light sleepers.



### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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( ) \$20 Local Audubon Membership (PRAS)

Includes the "White Bird" newsletter with local news articles, local meetings, field trips, bird walks, & special events.

All proceeds stay within local chapter

\*\*\*\*Checks payable to PRAS

( ) \$20 Local and National Audubon Membership

Includes all of the above plus National Audubon magazine.

\*\*\*\* Checks payable to National Audubon Society

( ) 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_