



# The Skimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

Vol. 32 - No.2

November, 2006

## Skimming

### *Turkey Creek Field Trip*

A baker's dozen, maybe more, of us met at the appointed place and time and took off in a car pool caravan for Turkey Creek, a drive of 90 minutes, more or less, down the speedway called I-95. First stop after leaving the interstate was a popular fast food establishment where we, seniors mostly, planned on using the facilities. Doors locked, we hopefully pressed our noses to the glass. Please let us in. We're birdwatchers. We have to . . . you know. No dice. Someone spotted a huge supermarket sharing the same parking lot so we all piled in our respective cars, counted off and drove the thirty feet or so to the market, which, happily was open.

By now we were in Palm Bay, only minutes away from the site which we found after a left turn here, a right turn there and so forth.

Turkey Creek Sanctuary is comprised of over 100 acres of native vegetation easily traversed by a fine boardwalk. I appreciated the boardwalk because I usually lug about forty pounds of photographic gear on these trips, some of which I actually know how to use.

The birding, for me, started off on an ominous note—while I was changing a lens, my camera's lens hood fell from the boardwalk rail down into the native vegetation, probably the native vegetation wearing thorns. Luckily for me, Roger Cutler, one of the more agile & athletic of our group, leaped over the rail, crashed through the underbrush and retrieved the part. Whew!

I'm told we saw 23 species overall that day including seven species of Warbler: Parula, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Black-and white, American Redstart, Worm-eating and Ovenbird. Also seen were a Scarlet Tanager & a Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

I was looking for these birds through a 500mm telephoto lens attached to a Canon DSLR mounted on very stable (heavy) tripod. It went something like this: "Look, a warbler at two o'clock on that snag!" Oh, wow I see it!" I'm listening to this while fumbling with lens, tripod, camera...cranking, tilting, peering, squinting. Ha, I see it! Oops gone. Repeat this 20 or thirty times.

I did get a very nice image of a turtle—a slider—sunning itself on a log in Turkey Creek and about twenty views of native vegetation where birds, once spotted, had vacated.

We broke up around noon, about half of us opting for lunch at a local casual-dining franchise restaurant.

All in all, I'd say it was a morning well spent. These trips really are worthwhile.

—Gil Miller

## November Speaker

This month's speaker will be Mr. Tad Fyock, a bird sculptor, who now makes his home on Bethune Beach. Tad is a native of the northwest. He was born in Portland, Oregon and grew up in the Willamette Valley. It was while living in this beautiful valley that Tad first developed his love of wild things. He later attended nearby Oregon State University and earned a BS in Geology. He went on to earn an MS in Geology at the University of Washington.

Upon graduation from university, he enlisted in the army and was stationed in Germany for 2 ½ years. After the service, he worked for thirty years as a Petroleum Geologist and was involved in projects from Alaska to Tunisia and from the North Sea to Patagonia.

Since retiring in 1994, Tad has devoted his time to bird sculpture, interpreting and portraying bird personalities and behavior in wood.

He teaches bird sculpture at John Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina and at the Treasure Island Art League in Tampa / St. Petersburg. Additionally, he is featured on a twenty minute segment of Woodworkers of America on the DIY Cable Channel.

Tad has won numerous awards for his pieces at art shows throughout Florida and also exhibits in two of our local shows. His work is in collections throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

—Ken Gunn

## Party Time

The Volusia/Flagler Sierra Club would like to invite all Audubon members to our Christmas Party – to be held on **December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006**. The club will provide the main dish (turkey / ham or both) and drinks. Please feel free to bring a side dish or desert. The party will be at St. Peter The Fisherman's Church on Saxon Drive, beachside in New Smyrna Beach. If you have any questions – or just want to let me know what you will be bringing – please call Pam Powell at 428-9312.

HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE!

## Conservation Notes

### Protecting Wetlands



Our nation has lost over half of its original wetlands, and the remainder is under heavy assault. In Volusia County, most of the high and dry buildable land has been paved or built over, so developers are planning subdivisions in swamps.

