



The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc. Summer Email Issue Vol. II - No. 3 July, 2007

The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society promotes the protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitat through education and activism.

Prez Sez

Time sure goes by quickly when you are in a beautiful place. Maureen and I have been spending our weekends hiking both in Teton National Park and in Yellowstone, immediately North of us. A couple of weeks ago we hiked to Taggart Lake in Teton Park. It was a lovely sub-Alpine lake carved out by glaciers about 10-15000 years ago. We decided to take another trail back, finishing a loop of about 6 miles. We saw a robin-sized bird perched on a dead branch singing its heart out and being very cooperative while we got pictures and checked the field guide. It was a Green-tailed Towhee. I had only seen one before, at Rocky Mountain National Park in 2002. We were lucky because they are normally difficult to see since they spend most of their time scratching in the lower grasses and thickets.

Last week, a buddy and I decided to go fishing at the point where String Lake dumps into Jenny Lake. One of the other guys told us it was hot. He "hammered 'em" a few days earlier. We didn't even get a strike so we decided to hike and fish the bank of Jenny Lake to the point where Hidden Falls empties into Jenny. We had to bushwhack down to that point. It was tough going but worth it. Right at the mouth, there was an American Dipper swimming in the fast current catching bugs beneath the surface of the water. According to Sibley, the American Dipper is unique in that it is the only songbird that regularly swims.

Last night found me fishing alone at Jackson Lake. The water level was so high that there was little place to fish from the bank, and the water was so choppy that I could not see if any fish were rising. So I decided to try the Snake River just below the dam (on Jackson Lake). I was about to turn into the side road to the river when a Black Bear crossed the road in front of me. I got a couple of awful pictures since it was nearly dark so I proceeded down the road to the river to see if I could get a better shot. There were a couple of fishermen on the river at the end of the road so I warned them about the bear heading in their direction. We chatted for about half an hour and I started to leave. It was too dark to fish when I know there is a bear in the area. I was half way up the side road when I saw a Grizzly sow and her three cubs following in the same path as the Black Bear. I turned around to see if they would emerge at the river and they did. In fact, so did the Black Bear. It was an amazing sight to see the three yearling cubs cavorting by the river and neither the Grizzlies nor the Black Bear paid any attention to each other.

—Don

Meetings

Meetings are held the first Wed. of each month

Oct. thru March at 7 P.M.

Next meeting is October 3, 2007

Links



Birds as Barometers/Indicators

<http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/sowb/6.html>

Planet Ark

<http://www.planetark.com/>

Your Florida Backyard

<http://www.nsis.org/index.html>

Florida Native Plants

<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/guide/invplant.html>

Central Florida Bird Watchers

<http://www.cfbw.com/index.html>

Florida Hotspots

<http://www.camacdonald.com/birding/usflorida.htm>

Our Email Address

the.skimmer@yahoo.com

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Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man.

Stewart Udall

Secretary of the Interior in the Cabinet of President John F. Kennedy (January 1961-January 1969)

Conservation Notes

Scrub jay Update and more . . .

Good news! Mr. Corder, Parks and Leisure Director of the City of Edgewater, e-mailed me June 21st that the US Fish and Wildlife informed him that the City needs to continue the maintenance program for the Scrub Jay Habitat and would like for the City to provide them with a revised burn plan. Mr. Corder is trying to set up a meeting with the biologist and local fire officials. Also, city staff are scheduled to start topping some of the trees within the next couple of weeks. We are being heard!

We still need members to monitor the Habitat to help "Bring Back the Jays!" please let me know if you'd like to help: 386-409-3091 mprademacher@msn.com

Another reason against the Restoration housing development West of I-95 is that swallowtail kite nests have been found with one kite seen on a nest last week. The next kite survey will be Friday, July 13th, 8 AM to noon. Let me know if you want to go kite nest searching because we will have to have enough trucks or 4 wheel vehicles to take us onto the property. The field trip will be led by a biologist.

I will be attending my first Environmental Council meeting which will give me an opportunity as your Conservation Chair, to network with other environmental groups in the County and find out what we issues we should be addressing and how best to go about it. Then in August, there will be a meeting of all state Audubon Conservation Chairs. Hopefully, after these meetings, I will be better able to fulfill the role of Conservation Chair on your behalf. In addition, I am gradually going through a box Lee Bidgood left me full of information about various issues/projects.

If you know of any other local issues we need to be addressing, please contact me about it.

—Kathy Booth

Let's Bring the Jays Back to Edgewater!

New Members

We welcome Francis Doher, Diane Frick, Donna Rankin, Carol Plaice, Cheryl Durley, Hope Christensen, Vernon Cook, & Maxine Jefferson.

I feel more confident than ever that the power to save the planet rests with the individual consumer.

