



The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

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December, 2007

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

Prez Sez

Water water everywhere, but . . .

Audubon of Florida recently stated its policy on the use of surface water for drinking water by injecting water from rivers such as the St John's River directly into the aquifer. Their policy is that they will be opposing all of the "Alternative Water Supply" proposals which propose to tap surface waters such as the St. Johns, Ocklawaha and Withlacoochee. They will be advocating the institution of mandatory water conservation measures, including changes to WMD rules and statutes that require significant limitations on lawns, irrigation systems, and water-thirsty vegetation in new communities approved by the WMD's through the ERP program. We will be seeking the addition of criteria for drought tolerant and xeriscape vegetation as part of the requirements for permit approval.

Their rationale for this policy is that we have not really scratched the surface of water conservation with the voluntary programs that have been undertaken thus far. Our organization's leaders came to the conclusion that the REAL "alternative water supply" that Florida must be pursuing, and doing so VERY aggressively, is recovering the water that is now wasted, primarily through use "outside the home" to water lawns and other landscape.

I applaud that policy and agree with the rationale.

Obviously they don't know about the watering restrictions in effect in Volusia County and Edgewater. We have had enforceable water restrictions since the late 1990's. www.volusia.org/environmental/pollution_abatement/Water%20Resources/conserv.htm is the county's restriction regimen and www.cityofedgewater.org/water_restrict.php is the Edgewater schedule with the fines assessed for violations. All counties and towns should have these types of restrictions.

If you are not aware of these restrictions, chances are you may not be following them. It is your responsibility to do so. I know two people who have been charged \$100 fines for violating the Edgewater ordinances. Water is one of our most precious resources. I urge everyone to know and follow the restrictions in your city. Note that I was not able to find the watering restrictions for NSB in either their website or their newsletter.

On the flip side, Audubon of Florida is rolling over on major developments like the four mile by five mile "Restorations" project on the west side of I-95 and North of US 442.

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Meetings

Meetings are held the 1st Wednesdays
Oct. thru March at 7 P.M.

Edgewater Library 103 Indian River Blvd. 7: P.M.

Smoke-free environment. Refreshments are served.

Plenty of parking. Public welcome.

Next meeting is December 5, 2007

Speaker: **Linda Evans, UF Extension Service**
"What's Bugging You?"

See December Speakers on page 3

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

Field Trips

For this trip we'll meet at the Liesure Services office parking lot (Hawks Park), 108 S. Ridgewood Ave. at 8 A.M.

This will be 1/2 day outing so you need bring only water and insect repellent. Wear comfortable shoes & clothing. Even on cool days, the area can warm up quickly.

Dec. 8 - Scrub Jay Habitat-Edgewater

See details on page 3

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 428-0447

Field Trips

2007 - 2008 Schedule

Dec. 8 - Scrub Jay Habitat-Edgewater (see article p.3)

Dec. 29 - Christmas Bird Count

Jan. 5 - Merritt Island

Feb. 9 - Vierra Wetlands

Mar. 8 - Blue Heron/ Bio Lab Road

April 5 - TBA

May 10 - Spring Migration Count

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

—Rachel Carson

Prez Sez from p.1

The philosophy seems to be that development is inevitable so we may as well try to manage it. This project as well as other major developments planned for the Edgewater and New Smyrna Beach areas will not help our tax bills or our quality of life. In fact, these developments, which will more than double our current populations, will put an even greater strain on our water and other resources. St. Johns River Water Management District's research suggests groundwater alone will not be able to supply Central Florida past 2013 without threatening the river's aquatic and plant life. In addition, all major developments destroy wetlands, which are supposed to recharge our aquifer. Increased traffic will congest our roads and decrease our access to the beaches.

What Audubon of Florida needs to recognize is that Florida, like the earth as a whole, has a carrying capacity based on its natural resources. We need to figure out what that carrying capacity is and recognize its limits. It may already have been exceeded. If you think that city and county governments are running us headlong into a mini-Miami, check out the website <http://www.floridahometowndemocracy.com>, download a copy of their petition, sign it and get your friends and neighbors to do so as well.

—Don Picard

C B C

Christmas Bird Count

The 108th Ponce Inlet Christmas Bird Count will be conducted **Saturday December 29th**. Participants will meet at the Brannon Center (on Riverside Drive just south of Canal Street) at 7:00 A.M. to start the day and again at 5:30 P.M. at the Main Street Grill for dinner and to tally the results.

Dick & Gail Domroski will be coordinating this year so please call them at 428-0447 as soon as possible to let them know if you will be helping or if you have any questions.

Remember that this is an all day effort so bring lunch, snacks, water, etc and don't forget your binoculars and field guides. Cost is \$5.00 per person to help defray Audubon's expense to maintain and update the database.