In an extreme example, the developer of “Restorations” (formerly called “Hammock Creek”) proposes to destroy 573.7 acres of wetlands on the 6,282 acre site west of I-95 in Edgewater and New Smyrna Beach. No doubt the remaining 2,134 acres of wetlands would be severely impacted by multiple buildings, roads and parking lots.

The developer plans to build 9,866 single and multi-family dwellings on the site, plus almost 2 million square feet of retail and office space and an 18-hole golf course. Population at build-out of the project is expected to be 22,889, roughly equivalent to the size of Edgewater or New Smyrna Beach.

The huge development will severely increase the cost of services provided by the county and the two cities. Sewer, water, police, fire and ambulance services, schools and roads will all be strained by demands of 23 thousand more people.

To make the wholesale destruction of wetlands and the high cost of urban sprawl services more palatable, the developer has promised to create jobs, lots of jobs. In its Application for Development Approval (ADA), the developer’s consultant, Fishkind and Associates projects that “Restoration” will create 4,048 new jobs.

That is a nice large number, but the expected wages for 72 percent of these new jobs fall into the Low to Very Low categories. All of the new jobs would be in retail, offices and golf course services. The 1,563 low-paying jobs range from \$25,150 to \$40,239 annual pay, and the 1,372 very low-paying jobs range from \$12,800 to \$25,149, according to Fishkind.

It appears that most workers in the development would have to commute to their jobs. Single family homes start at \$350,000 and multifamily dwellings at \$250,000. This means more traffic on already congested roads, and more demand for affordable housing – somewhere.

The swap of wetlands for new jobs does not appear to benefit Volusia County, Edgewater or New Smyrna Beach. Most Floridians understand the value of wetlands and most (except those who profit from destroying wetlands) want to protect them. Federal and state agencies charged with wetlands protection seem to be catering more often to those who want to destroy wetlands rather than people who want wetlands protected.

For example, between 1992 and 2001, the Army Corps of Engineers approved 25,767 permits to destroy Florida wetlands while denying 34. Since that disclosure, the Corps has clammed up on such statistics. In April of this year, the group, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), filed suit in a US District Court demanding that the Corps release permit and enforcement records kept secret since 2002.

Despite the Corp’s abysmal record of protecting Florida wetlands, it has in at least one instance been more effective than the responsible state agency, St. Johns River Water Management District, in safeguarding vital wetlands in Volusia County. The Corps denied a WalMart application that had been approved by St. Johns to destroy wetlands for a big box store on SR-44.

I attempted to find out the total acreage of wetlands destruction in permits that have been granted in Volusia County, but the County evidently does not keep such records.

It seems likely that destroying 573.7 acres of wetlands in our county, will, if approved, set some kind of an ignominious record.

Where is the indignation and where is the outrage?

—Lee Bidgood

In America today you can murder land for private profit. You can leave the corpse for all to see, and nobody calls the cops.

—Paul Brooks, *The Pursuit of Wilderness*, 1971

## Bird Rescue Center

### October Report: Flying the Coop!

The fast fading baby bird season of 2006 was one of the larger and longer ones we have had in recent years. I am sure that “larger” had a lot to do with the fact that Mary Keller, the “Bird Lady”, who over the years, has cared for thousands of baby birds from the Daytona Beach area, is no longer there.

We handled calls from as far north as Flagler County, as far south as Titusville, and west into Lake County, answering well over 2,000 phone calls this baby bird season. We had over 1,400 birds come into our center for care this year. Most of them have now been raised, rehabilitated and released back into the wild. I cannot express enough praise for our handful of hardworking volunteers who have made this possible.

We are now experiencing a rare, and much appreciated, quiet time. We are seeing a few sea bird monofilament line injuries. We expect an increase in these, as more of them return in their southerly migration.

Remember “Andi”, the young sandhill crane with the greenstick fracture of his left leg? After many hours spent trying to get him to eat, working with him in rehab; teaching him to stand, then walk again, we had a fantastic story book ending. We reunited him with his parents and sibling in the fields of Andi Plants Nursery, where he had been found stuck in the fence many weeks prior. We watched him take off and fly, then land and forage for food in the pasture.

