

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society Meeting October 8, 2015

Financial Report:

Fiscal year balance: \$2784.63
Check to ARCI -\$1200.00 (swallow-tailed kite project)
Oct 8th 2015 balance \$1584.63

Conservation Chair Report:

The Amendment 1 funding mandate has not been followed. Instead monies have been used to offset operating costs, salaries, road projects, etc.

Eric Draper is still hopeful and will try other approaches to convince legislators how important this is for our sensitive environmental areas. The voter response transcends political boundaries. 75% of Florida's voters mandated this. We need to support candidates who support the intent of Amendment 1. Environmental groups have brought suit in Leon County. On a local level, The Marina Village builder has promised that there will be no sidewalks near the rookery Islands along the AOB site on North Causeway in New Smyrna Beach.

New Business:

Audubon Adventure's cost has gone up from \$18.00 to \$50.00 per class. We have had no feedback and will try and gather more information on this educational program.

Field Activities Report:

Buschman Park field trip was great! Lots of bird sightings in a beautiful old Florida environment. We saw Pilated and red bellied woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens, yellow throated warblers, blue gray gnat catchers, titmice, a cardinal, american red-star, osprey, and a peregrine falcon. A Gopher Tortoise and Florida water snake were also seen. Then most of the group went on down to the river off Dunlawton causeway for more birding.

Speaker Sam Fried will speak about Owls in North America:

Mr. Fried has had over 1000 photographs and 56 feature articles published in field guides, books, newspapers and magazines worldwide, including National Audubon, National Geographic, Birder's World, Bird Watcher's Digest, Birding and Living Bird Quarterly and various golf magazines. He wrote several chapters of the Insight Guides book on birding in North America, published by The Discovery Channel and has made around 500 photo presentations to a wide variety of organizations. He is a Past President of Hartford Audubon Society and has a North American Life List of 751 bird species seen and 733 photographed. He is the founder of Flights of Fancy Adventures, LLC, a birding, photography and natural history travel company offering small group, low cost, high quality trips throughout the Americas and now to Africa. We enjoyed many photographs and calls of various types of owls. There are 19 species in North America.

A few fun factoids are:

Short eared owls are crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk).

Great horned owls are the flying tigers of the bird world.

Males are 30% smaller than the females and have a higher pitched song.

Owls have no sense of smell and love to eat skunks.

Owls are silent flyers due to having space between their feather barbules.

Owls have binocular vision and cannot move their eyes. Their heads rotate 270 degrees to compensate for this. Some have false eyes in back as well.

Owl ear openings are asymmetrical and most have a facial disc which funnels sound into their ears for excellent hearing.

Bard owls have dark eyes and are diurnal. Their call sounds like monkeys and can be heard during the day.

Eastern screech owls sound like horses whinnying.

Saw-whet owls hide in dense cover and sound like a saw on a whet stone.

Great Gray owls are the largest but not the heaviest.

Snowy owls will hiss and do not have a song. They stay on the ground and their feathers hide the beak and go down to their talons for warmth.

Barn owls live in structures and sound like screaming banshees. The underside of their wings are white and they look ghostlike when flying.

Owls expel pellets to rid their digestive system of fur and bones from prey.

Pellets resemble fur balls with whole bones inside.