—Dick & Gail Domroski

Editor's Note: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/cbcPhotos.php> for CBC pix

From the Field

Seminole Rest at Oak Hill and Scrub Jay Trail & Black Point Drive at Merritt Island NWR

We did have a fine day for it. The weather was perfect and everyone in our small crowd of ten—it's a shame more folks don't participate in these field trips—agreed that it was one of our best trips.

It was easy driving, just down the road to Seminole Rest and then a little farther on to the Scrub Jay Trail —we did see jays!—and then a hop, skip & a jump to the Black Point Trail. The mosquitoes were out on the Scrub Jay Trail but not noticeable at all on the Black Point Drive. The birds were there though and a lot of stops were made. Cameras & binoculars were hoisted and spotting scopes set up to enjoy the sights on this pretty autumn day in Florida. A family from Lake County stopped to see what was going on and they were invited to look through the scopes. They asked questions and our bird experts answered them. They left impressed with the Audubon Society, Southeast Volusia chapter anyway.

Species spotted are in the side bar at right Pix from the day are below. Please join us on the next field trip on Saturday, Dec. 8. It's an important one.

—Gil Miller

Spotted

- Pied-billed Grebe
- White Pelican
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Snowy Egret
- Little Blue Heron
- Tricolored Heron
- Reddish Egret
- Cattle Egret
- White Ibis
- Glossy Ibis
- Roseate Spoonbill
- Wood Stork
- Black Vulture
- Turkey Vulture
- Mottled Duck
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Hooded Merganser
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- American Kestrel
- Merlin
- American Coot
- Sandhill Crane- (heard)
- Black-bellied Plover
- Killdeer
- Great Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Least Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Laughing Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Caspian Tern
- Forster's Tern
- Rock Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Belted Kingfisher
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Eastern Phoebe
- Loggerhead Shrike
- White-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay
- Scrub Jay
- Fish Crow
- Tree Swallow
- Carolina Wren
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- American Robin
- Northern Mockingbird
- European Starling
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Palm Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Sparrowspecies
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Boat-tailed Grackle.



Conservation Notes

Volunteering, Scrub jays and mega-development

Thanks to those who volunteered to monitor migratory bird nesting on the beach of Smyrna Dunes Park NSB. Both dog and bird lovers should be able to agree that dogs (and humans) should not be invading the protected bird nesting areas of the beach. If you have not volunteered for a conservation activity, consider birding at Smyrna Dunes Park. While you are there, if you witness incidents or evidence of dog or human prints in the protected areas, please photo or video-document and call Kathy Booth, conservation chair, at 409-3091 to make arrangements to give me the documentation. The more volunteers, the more documentation, and the faster we can get better protection for these harassed birds. It should not escape our attention that the birds were there first...uhm.

Thanks to those who volunteered to assist with field studies to educate grades 4-6 about scrub jays and their habitat. We are waiting for school approval. Meanwhile, the SEVAS field trip will be to this habitat at the YMCA in Edgewater on December 8th, which will give SEVAS members an opportunity to visualize the educational potential.

Although tough for the economy, a wonderful benefit from the downturn in the building sector is that the proposed huge developments west of I-95 have had no apparent permitting activity these past months. The birds and animals and plants in that habitat can live a little longer. It is distressing to consider that the St. Johns Water Management District and the City of Edgewater and the City of NSB are leaning toward permitting these developments without knowing whether there is enough water to supply them. We who currently reside in Edgewater and NSB are already under water restrictions. Our already precarious water supply is in serious jeopardy if these developments are permitted. Edgewater residents, go to <http://cityofedgewater.org/>, or call 424-2400 and tell the mayor and council, and the planning and zoning boards, to deny permits for these and any future developments. Ironically, when you go to <http://cityofedgewater.org/>, you will find a several paragraph Notice of Water Restrictions! NSB residents: <http://cityofnsb.com/> or 424-2112. URGENT: City of NSB has an opening on the Planning and Zoning board. This position is meant for a conservationist like you!

—Kathy Booth

In an age when man has forgotten his origins and is blind even to his most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of his indifference.

—Rachel Carson



Scrub jay Gil Miller

December Speakers

Linda Evans and a Florida Hometown Democracy Representative

Our speaker for the December meeting will be Linda Evans of the University of Florida Extension Services located at the Volusia County Fairgrounds office on State Road 44. This office is dedicated to Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences and is there to help US - the taxpayers of Volusia County. Linda's formal education is in the field of Chemistry and she is a trained Clinical Chemistry Specialist. She ran her own business for ten years before starting with the University of Florida, Volusia County Extension in 1998 as a Program Assistant in their "Yards and Neighborhoods" program. Since 2000 her title has been Management Specialist which covers a wide range of topics and responsibilities including giving presentations to groups such as ours.

