



# The Skimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

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## Prez Sez

The mission of the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society is to protect birds and other animals and their habitat through education and activism. It is important because birds tell us how well our environment is doing. After all, they need the same things as we do to survive—clean air and water, a habitable place to live in and rear their offspring, and freedom from encroachment.

We perform our mission in many ways. We conduct bird surveys such as the *Christmas Bird Count*, as well as migratory bird counts, *Great Backyard Bird Counts*, etc. We involve young people in these activities to help them understand their place in the ecosystem. We provide schools with environmentally oriented educational materials, including books to their libraries and *Audubon Adventures* to designated classrooms. We have taken school groups on field trips to places like Smyrna Dunes Park. We also conducted educational programs for cub scouts and explorer groups.

We have been involved in efforts to stop the super Wal-Mart on Rte 44 in NSB and now are working to stop incredible growth and urban sprawl in Edgewater and NSB. And we are trying to preserve a scrub jay habitat behind the Edgewater YMCA.

As you are aware, organizations like ours operate only because of volunteers. And as in many organizations, a small number of volunteers does most of the work. We need your help. We need your ideas. The more people that help, the less the “regulars” have to do. It is your club. We need your ideas on what you want to see or hear in the meetings and where you want to go on field trips. We need to know what issues you want us to explore. More importantly, we need your help in doing these things. We would also like you to volunteer to be officers in the club. Those of us on the executive committee have been doing this for a long time. It is time for some new blood.

The April meeting is our annual pot luck at Menard May Park in Edgewater. It will be held at 5:30 p.m. We will also have the annual election of officers. Please join us and offer your help. Be a club officer.

—Don Picard

## New Members

We welcome Mrs. Winifred S Augusta into the nest.

## Lee & Catherine Bidgood Farewell, As Good People Move On

It is with mixed emotions of sadness and joy that we say goodbye to Lee and Catherine Bidgood; sadness because they have been such stalwarts in our club and in the environmental movement in general and joy because they are embarking on another stage in their lives, one which they have been planning for some time. They will be moving out of the area and will no longer be able to participate in our club, except of course in spirit. Lee and Catherine were involved with the club since their arrival 27 years ago. Then it was called the New Smyrna Beach Audubon Society. It was formed by people whose initial interest was the establishment of Smyrna Dunes Park from lands the Coast Guard declared superfluous to their needs.

Since then, Lee and Catherine have been very active in the club. Lee was President from 1985-1987 and Conservation Chair since then. He has been Vice President for the ten years of my presidency. You are aware of his Conservation Notes in the *Skimmer*, and many of you remember his regular columns in the *NSB Observer* and other writings in local newspapers.

He has been successful in reducing herbicide and pesticide use in schools, fostering the use of Solar PV cells on homes and schools, focusing attention on global warming and many other issues. Catherine was our Membership Chair and editor of *The Skimmer* for 12 years— in times before the computer. Most recently she has been our Publicity Chair and I can't tell you how many people came to our meetings because they saw her articles in the local newspapers.

We appreciate everything they have done for the club. Our group will truly miss them and wish them Godspeed in their new home.

—Don



Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the people of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it.

- Chief Seattle

## Conservation Notes

### Florida's Biodiversity



Florida has marvelous biodiversity, but our progress(?) means that this great variety of life is at risk. For example:

A large, well known and lovable aquatic creature, the Florida manatee, struggles to survive. It's hard to believe that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission would decide to downgrade the manatee to Threatened from its former Endangered status – despite a record 416 manatees found dead last year, including 86 that were crushed or sliced to death by boats. Visitors to manatee-viewing parks notice that virtually all adult manatees bear serious propeller scars. No wonder many nursing baby manatees starve.

Of course the Conservation Commission was coaxed toward downgrading gentle sea cows by the speedy-boater tribe of boat-owners, a most prosperous and rapidly multiplying species. The speedy boater tribe hates to slow down when speeding toward a favored fishing or picnic spot. By roaring along at 30 mph, speedy-boaters can get to a desired location even five miles away in only 10 minutes. But horrors! Cruising at only 10 mph for that same five mile trip would use 30 minutes of their precious recreational time. Never mind that slow speed saves fuel, spares manatees and allows scenery viewing.

