



The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc. Summer Email Issue Vol. II - No. 2 June, 2007

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

Prez Sez

Greetings from Wyoming.

Our trip out was very eventful, taking eight days to go 2300 miles. Tire problems the first couple of days resulted in a new set of six tires for the motor home to the tune of \$1600. The ones on the motor home were apparently originals, and despite the good tread remaining had been deteriorating and needed replacement. The first clue was when an internal dually (on the rear) blew out about 15 miles south of Troy, AL. I limped the rig into Troy and found a shop that could install the tires, but they were too large for them to balance. So it took a stop two days later at a Truck Stop to get that done.

We got to Lake McConahay early in the day and decided to stop and smell the roses and even camp there overnight. There was a really nice beach visible from the campsite and I got the scope out. Lots of gulls, terns, Canada Geese and Western Grebes. Of course, the Western Meadowlarks kept us serenaded with their songs. We went to the beach and were treated to a pair of Piping Plovers. It appeared she was preparing a nest because her legs were well down into the beach sand.

Since we arrived in Wyoming, I have been keeping a log of the birds and other animals we have seen. Animals include several grizzly bears, a black bear, pronghorns, mule deer, elk, moose, coyotes, fox, Uintah ground squirrels, red squirrels, golden mantled squirrels, etc. Birds include Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Swainson's Hawks, Trumpeter Swans, White Pelicans, California Gulls, Osprey, killdeer, Ravens, Darkeyed Juncos, Common Mergansers, Western Grebes, Wilson's Phalarope, Ruddy Ducks, Buffleheads, Redheads, Barrow's Goldeneye, GB Herons, American Wigeons, Green-winged Teals, Yellow-headed blackbirds, brown-headed cowbirds, and lots more. It is really great to see some of these birds in their spring finery when we only see them in winter drabs in Florida.

Until next time, have a happy summer.

—Don Picard

Meetings

Meetings are held the first Wed. of each month

Oct. thru March at 7 P.M.

Next meeting is October 3, 2007

Officers & Chairs



President: Don Picard	321-206-4658	sevas@cfl.rr.com
VP: Roger Cutler	386-427-7282	rcutler@ucnsb.net
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Conservation: Kathy Booth	386-409-3091	mprademacher@msn.com
Membership: Richard Domroski	386-428-0447	r_domroski@bellsouth.net
Publicity: Vacant		
Ways & Means: Vacant		
Education/Outreach: Vacant		
Hospitality: Vacant		

We need YOU to fill one of these vacant spaces!

New Members

We welcome Lou Bartos; Susan Cassels; Alice Shull; Joseph Montpelier & Gary Palmer.

Let's Bring the Jays Back to Edgewater!

Conservation Notes

Scrub Jay Habitat

On a visit to the Edgewater Scrub Jay Habitat in May with Audubon member and native plant expert, Sonya Guidry, we were fascinated as she identified over sixty-five native plants during our three hour stroll in the scrub.

Of particular interest were parasitic aphids (*Dactylopus coccus*) living in a protective cottony mass on prickly pear cactus, that when crushed, produced a bright red "Cochineal" dye used by the Aztecs and that is actually used in products even today. During the visit, we met Johnny Lee, a City employee, who maintains the Habitat under the direction of Jack Corder, Director of Parks and Leisure, City of Edgewater. Mr. Lee was congenial and ready to do whatever needs doing to restore the habitat. Mr. Lee seemed most concerned about the wild grape vines covering a lot of the smaller vegetation, but it was pointed out that if the City had burned as previously planned over the years when weather permitted, the vines would not be a problem.

After the visit to the Habitat, the updated biological survey done October 2006, was obtained from Mr. Corder's office. Unfortunately, the survey does not re-iterate any of the recommendations found in original plan done 11/99, nor does it note that essentially none of the recommendations have been followed by the City since that time. The good news is that the biologist does say that "given the habitat on site and potential provided through the management plan, sufficient habitat for this family to expand could be possible in the future". The biologist also notes that no endangered or threatened plant species were present at the time of year he did the survey, but that scrub jay and gopher tortoise are both on site and both are threatened.

To those interested in preserving scrub jays and who want to volunteer for monitoring their Habitat in Edgewater, there will be a free scrub jay training session at Lyonia Preserve Saturday June 9th from 8-12. Please call Kathy Booth @ 386-409-3091 if you would like to attend.

If you'd like to arrange a guided visit to the Edgewater Scrub jay Habitat to view the scrub jay and other birds, native plants or the butterflies, also call Ms. Booth.

Let's Bring the Jays Back to Edgewater!

Green Schools

A Good Sign Indeed

A shortened version of this story appeared in the Daytona News-Journal, Tuesday, May 29, 2007.

