



The Skimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc. Vol. 31 - No.4 January 2006

Prez Sez

Goals For The New Year

I hope you had a great holiday season and wish you a safe, healthy and environmentally friendly 2006.

During the December meeting, I presented a list of goals for the chapter for this year. They were accepted unanimously by the members present. For those of you who were not present, I am providing a list of these today. They included:

1. Help the city of New Smyrna Beach develop the new park on Saxon Road with a view of providing a wildlife observation tower..
2. Develop a closer liaison with the Bird Rescue Center.
3. Protect wetlands, especially Spruce Creek and the Tomoka River source.
4. Support solar energy and try to persuade the legislature to come up with a law to reward use of solar energy.
5. Procure "Bird nesting/resting" signs for Smyrna Dunes Park and work with park manager to protect the wildlife from children and dogs.
6. Encourage the use of alternatives to pesticides on lawns.
7. Put environmentally targeted educational media in several local elementary schools. Let them choose from a list. Because of limited funds would have to rotate this program.
8. Establish a memorial to Debbie Thomas, a former member who died of a rare form of cancer last year.
9. Work with schools and scouts to get children involved in the environment.

Get them involved in birding activities such as Christmas Bird Count.

Sponsor judges and prizes at regional science fair.

If you are interested in helping with any of these goals, please contact us. We can always use the enthusiastic participation of our members.

—Don Picard

When the planes still swoop down and aerial spray a field in order to kill a predator insect with pesticides, we are in the Dark Ages of commerce.

— Paul Hawken

Meetings

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.

Jan. 4 - Gian Basili - Senior Project Manager
Lake Apopka Restoration Program
St. Johns River Water Management District

Officers & Chairs

President: Don Picard.....321-206-4658
 VP: Lee Bidgood 423-4682
 Secretary: Helga Carlson..... 423-5700
 Treasurer: Richard Domroski..... 428-0447
 News Letter Editor: Gil Miller.....423-4124
 Programs: Patty Moody.....427-8559
 Field Trips: Gail Domroski..... 428-0447
 Conservation: Lee Bidgood..... 423-4682
 Hospitality: Edna Balis.....423-8414
 Membership: Richard Domroski..... 428-0447
 Education/Outreach: Kathryn Garner..... 409-0260
 New Member Greeter: Mary Yon..... 423-5934
 Publicity: Catherine Bidgood..... 423-4682
 Ways & Means: Vacant

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!

Jan. 7 - Merritt Island

Contact Gail Domroski 428-0447

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

Conservation Notes



The Creeping Crisis May Be Leaping

For three decades, climate scientists reported that man-made greenhouse gases were possibly or probably helping to warm the planet. Their cautious reports about a slowly developing problem alarmed few of us or our government. But recently the creeping crisis of global heating has accelerated.

Recent scientific findings and weather events:

- Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration is higher than at any time in the last 650,000 years. The rise in the last two centuries is 200 times faster than at any time during 650 millennia.

- The Chief Scientist aboard a Canadian icebreaker measuring Arctic Sea pack ice, reported that summer ice shrank steadily since 1978, but last summer the melt rate increased sharply. Melting pack ice exposes dark seawater that absorbs far more sun's heat than ice and snow – reinforcing global heating.

- In the last two centuries the rate of sea level rise has doubled, fed by melting glaciers. University of Maine scientists reported that two of Greenland's largest glaciers are sliding faster into the sea. One is now moving about 9 miles per year (mpy), up from 3 mpy in 2001. The other's speed increased to 7 mpy from 4 mpy over the same period. Greenland holds enough ice to raise sea level 23 feet. Some scientists worry that in several decades the Greenland melting trend may become irreversible.

- Munich Re, the giant reinsurance firm, reported that global weather-related disaster losses set a new record of \$200 billion in 2005, far surpassing the previous \$145 billion record in 2004.

- Weather extremes are increasing. The 2003 European heat wave killed about 35,000 people. Thirty major European floods from 1995 through 2004 killed 1,000 people and affected 2.5 million others. Southern Europe endured record heat, drought and wildfires last summer. Some scientists believe that climate change is causing Sahara desert-like conditions to move north across the Mediterranean. Spain and Portugal lost 60 percent of their grain crop last summer and many Portuguese wells went dry.