Linda's topic will be "What's Bugging You?" She will discuss the good, the bad and the ugly of the insects which we encounter in our yards, gardens and travels. Linda is the producer of a really neat display on the subject which you may have seen in their office over the last several months.

We will also have a brief presentation by a representative from the "Hometown Democracy"? initiative explaining the reason for their action and the current status of their petition. **PLEASE BRING YOUR SIGNING PENS!**

—Ken Gunn

December Field Trip

Scrub Jay habitat

December field trip schedule change.

The **Saturday, Dec. 8**, field trip will be to Hawks Preserve in Edgewater. It is behind the YMCA on Turgot Ave. Here is a chance to learn about a Scrub Jay habitat in our own back yard. The Florida Scrub Jay is listed as a threatened species under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act. Volunteers will talk about the scrub habitat, the plants and other animals that live there, the special requirements needed for Scrub Jays to live there and why they are no longer there.

For the last year we have been working with the city Director of Parks and Recreation, Jack Corder, to get the city to fulfill its responsibilities to preserve the small Scrub Jay habitat there. They agreed to preserve it as part of a mitigation agreement when the YMCA was built but they failed to live up to the agreement. Their neglect and the failure of the US Fish and Wildlife Service to enforce the terms of the federal mandate resulted in the deterioration of the habitat and the loss of the Scrub Jays that once lived there.

We will see other birds and animals there. Meet at **Leisure Services office parking lot (Hawks Park)**, 1108 S Ridge-wood Ave, **Saturday, Dec. 8, at 8 A.M.**

—Gail Domroski

Around Town

Calling All Collectors

Dana Thompson, media specialist at New Smyrna Beach Middle School, has extended an invitation to Audubon members to share their collections with middle schoolers. If you have ever visited her media center, you know that it is a beehive of activity throughout the day. There are a number of glass cases of various sizes where items can be displayed securely.

Bird-related collections are welcome, as well as displays related to nature and conservation or other topics of interest. At the present time, for example, there are showcases related to the seashore—shells, horseshoe crabs, seaweed—and others that feature African artifacts.

If you would like to lend your collection (or create one), you may reach Dana by email at dbthomps@volusia.k12.fl.us or by phone at 424-2550, ext. 36758.

In Honor of the Bidgoods

Live Oak to be planted

LAST SPRING OUR CHAPTER decided to have a tree planted in honor of Lee and Catherine Bidgood for their contributions to our Audubon chapter and our community.

The Bidgoods will be returning for a brief ceremony to plant an oak tree in **Riverside Park, New Smyrna Beach, Thursday, December 6 at 4 p.m.** Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

New Smyrna Beach's mayor, Sally Mackay, is scheduled to make a few remarks. Following the tree planting, we will go to the Night Swan B&B (about 2 blocks south of the park) for a small reception.

Native & Nice

American holly

Appropriate to the season, this column takes a look at the familiar American holly (*Ilex opaca*). It is as well-known for its stately height and bright red berries as it is for its prickly but attractive evergreen leaves. American hollies range from Massachusetts to central Florida and west to Texas.



The American holly in our front yard came to us by accident nearly 10 years ago. Having discovered early on that everything I knew about Maryland gardening was useless in Florida, I was anxious to learn what would thrive at our new home. Gil and I attended one of the water-wise workshops sponsored by Volusia County Extension Service and won the door prize—a sweet bay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*). In the same pot, but dwarfed by the magnolia, was a spindly American holly. Today, it stands over 7 feet tall, taking its place in the same acid soil of nearby pine trees and azaleas.

In the north, the holly is a food source for birds and other wild animals, where the repeated freezing and thawing of the berries make them palatable. Locally, the American holly creates habitat for song birds such as bluebirds and thrushes.

While the berries can be mildly toxic, Native Americans used them to brew their “black drink,” a caffeine-rich purgative and ceremonial stimulant. They also boiled the twigs with pine tops as a cure for coughs.

In 1997, the American holly was recognized on the 32-cent postage stamp.

—Donnadine Miller

Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species -- man -- acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world.

—Rachel Carson

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the.skimmer@yahoo.com

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Our Website

<http://sevolusiaaudubon.org>

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Officers & Chairs



President: Don Picard	386-957-1886	sevas@cfl.rr.com
VP: Vacant		
Secretary: Jean McNeil	386-423-2508	
Treasurer: Richard Domroski	386-428-0447	
Newsletter: Gil Miller	386-423-4124	the.skimmer@yahoo.com
Programs: Ken Gunn	386-423-2334	gunnsatbeach@cfl.rr.com
Field Trips: Gail Domroski	386-428-0447	
Conservation: Kathy Booth	386-409-3091	mprademacher@msn.com
Membership: Richard Domroski	386-428-0447	
Publicity: Bill Cox		billmarsha@pshift.com
Ways & Means, Education/Outreach, Hospitality: VACANT!		