

White Bird

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Sandy Artman, Editor
Dan Artman, Dispatcher



www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

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Next Meeting: December 17, 2009 at 5:30 PM
Potluck Dinner
Photo Contest
Speaker, Andy Stevens

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



We will start the evening with a Potluck dinner and a Photo Contest (See rules below). After dinner Andy Stevens, manager of the Charlotte County Natural Resources division, will discuss how Charlotte County is developing a Habitat Conservation Plan for the Federally Threatened Florida Scrub-Jay.



President's Message By Cathy Olson, PRAS President

I can't believe it is December already! The Christmas Bird Count is right around the corner. Several teams are still lacking participants so be sure to contact Tony Licata if you haven't been contacted by your team leader. We also need someone with a boat. Three of our areas are counted by boats. One is all set, one needs a good birder and the third still needs a captain, a boat and some birders. Tony may be reached at (941) 505-9775 or alicata@dcwis.com. Keep your fingers crossed for good weather and lots of good birds!



The speaker at our next meeting will talk about the status of Charlotte County's Florida Scrub-Jay Habitat Conservation Plan; the County's effort to save the bird and streamline the development process. It is also our Annual Christmas Potluck, so make your favorite dish, bring your appetite and a plate, silverware, and a cup. Don't forget the Photo Contest.



The Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival was a great success. Thanks to Starr and the other PRAS members who manned the booth. Several new members joined our group. Be sure to welcome them when you see them. In January, I hope to have another work day at Audubon Pennington Park. The air potato, Brazilian pepper and other exotics need to be treated. Last year we birded for a while and then worked. We were rewarded with a wonderful view of a great horned owl. Hopefully we will be equally lucky!



Photo Contest Rules Have your photos there between 5:30-6:00 PM

We are going to try something new this year. Our Annual Photo Contest will be held at the December Potluck so get your pictures ready now. The pictures will be displayed and the voting will take place at our meeting on Thursday, December 17. We will vote that evening and auction off the photos. The winners will not be announced until our Audubon Banquet in March. We plan to award 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes along with 3 honorable mentions.

Please bring your entries between 5:30- 6:00 PM on Thursday, December 17. Ballots will be available at the sign-in table. The photos will be auctioned off that evening. Winners will be notified so they can be sure to attend the Audubon Banquet to receive their award.

Photo Contest Rules are listed below.

1. 1 entry \$3 or 4 for \$10.
2. Subject material unlimited
3. Each person at the meeting gets one vote.
4. The entry with the most votes wins 1st prize, etc.
5. All photos will be put up for silent auction.
6. The MAX size is 8x10 - does not need to be matted.

Tuesday, January 5, 2010 Walkabout DeSoto County Environmental Learning Center By Stu & Louise Lewis

We will meet at the North field trip meeting location (McDonalds at Peachland Mall) at 7:45 AM to carpool. Gil McAdams will join us to help identify plants along the way. The center includes several trails and a variety of habitats including a cedar swamp and several ponds. We hope to see some less common warblers including the Northern Parula. For questions, call Stu Lewis at 235-2590.

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

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

**Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 19th**

The 2009, Peace River Audubon Society, Christmas Bird Count is set for Saturday, December 19. We will be counting the number of birds and bird species within an area defined by a 15-mile diameter circle the center of which is located at US 41 and Henry St in Punta Gorda. To facilitate the count the circle has been divided into twelve areas. A team will be assigned to each area. We are now in the process of appointing team captains and assigning team members to each of the ten teams. If you participated in the count last year, your name will already be on the list. Your team captain will be contacting you with details on when and where to meet. You will only need to call in if you want to change your area or cannot participate this year. If you did not participate last year and want to be included, please contact Tony Licata(941-505-9775 or alicata@dcwis.com) or Cathy Olson(941-613-6753 or cathyolson@comcast.net).

Most teams will begin counting by 7:00 AM. Hopefully, the weather will be good and we will have a delightful day in the field counting and watching our local wild birds. As before, team captains will collect a \$5.00 fee from each participant which will be forwarded to National Audubon to fund the compilation of the results on a national basis and make the results available in published form.