- Ironically, Europe could suffer a big freeze from global heating. The science journal, *Nature*, reported that subtropical Atlantic Ocean temperatures in the last 50 years indicate that the Gulf Stream may be 30 percent weaker. Warm water from the Gulf, instead of flowing north, is circling southward toward the Brazilian coast. If further research verifies this trend, in 30 years the average temperature of Northwestern Europe could drop about 11 degrees F, while most of the world bakes. Could it be affecting Brazil?

- This year's record Amazon River basin drought has dried up tributaries and lagoons, killing untold millions of fish and stranding people accustomed to traveling and trading by boat. The Brazilian government has staved off widespread starvation by distributing food via army helicopters. Scientists say the drought may have been caused by higher temperatures in the tropical Atlantic, which also spawned Hurricane Katrina.

To help achieve energy independence, the US will give \$700 million to a consortium of public utilities and coal mining firms that plan a relatively small \$950 million "clean" coal power plant. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, carbon dioxide would be extracted from the exhaust and injected into underground reservoirs for supposedly permanent storage. Why not spend those 700 million taxpayer dollars on proven, clean renewable energy projects and let coal companies and utilities finance their own clean coal plant?

Some good news:

Contrary to our federal government's insistence that compulsory greenhouse gas cuts would cripple the economy, the reverse has happened in California. After the first oil price spike in the 1970s, California imposed strict environmental rules limiting pollution, including greenhouse gases. Businesses and consumers have saved an estimated \$56 billion by using energy more efficiently since then. Now California has set a highly ambitious goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050.

Army housing on bases in Hawaii is being equipped with solar systems that will cut fossil fuel use by 30 percent for 7,894 new and renovated dwellings. This will be the largest solar project for any US residential development. If an army housing project gets 30 percent of its energy with solar, why can't Florida?

As reported last meeting, a bill to boost solar photovoltaic (PV) installations will probably be filed in the 2006 Florida legislative session. The bill will need strong local support to pass. Chapter activists will be notified when support becomes timely.

The Sunshine State has the most to lose of any state from sea level rise and stronger hurricanes fueled by global heating. We ought to become leaders in using clean, free sunshine energy.

—Lee Bidgood



From the Field

Thirteen members spotted 76 species on our trip to Merritt Island. We saw 10 species of Ducks. Thanks to Charles Buchy, who saw a small odd Duck waddling across the road from one pond to another, we were able to get a good look at a female Ruddy Duck. We were happy to welcome three new members, Ann Walls, Jackie Myers and Ken Park, on this field trip.

Come join us Saturday **Jan. 7th** for our next trip. Remember, our start time is changing to **8 am**.

—Gail Domroski

Editor's Note

We'd like to invite those folks who read this newsletter but, for some reason or another, can't seem to make it to our meetings or field trips to come on in. Although we mail well over 200 issues each month, the attendance at meetings is a low percentage of that list.

You'll find that the meetings are interesting, informative and agreeably short on "business matters". This year the speakers lined up by our Programs chair, Patty Moody have been vibrant, motivational and most of all informative on issues that concern us. I've left each meeting knowing more than I did when I entered.

The field trips planned by Gail Domroski are great for birders of all ages. We manage to car pool at the meeting site and once at the designated trip area, Gail & Dick are excellent guides. The terrain is never too difficult for anyone to handle.

For those of you who have picked up this Skimmer at the local library, Chamber of Commerce or another rack in the county, please take part in a meeting or a field trip. You don't have to be an Audubon member to participate in either and you'll find when meeting with us that we aren't "pushy". We won't badger you into becoming a member. Many folks have come to meetings and field trips time and again without joining but, I will say, those who come back frequently wind up joining the group.

We have fun birding and we tackle serious environmental issues. We are the kind of group you'll feel comfortable with if you're interested in wildlife & our environment.

Come see for yourself.

—Gil Miller

Eco-Spun™ Bags

Our chapter's logo looks great in black on these off-white bags. Eco-Spun™ is fabric made from recycled plastic bottles. It's bright, soft and very durable. Leave them in your car so they'll be handy whenever you go shopping. We use ours for a weekly shopping trip to the super-market.