Equally as appealing as a sea cow, but much, much smaller is the friendly Florida scrub-jay, living only in the Sunshine State. Because these small birds show no fear of people, maybe an ancient tribe of Native Americans befriended and fed or even worshipped Florida scrub-jays. Perhaps these ancient people admired scrub-jay family organization. Mature birds often stay near their birthplace to help parents feed and protect the next generation. Sometimes these first-generation Florida scrub-jays bring food to a parent incubating eggs in the nest.

Florida scrub-jays survive only in scrub habitat formerly renewed by periodic forest fires. Much of their original territory has been converted into citrus groves and then into human communities. Fire prevention practices have allowed some scrub to become overgrown, attracting Blue jays which drive out scrub-jays. In recent years some controlled burns have helped to preserve scrub habitat, but housing proximity limits this smoky procedure. The Lyonia Preserve, beloved by scrub-jays in Deltona is maintained without fire by mowing and bulldozing to preserve scrub. As habitat shrinks, the Florida scrub-jay, officially a Threatened species could become an Endangered species.

Volusia County is home to the Endangered Rugel's paw-paw, a plant found nowhere else. The East Volusia-Flagler chapter of the Native Plant Society is named for Rugel's Paw-paw. It grows only in specific Volusia soils west of I-95. If huge developments proposed west of I-95 are built, this endemic flower could vanish.

The Florida manatee, scrub-jay and Rugel's paw-paw are but three of the myriad species that are dying out as Florida

encourages unbridled urban sprawl. Ancient scrub and swamps are probably home to myriads of tiny nameless plants and animals comprising the basic food of ever larger species, up the chain to humans or hawks.

A recent report noted that Florida has 56 different species of cockroaches. Those roaches may be more likely to endure than the three species discussed above.

We know how to preserve our heritage of biodiversity:

- ① Support taxes that fund land preservation.
- ① Quit polluting our inland and coastal waters. Establish and enforce slow speed zones in manatee habitat.
- ① Oppose proposals that would allow more urban sprawl. We already have zoning in place that could accommodate some 90 million Florida residents – far too many. Oppose new cities in the swamps.
- ① Collect and submit Florida Hometown Democracy petitions for a constitutional amendment that would allow Florida citizens to vote on future Comprehensive Plan amendments.

—Lee Bidgood

## Last Chance for EcoSun™ Bags

Fewer than a Dozen Left



### EcoSpun™ Bags

A good deal at \$8 ea.

Available at meetings.

We'll have them at the final meeting of the season or you can get in touch with Dick Domroski :  
ph. 386-428-0447 email r\_domroski@bellsouth.net

## Website Update

### We're Still Working On It

The website isn't up & running yet but we're hoping for a June debut.

Meanwhile we're planning to send **The eSkimmer** via email through the summer months (May, June, July, August, Sept.) that the hard copy version is napping.

To make sure you get your copy, just send an email to: [the.skimmer@yahoo.com](mailto:the.skimmer@yahoo.com) putting **Subscribe** in the Subject line and **eSkimmer** in the message box.

By the way, if you've picked this copy of *The Skimmer* up from one of drop locations ( e.g. library) and you'd like a hard copy delivered via conventional mail, include your name, street address & zip as well.

**Mar. 10 Field Trip Bird List**

Pied-billed Grebe  
 Double-crested  
 Cormorant Morning  
 Dove  
 Anhinga  
 Great Blue Heron  
 Common Ground Dove  
 Great Egret  
 Snowy Egret  
 Belted Kingfisher  
 Little Blue Heron  
 Tricolored Heron  
 Red-bellied Woodpecker  
 Cattle Egret  
 Green Heron  
 Pileated Woodpecker  
 Black-crowned Night Heron  
 White Ibis  
 Eastern Phoebe  
 Glossy Ibis  
 Wood Stork  
 Blue Jay  
 Black Vulture  
 Turkey Vulture  
 Fish Crow  
 Blue-winged Teal  
 Osprey  
 Purple Martin  
 Bald Eagle  
 Northern Harrier  
 Tree Swallow  
 Cooper's Hawk  
 Red-shouldered Hawk  
 Carolina Wren  
 Common Moorhen  
 American Coot  
 American Robin  
 Sandhill Crane  
 Ring-billed Gull  
 Northern Mockingbird  
 Gray Catbird  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler  
 Palm Warbler  
 Common Yellowthroat  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 Northern Cardinal  
 Red-winged Blackbird  
 Boat-tailed Grackle  
 Great Horned Owls

**From the Field****Orlando Wetlands Park**

Sixteen enthusiastic birders, including new guests Marsha & Bill Cox, enjoyed a beautiful spring morning at Orlando Wetlands Park. We identified 48 species by sight and sound while walking the trail and were rewarded with great poses of Black Crowned Night Heron, Anhinga, Green Heron and American Bald Eagle. Purple Martins were pairing and selecting nest sights in dead Cabbage Palms and the Coots and Moore Hens chuckled when we misidentified a bird. On the way South, we stopped in Scottsmoor to scope out an adult and two juvenile Great Horned Owls.