BRC will be meeting the third Monday of the month through the end of the year, at the Venetian Villas recreation room at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome. Come visit, or better yet, come join.

—Phyllis Falk Lamborn

## Backyard Birding

Look for . . .



Since the last report, Palm Warblers have arrived. These warblers are fairly easy to identify by their bright yellow undertail coverts and the almost constant bobbing of their tail as they feed on or near the ground. Other birds seen in our yard and around Edgewater include Gray Catbird, Painted Bunting, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak and American Kestrel.

At Merritt Island, a few Blue-Winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, American Coot, Northern Pintale, Pied-billed Grebe, American Wigeon and White Pelican have arrived. Also, look for Dunlin, Short Billed Dowatcher, Least & Western Sandpiper, Willets, Black-bellied Plovers and Marbled Godwit. Water levels are high so look along shorelines and at shallow ponds for these and other shorebirds. Many more ducks will be arriving as the number of cold fronts increase and intensify.

Lets go birding.

—Dick & Gail Domroski

## New Members

We welcome Melvin Bove, Joe Harper, Peggy Meachum and Peggy Ann Wright

We're looking forward to meeting you in person at the monthly meetings and hope you'll participate in the excellent field trips.

## November Field Trip

Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge — Saturday, Nov. 7, 2006

This from their website <http://www.fws.gov/lakewoodruff/>

" Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge was established as a refuge for migratory waterfowl and wading birds. There are over 21,000 acres within the refuge boundaries, mostly marsh, rivers and lakes. The staff constantly maintains the area to provide shelter, nesting, and feeding habitat for these birds, and maintains the Public Use Area to provide a safe and pleasant place for visitors to observe nature."

We've visited this site, with some success, several times and hope to spot some of the many residents there which include: herons, egrets, ibis, limpkins, coots, moorhens, maybe even a rail or an American bittern.

Warblers are in the brush around the many ponds and eagles, osprey, kingfishers are seen here. Hawks and vultures are in the skies above.

Lake Woodruff NWR is located 25 miles west of Daytona Beach in DeLeon Springs so it won't be a long ride in the car. Trails are grassy and level which makes birding a lot easier for folks of all ages.

Some like to bring a lunch and picnic, others prefer dining in nearby Deland which has many eateries.

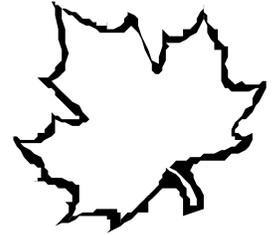
Richard & Gail Domroskie are available to answer questions at the meeting. Remember: the field trips are on the first Saturday following the Wednesday meeting. Please avail yourselves of this good opportunity to bird with excellent guides and friendly folk.

—G.M.

## Native & Nice

*Acer rubrum*

Who says there's no fall color in our part of the world? Maybe they haven't seen a red maple (*Acer rubrum*). Okay...central Florida's red maples turn more of a faded red in fall, never attaining the flashy scarlet leaves of those in higher latitudes. Think of our red maple as a more genteel version of those brash Northerners!

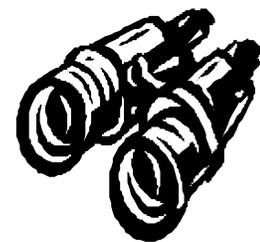


Besides its fall foliage, the red maple owes its name to the many tiny, but showy, clusters of flowers that cover the branches as early as January, in anticipation of spring's new leaves. Female trees also bear reddish winged fruits. Even the leaves boast red stems and veins.

Red maples have the widest north-south range of any tree native to the East Coast from Canada to the Everglades. They are a pioneer species of open moist or wet areas—even swamps; however, they will grow in partial shade and are highly drought tolerant once established.

A hardy species, the red maple grows fairly quickly, reaching 45 feet high with a narrow crown and ascending branches that provide shade as well as beauty.

—Donnadine Miller



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## 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.

**Wed., November 1, 7 P.M.**

Speaker: **Tad Fyock**  
**Bird Sculptor**

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!

**Sat. Nov. 4 - Lake Woodruff N W R**

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 428-0447

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.