We'll have them at every meeting.

We think they're a good deal at \$8 ea.



New Members

We welcome new members Karen Harris, Ray Jetton, Sr., Mary J Maurer and Robert Scott Randall.

—R.D.

Native & Nice

If you have walked through local wooded coastal areas such as the proposed Saxon Park, you have probably seen *Psychotria nervosa*, better known as wild coffee. Its favorite location is at the base of larger trees where it is protected from the intense sun. At 6-8 feet tall, wild coffee makes a good under story plant in backyard landscapes, as well.

More a shrub than a tree, wild coffee is very attractive. Its dark, glossy evergreen leaves are deeply veined, much like its relative the gardenia. Clusters of small white blossoms give way to maroon berries which resemble coffee beans. Not for human consumption, the berries are favored by blue jays, cardinals, and catbirds.

Wild coffee is as adaptable as it is attractive. It prefers a somewhat moist, alkaline soil, but will adjust to some variation. It is also somewhat salt tolerant.

The wild coffee plants in my yard came from Full Moon Natives nursery in Port Orange and continue to be a stock item there. However, self-sown seedlings pop up near the parent plant, so I am watching mine for signs of a new generation.

—Donnadine Miller

Audubon of Florida

Frequently asked questions

Q: Is it safe to feed my hummingbirds nectar with red dye, as sold in most stores?

A: Current thinking is that the red dye may not be good for them. The red dye is not necessary to attract hummingbird. The color on your feeder is enough to attract them. You can mix your own nectar using 1/4 cup sugar to every 1 cup of warm water. Avoid honey due to the potential of botulism, and also avoid artificial sweeteners such as Nutasweet® due to the lack of nutritional value.

Q: What is safe to feed my backyard birds?

A: Most of the prepackaged wild bird seed and suet cakes are a favorite among backyard birds. This mixture can be obtained from most grocery stores, pet stores or Wild Bird Centers (1-800-WILD BIRD).

Q: What do I do about birds building a nest in an inappropriate place on my property?

A: The best advice is to stop this process as soon as it starts. Remove the nest materials by hand or with a hose, making sure not to injure any nearby wildlife. This action is only appropriate in the beginning stages of nest building. If nesting has already begun, it is against the law to injure or disturb wildlife.

<http://www.audubonofflorida.org/>

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

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

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New Smyrna Beach, Fl.
Permit No. 59

West Volusia Audubon

PROGRAMS

Fourth Tuesdays, September – April, except December,
The Woman's Club of DeLand, Inc.,
128 West Michigan Ave., DeLand.
6:30 PM Mix and mingle - 7:00 PM Meeting and program

The Bird Rescue Center

THE BIRD RESCUE CENTER, has done an outstanding job of rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing sick, injured and orphaned birds. It is staffed entirely by volunteers.

Needless to say, they can always use your help. They'll train you to the job of your choice and you'll find the experience rewarding.

Call Phyllis Lamborn - 423-1434

Florida Native Plant Society

There are two local chapter of FNPS in our area: the **Lyonia Chapter** and the **Paw Paw Chapter**.

Both offer monthly presentations on native plant topics and related environmental issues. They also sponsor field trips and local demonstration gardens.

Lyonia Chapter Monthly Meetings
Second Tues. at 7 pm, Volusia County Ag Center
Contact: Ray Jarret: 386-409-0543

Paw Paw Chapter Monthly Meetings
Third Tues. at 7 pm, Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave
Contact: Kevin Bagwell 386-212-9923

Halifax River Audubon www.halifaxriveras.org/

PROGRAMS

Third Mondays, September - May, at 6:30 P.M.

Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona, Holly Hill, FL

Chapter meetings consist of a speaker, business meeting and light refreshments. All members and guests are welcome.

Jan. 6 Jim Rodgers, Avian Research Program Leader.
FF&WCC, Gainesville

"Breeding Ecology and Productivity of the Wood Stork in Florida"

FIELD TRIPS

There are three field trips in January - Check with web-site or call Kevein.

For information about field trips call Kevin Doxstater 386-212-4319