**April Field Trip**

Our next field trip will be Saturday, April 14th. We will travel to Washington Oaks Gardens State Park to look for Spring Migrants. The Gardens are always a special treat, there are several trails of various lengths to explore and there is a shaded picnic area & restroom facilities. Bring a picnic lunch, water & insect repellent. Plan on car pooling to share the \$4 per vehicle entry fee. Drive time is about 1 hour.

—Gail Domroski

**Native & Nice*****Tradescantia fluminesis***

When naturalists assign the term “common” to a species, I’m sure they are applying its definition of “widespread,” not “second-rate.” Nevertheless, I dislike the possible misunderstanding the term may create. (How can anyone who has observed the striking *Gavia immer* in summer plumage consider this striking bird a “common” loon?)

Nomenclature notwithstanding, Florida’s native wild-flower *Tradescantia ohiensis* is usually called common spiderwort. These grass-leaved perennials grow in clumps along the roadside and on the banks of ditches; they even pop up in lawns. It is not unusual to drive by an open area carpeted with spiderwort. Although spiderwort blooms from spring through fall, now is the time for the most profuse clusters of small blue to purple flowers that are about the size of a quarter.

Although the flowers last just a few hours in the morning, they are quickly replaced by others. Trimming off the old flower stalks and seed heads encourages more blossoms. Pest-free and almost indestructible, the spiderwort thrives in a wide range of conditions: dry to moist, sun to shade.

*Tradescantia fluminesis* is the white variety of spiderwort, but it is less widespread.

Spiderwort multiplies quickly. It is abundantly self-seeding and each plant clump grows larger over time. Because they are found almost everywhere, it is hardly necessary to purchase spiderworts. However, Full Moon Native Nursery in Port Orange offers both the blue and the white varieties for sale.

—Donnadine Miller

**Nature Photography Contest*****Orange Audubon Society***

Orange Audubon Society is accepting entries for its 19<sup>th</sup> annual Chertok Open Nature Photography Contest. Themes for the two categories for the digital contest are “Florida’s Birds!” and “No Birds Allowed!” Entries cannot show humans, human-made structures or artifacts, or fauna or flora non-native to Florida.

Only digital images in \*.jpg format and a file size of 1MB or less supplied on CDs readable by PC-based applications are acceptable. You may convert prints, negatives or slides (transparencies) to digital images before entering. Images may not be excessively manipulated. Final deadline for entries is May 17, 2007. Optional pre-screening deadline is April 19, 2007.

Cash and other awards will be announced June 21. Cost: \$3 per image for ages 17 or younger; \$5 per image for Audubon members (any chapter); \$7 per image for nonmembers. For complete details and entry forms, visit [www.orangeaudubonfl.org](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org) or call 407-644-0796.

**Help Wanted**

**We're Depending On YOU!**

SOUTHEAST VOLUSIA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 46  
New Smyrna Beach, FL. 32170



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**MISSION STATEMENT: THE SOUTHEAST VOLUSIA AUDUBON SOCIETY PROMOTES THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, OTHER WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITAT THROUGH EDUCATION AND ACTIVISM.**

## Officers & Chairs



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Education/Outreach: Vacant		
Ways & Means: Vacant		
Hospitality: Vacant		

## Meetings

Meetings are held the 1st Wednesdays  
**Oct. thru March**

Edgewater Library 103 Indian River Blvd. 7: P.M.  
Smoke-free environment. Refreshments are served.  
Plenty of parking. Public welcome.

**April 4 - Annual Potluck Picnic 5:30 p.m.**  
**Menard-May Park, Edgewater**  
*please note time & place*

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

## Field Trips

Field trips begin at **8:00 A.M.** unless otherwise noted. Meet in the Market Square parking lot Edgewater, Ridgewood Ave. & 442, between Dunkin Donuts & Chik-Fil-A.

Bring lunch & drinks. Don't forget bug-spray!

**April 14 - Washington Oaks Gardens State Park**

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 428-0447

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.