**PRAS Spotlight on Bob & Joanne Winter
By Phyllis Cady**

The spotlight this month is on Bob and Joanne Winter of Rotonda. They have been active members of our local group since they retired here in 2002, attending field trips, meetings, and participating in the Christmas Bird Count. Joanne is originally from Jamestown, N.Y., the same hometown as Roger Tory Peterson, so no wonder she became an avid birder. There is an active Audubon group there and Joanne's uncle was an amateur naturalist and one of the original advocates of banding



birds. Bob is from Pittsburgh, PA. and has been participating in the Christmas Bird Count since the 1970's. Prior to moving to Charlotte County they lived in Warren, Pennsylvania for 30 years, where Joanne was a nurse and Bob was a Plant Engineer, responsible for environmental compliance.

Bob and Joanne have not only been interested in conservation, they have been active conservationists since arriving here.



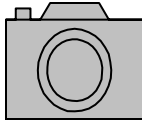
Their biggest project has been to make the 30 miles of canals in Rotonda, environmentally friendly. They saw the need for improved habitat for fish, birds, and other animals that live along the canals. Working as part of The Rotonda West Association Canal Committee, they received 2 grants, one from SWFWMD, to plant littoral plants on the edge of the waterways, and one from CHEC, for a brochure, advising people of what they could do along their own shoreline. They set up a demonstration area with signs and the brochure, as a model of a habitat people could create.

Another conservation issue that Bob and Joanne helped tackle was the commercial harvesting of soft shell turtles in Rotonda. They were a part of a community effort of signing petitions and letter writing to put pressure on the Governor to change the existing law. This was a successful venture and in July 2009, most commercial turtle harvesting in public and private waters was banned.

When you see Bob and Joanne, please thank them for taking an active role in our community. Also tell them Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary!

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.

PRAS Photography Group



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

On the 2nd 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 maintained for notification of the occasional extra photo op.

On the 4th 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.

December Walkabout Report By Chuck & Joan Froman

Twenty-two birders met at the Amberjack parking lot at 8:00 am. The weather was perfect and we observed 40 species of birds. Though we saw nearly as many species as we did in January 2008, we saw far fewer numbers of birds. Strangely we did not see one mockingbird. We wondered if the dry conditions of Lemon Lake during the spring and summer, when the lake went completely dry, adversely affected the habitat and the current bird population. Regardless it was a special day of birding and camaraderie!



November Field Trip Report By Cathy Olson, PRAS President

Twenty people from PRAS and Lee County Bird Patrol birded Harns Marsh Sunday October 21st. We were first greeted by a flock of double-crested cormorants hunting/herding fish under water, a bunch of roosting vultures and wading birds out for an early morning meal. As we drove through the gate we were lucky enough to see an American bittern and limpkins. Further down we saw blue-winged teal, mottled ducks, American coots and least sandpipers. It took us a while to see the snail kites, they were not in the beginning of the tour as they often are. All in all we saw 55 bird species, several butterflies and a peninsula cooter on land. Contact Cathy if you missed the trip and would like a chance to take the driving tour of Harns Marsh.



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 941-286-7638
- October 17: *Field Trip* Celery Fields
Don Youso *North
- November 3: *Walkabout* Ollie's Pond
Don Youso
- November 21: *Field Trip* Harns 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

Maureen Devine
James Burke
Sandra Poore
Sue Herring
Marilyn R. Friedenber
Maryann Sakamoto
Lisa Sordam
Eric Milroy



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

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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: Scissor-tailed flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) by Cathy Olson, PRAS President

The scissor-tailed flycatcher is an unforgettable bird with its long, forked tail, gray body, white head, salmon colored flanks, and red patches under their wings. While the majority of the flycatchers winter in central America, we are lucky to have a few of these birds winter with us. In Florida, They most often winter in the southern interior of the state where there are still vast pastures where they can hunt insects and other arthropods. This year, however, several have been reported in Rotonda and other parts of Englewood! In our area they are most commonly seen on powerlines or fences posts in rural, open areas.



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 (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

(\$20 New Members Only, \$35 Renewals)

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 \$ _____