Here is a link to Yahoo news which has the story plus links:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20070528/ap_on_re_us/green_schools



Wandering Members

Canadian Owl

I spent the last few days of February and the first half of March at our cabin in the Alberta foothills.

One evening, as I was driving home just after sunset, I spotted a small, dark bird at the very top of a tree beside the road ahead of me. It was obviously trying to catch the last of the warmth from the now departed sun. I stopped, as I had no idea what kind of bird it could be at that time of year.

Light was poor and failing fast but when I put my glasses on it, the head immediately struck me as being that of an owl. Just then it flew past me and landed at the top of a tall spruce tree behind me, still trying to get some sun. The flight was similar to that of several woodpecker species (flap, flap, flap, glide/dip, flap, flap) and it appeared to be close to the size of a Downy. I backed by it and again stopped a comfortable distance away for another look.

The light and the angle were slightly better this time and I was able to determine that it had a fair amount of white all down the side of its breast and a light pattern over and between the eyes. The prominent feature, however, was the tail. It had some light barring but stuck out at a very odd angle.

A quick search through Sibley determined that it was definitely a Pygmy-Owl. There are just two types of Pygmy-Owl in Sibley; the Ferruginous, which barely gets as far north as South Texas and southern Arizona and the Northern, whose rather erratic range covers Southwest Alberta. As best that I could see in the poor light, the white / light patterns more closely matched those of the Pacific than of the Interior subspecies and I could not tell brown from rufus from gray at all.

Based on the tail and the range, I am certain that what I saw was a Northern Pygmy-Owl and have added it to my life list.

—Ken Gunn

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>

Our Email Address

the.skimmer@yahoo.com

From The Field

North American Migration Count

In our last issue (The eSkimmer, May 2007), we talked about the North American Migration Count in Florida, sponsored by Florida Ornithological Society, and supported by local Audubon Societies, local bird clubs, and other interested organizations.

This spring's count was taken on Saturday, May 12 and interested members of our Southeast Volusia Audubon Society chapter participating were: Richard & Gail Domroski, Charlie & Maritta Buchy, Lee & Catherine Bidgood, Helga Carlson, Virginia Heidenreich, Ken Park; Bitsy Flame, Kathy Booth; Layla Buck, Jean McNeal, Yvonne Teitsworth, Don & Beverly LeRoy, Fred & Nancy White

More information on the results of the count can be found at <http://www.fosbirds.org/>

Scrub Jays

We Need to Work On This

Daytona News-Journal Environment Writer Dinah Voyles-Pulver has written a series of articles concerning the plight of the Florida scrub jay which appeared—front page with pictures, no less—in the Sunday Edition (May 20) of the N-J.

Here are links to that series, well worth reading.

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/special/natural/nothingbutscraps.htm>

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/special/natural/scrubjays.htm>

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/special/natural/primescrub.htm>

Hopefully, the articles will pique the interest of local movers & shakers and something will be done before Florida is completely paved over.

Our Conservation chair, Kathy Booth has made the Edgewater Scrub Jay Habitat our conservation issue and is bulking up our new Scrub Jay Habitat committee to tackle this formidable task. Our battle cry, **"Let's Bring the Jays Back to Edgewater!"** hopefully will attract some attention to our cause.

This perky little bird with a huge personality embodies what is sometimes cursorily referred to as "quality of life" a term we need to pay a lot more attention to.

Please forward this  to friends.

Native & Nice

Silver Buttonwood

Not long after we moved to New Smyrna Beach (nearly 10 years ago!), we visited the farmers market at the DeLand fairgrounds. Since we knew approximately nothing about native plants, it was a lucky happenstance that we stumbled on a vendor selling what turned out to be native silver buttonwoods (*Conocarpus erectus* var. *sericeus*).



We liked the shrub's silver-green foliage so we brought home several. They did not thrive. They grew very slowly and soon became covered with a black sooty mold. Fortunately, the mold was easy to remove; I have since learned that had I planted them on our bay side, the saline influence probably would have prevented the mold.

I patiently pruned my silver buttonwoods into small, multi-trunked trees. Today they stand as graceful, willowy sentinels among the beauty-berry, Stokes aster, and spiderwort bed in our front yard.

I've also seen silver buttonwood densely planted as a shrubby hedge along a driveway, which makes a much more spectacular showing than single specimens.

Silver buttonwoods are a variant of the all-green buttonwoods, hardy trees but not nearly as attractive as their silver cousins.

—Donnadine Miller

Let's Bring the Jays Back to Edgewater!

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a commodity to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

Aldo Leopold



© Gil Miller

ALERT**A message from Linda Young.**

This arrived in our mailbox this morning, just in time for inclusion in this issue of The eSkimmer.