Denis Hayes

Denis Hayes worked with Gaylord Nelson in the environmental movement. For more on him see:

<http://www.nrdc.org/reference/profiles/prohayes.asp>



Wandering Members

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

I had an excuse to travel to Prince Edward Island in the Canadian maritimes and jumped on it. I arrived Thursday, June 7 in the evening and left the following Tuesday evening. As the conference I attended ran Friday noon to Monday noon, I had time for sightseeing and bird watching.

Thursday evening, after checking into my hotel, I drove 45 minutes west of Charlottetown to Confederation Bridge. This is an impressive cement causeway, almost 8 miles long, completed ten years ago to connect the island to the Canadian mainland. The purpose of this trip wasn't birding but I did see several Blue Heron along the way.

The next morning, I drove west of town a short way to one of the managed "woodlots" on the island. These are areas where native species have been planted and the area managed in a way to approximate original diversity. There were quiet trails through the woods but the best birding for the warblers I was looking for was along a power line right-of-way. I saw a Black-throated Green, a Magnolia and a pair of Yellow-rumped; the first two were lifers for me. A woodpecker was rapping on one of the power posts but I couldn't locate it.

The weather all during the conference was beautiful but turned cooler, windy and finally wet starting mid-day Monday.

Monday afternoon the conference photographer went out with me. She led me to an area of cliffs, a local secret, where Great and Double-crested Cormorants nested. There were at least a hundred nests and we were able to see eggs in a couple of them and chicks in one as the setting bird repositioned herself. We watched for half an hour as the adults came and went, each time landing effortlessly on the sheer cliff above or beside their partner's nest. Neither cormorant was a lifer but the Iceland Gull, of which there were several over and on the water below, was.

We spent the rest of the afternoon near the north shore of the island, seeing several ducks, mainly Black and Mallard, several Song Sparrows, many swallows, blackbirds and crows, an Osprey and two Bald Eagles, one flying and one on the edge of a slough.

The next morning, I went out to a woodlot east of town but between poor weather and many mosquitoes saw very few birds. I actually saw three warblers but did not get good enough views to identify them.

The last afternoon, the photographer again went out with me. We saw several Song Sparrows, a family of Blue Jays and had a close look at a Common Yellow-throat but weather and luck kept me from adding to my life list. I did get to see a potato packing plant and a lot of Hereford cows and calves.

Overall, I only saw about 40 species and added three birds to my life list but the island is extremely beautiful and the people friendly and hospitable.

—Ken Gunn

From The Field

Panhandle Airport

Leah Ellington of the Cleanwater Network sent this to us:

The following letter to the editor, printed in the Orlando Sentinel, does a great job of explaining why the proposed Panama City-Bay County International Airport is such a bad idea for *everyone* in Florida. If it is allowed to happen, this corporate welfare project will use our state and federal tax money, which could go to other more deserving projects at a time when revenue is already being affected by property tax changes, not to mention the negative impacts on the waters of the area.

Even though you may live hundreds of miles away from Panama City, this plan affects you. The state has already squandered \$40 million of your taxes on studies and permitting for this environmentally destructive project.

Please go to

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/views/orlando2507jun25,0,4519904.story#comment-form>

to express your opinions about this unnecessary waste of taxpayer money (click on Reader Feedback in the Article Tools box on the right side of the page).

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<http://www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org/>



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- Education/Outreach: Vacant
- Hospitality: Vacant

We need YOU to fill one of these vacant spaces!

Native & Nice

Stokesia laevis



Most flowering native plants have blossoms that are significantly smaller than their non-native counterparts. Not so with Stokes' aster (*Stokesia laevis*). These full, multi-petaled flowers are one of the few natives with blue-lavender flowers in bloom now. Stokes' asters sport several sizeable (up to 4" diameter) blossoms on each stem.

Each year the perennial, evergreen plant clusters broaden, increasing the number of flower-bearing stems. Dead-heading spent blossoms extends their flowering period. However, I propagate Stokes' asters by leaving some of the seed heads to dry each fall then sprinkling them in the bed. The clumps can also be divided.

According to Nelson (Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants), Stokes' aster prefer moist, acid soils. My specimens are a testament to their adaptability, as my yard is mostly dry and sandy. They are just as tolerant of varying degrees of sunlight. Their blossoms are attractive to butterflies and bees.

Interestingly, gardeners are warned that Stokes' asters may multiply so quickly that they need thinning. They are such a lovely addition to flower beds that having too many would be an attractive "problem."

—Donnadine Miller

Let's Bring the Jays Back to Edgewater!



Please forward this **eSkimmer** to friends.

"The fate of the living planet is the most important issue facing mankind".

Gaylord Nelson

Gaylord Nelson, former Governor and Senator from Wisconsin, was considered the founder of Earth Day.

For more on him see
<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=N000033>