Please read it and take action. This is one of the many benefits of having an electronic eSkimmer.

Dear friends of Florida's waters

Sally Swartz of the Palm Beach Post did an excellent job in the opinion piece below, explaining the importance of the recent recommendation by Judge Canter in the International Permit case.

I hope you will read it and have a few minutes to contact the Governor's office and/or DEP to let them know we want DEP to uphold the judges' recommendation. If you need a quick and easy way to send a letter, go to our website and use our Action Alert message to the Governor. You can get further information about the IP case on our website as well. Look under "Issues" and then go to International Paper. You will find a wealth of info there. Thank you for all your efforts to protect Florida's waters.

Remember that Judge Canter is our judge in the Buckeye case as well, so we REALLY need to support his courageous action.

Thank you,
Linda L. Young, Director
Clean Water Network of Florida
llyoung2@earthlink.net
850-222-9188

Please take a minute to visit our new website at <http://www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org/>. It has a daily list of statewide news clips on Florida's environmental issues, plus a Blog on which you can share your thoughts about current environmental issues and much more.

Clean-water win, if the state agrees

By Sally Swartz mail to: sally_swartz@pbpost.com

Palm Beach Post editorial writer Wednesday, May 30, 2007

Up in Florida's Panhandle, a test awaits Gov. Crist's Department of Environmental Protection.

Will Secretary Michael Sole uphold a ruling that, finally, makes a paper mill stop polluting once-pristine Perdido Bay? This month, an administrative law judge denied the world's largest paper company, International Paper, a permit to build a discharge pipe to the bay and told the DEP to make the firm obey clean-water rules.

If Mr. Sole agrees with the judge, it will signal that Gov. Crist means to make polluters accountable. If Mr. Sole overrides the judge's recommendation - as he can - the "new" DEP's credo will remain "business as usual."

International Paper got statewide attention in 2004, after Gov. Jeb Bush's DEP secretary, David Struhs, engineered a public bailout for the private polluter. Then, Mr. Struhs quit the agency to become International Paper's vice president of environmental affairs. It was a natural transition in more ways than that. One year earlier, Mr. Struhs supported the legislation that extended by 10 years the deadline for cleaning up the Everglades.

Mr. Struhs started helping International Paper in 2000, after it bought the mill near Pensacola. The mill, under several owners, has failed to meet state water-quality standards since 1989 and dumps millions of gallons of waste daily into nearby waterways. A Web site www.friendsofperdidobay.com shows photos of the mill's dirty foam and scum on beaches. The state never has strictly enforced pollution rules for the mill, which employs almost 1,000 people.

Mr. Struhs arranged a \$56 million, low-interest loan, administered by the DEP, to a utilities authority for a sewage treatment plant and pipeline to the mill, which then would send treated waste to "experimental" wetlands.

The money he funneled ordinarily would have been used to help small governments with water cleanup projects. It was hard to tell which was worse: the deal itself, or the fact that the public would be paying for it.

The deal was approved in October 2002. A year later, Mr. Struhs recused himself from dealing with International Paper because the firm was trying to hire him. He left the DEP for his new job in February 2004. That year, the DEP signed off on the plan to pipe 23 million gallons of waste daily to 1,500 acres of wetlands, which were supposed to filter the polluted water before it enters the bay.

But on May 11, Florida Administrative Law Judge Bram Canter recommended that the DEP deny International Paper's request to build the 10-mile pipeline to the wetlands. In essence, the judge's decision negates the sweetheart deal Mr. Struhs engineered at the public's expense. With that decision, the judge also said that whether a pipeline is built or not, International Paper's discharges don't meet water-quality standards and denied the experimental use of wetlands.

Mr. Struhs, contacted Tuesday at International Paper's Memphis office, said, "The judge obviously erred." International Paper is appealing the decision. "In any other part of the world," he said, "International Paper's efforts to clean up would be celebrated and win some awards." He said he believes the judge's decision is "not consistent with DEP's own rules."

Stuart environmental lawyer Howard Heims argued the case before Judge Canter for Friends of Perdido Bay and the James Lane family, which has fought since the 1950s to stop the paper mill from dumping its waste into the bay.

Obviously, Mr. Lane is pleased with the ruling. But he has celebrated other legal victories, sat on committees that recommended cleanup, and then watched the DEP transfer regulators or polluters recruit them.

The Clean Water Network (www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org) a coalition of environmental groups, is urging Floridians to write Gov. Crist. If the DEP backs the judge and makes the paper mill clean up, the agency will set a precedent for making other major polluters statewide do the same. That would be a great victory for Florida's waters.

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

Look for the article under Opinion/Columnists/SallySwartz

There's even an Audio clip at the site.