



The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

Issue Vol. V- No. 3

March, 2010

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

Prez Sez

Tomoka Regional Science Fair: As has been our custom for the past ten years, the SEVAS partnered with the Halifax River and West Volusia Audubons to provide judges and prizes for the Tomoka Regional Science Fair. We each contributed \$100 to be distributed as \$100 first prizes and \$50 second prizes. Our judges looked for the best senior and junior participants in projects involving environment/conservation/birding projects. Our congratulations to all the participants we judged and especially to the winners:

First place Senior: Kelton Williams, Deland H. S. "Environmental Effects on Banana Ripening and Sugar Content"

First Place Junior: Chase Antilla, Buddy Taylor M. S. (Flagler) "What duration of ultraviolet exposure kills bacteria?"

Second place Senior: Katelyn Zeringue, Deland H.S. "What is the most effective fuel: B-100 bio-diesel, B-50 Bio-Diesel, or 0-Bio-diesel?"

Second place Junior: Michelle He, Creekside M. S. (Port Orange) "What are some natural ant repellents?"

Annual Elections: We are coming to the end of another year and are again at the time when we look to you to volunteer for service to your club. Anyone wishing to be considered for elective office should make themselves known before or during the March meeting. Some of us have been serving for a long time and would like a rest. Other positions have been unfilled for some time. It would be nice to have a Vice-President and a Conservation Chair. Please volunteer.

Farmton: At the last meeting, I briefed on the latest updates to the Farmton project, including the meeting between Charles Lee, the Conservation Chair of Audubon of Florida and the presidents of SEVAS, Halifax River and West Volusia Audubons. The members voted unanimously to continue our objection to the Farmton project. I sent an email to the members of the Volusia County Council asking them to vote the project down. You can see the email on our website. As you probably know, Farmton passed with a vote of four to two, with Andy Kelly and Carl Persis voting No!

As a result of our vote, I intend to send another email to

Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesdays
Sept. thru March at 7 P.M.

Edgewater Library 103 Indian River Blvd.

*Smoke-free environment. Refreshments are served.
Plenty of parking. Public welcome.*

Next meeting is March 17, 2010

Speaker: **Dr. Debra Woodall**

Associate Professor of Oceanography/Geology
Daytona State College

See March Speaker page 3

Topic: Ocean Currents 101--the Good, the Bad and the Ugly!

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

Field Trips

Meet in the Market Square parking lot Edgewater,
Ridgewood Ave. & 442 *between Dunkin Donuts & Chik-Fil-A.*
(Meeting time listed with trip)

Bring lunch & drinks. Don't forget bug-spray!

Fri., Mar. 5 - Ravine Gardens State Park 7a.m. (2)
Sat., Mar. 20 - Peacock Pocket Rd. @ Merritt Island 8 a.m. (1)

See Field trips p. 2

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 386-428-0447

Numbers in parentheses indicate degree of difficulty.
(1) easy or no walking. (2) walking less than one mile.
(3) One plus mile walking and/or uneven terrain.

Field Trips are free.

the Volusia County Growth Management Commission before their meeting later this month asking them to vote NO on the project. I will also send an email to the state Department of Community Affairs asking them to renew their disapproval of the project.

—Don Picard

Please forward this eSkimmer to friends.

Orlando Wetlands Park

Nineteen people, including four friends from Halifax River Audubon, gathered on a brisk morning for a trip to the Orlando Wetlands Park. Though I had organized a hayride through the park, with the park biologist Mark Sees, none of us knew in advance how great this experience would be.

Our main guide was Gary Coleman. On seeing the size of our group and how tight it would be on the wagon, Gary obtained an eight-passenger golf cart and two volunteers, Bob Rope and Jim Hulbert. This was not just a hayride, but a full guided three-hour tour of the park.

They showed us over eight miles of park roads and 62 species of great birds including the White-faced Ibis and a pair of Crested Caracara. Our thanks to these fine folks for a great morning of birding. After lunch, we went to the BioLab Road for some more great birding. Check out some pictures on our blog. The complete list follows:

—Don Picard

Pied-billed Grebe	Ruddy Turnstone
American White Pelican	Sanderling
Brown Pelican	Dunlin
Double-crested Cormorant	Short-billed Dowitcher
Anhinga	Long-billed Dowitcher
American Bittern	Common Snipe
Great Blue Heron	Laughing Gull
Great Egret	Ring-billed Gull
Snowy Egret	Royal Tern
Little Blue Heron	Forster's Tern
Tricolored Heron	Black Skimmer
Reddish Egret	Morning Dove
Cattle Egret	Common Ground Dove
Green Heron	Belted Kingfisher
Black-crowned Night-heron	Red-bellied Woodpecker
White Ibis	Downy Woodpecker
Glossy Ibis	Eastern Phoebe
White-faced Ibis	Blue-headed Vireo
Roseate Spoonbill	Blue Jay
Wood Stork	Florida Scrub Jay
Black Vulture	American Crow
Turkey Vulture	Fish Crow
Blue-winged Teal	Purple Martin
Greater Scaup	Tree Swallow
Lesser Scaup	Carolina Wren
Hooded Merganser	Marsh Wren
Osprey	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Bald Eagle	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Northern Harrier	American Robin
Red-shouldered Hawk	Gray Catbird
Crested Caracara	Northern Mockingbird
American Kestrel	Cedar Waxwing
Wild Turkey	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Sora	Palm Warbler
Purple Gallinule	Common Yellowthroat
Common Moorhen	Savannah Sparrow
American Coot	Swamp Sparrow
Sandhill Crane	Painted Bunting
Black-bellied Plover	Red-winged Blackbird
Killdeer	Common Grackle
Greater Yellowlegs	Boat-tailed Grackle
Lesser Yellowlegs	American Goldfinch

Field Trips

Fri. March 5, 7 a m (2)

Ravine Gardens State Park in Palatka.

The gardens were developed by the City of Palatka and the Federal Civil Works Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression from 1933-39 in an effort to spur the economic recovery of the City of Palatka. Azaleas were chosen as the theme flower of the gardens because of their brilliant bloom during the tourist season. By 1934 over 95,000 had been planted by Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) workers. This 146 acre park is a combination of formal and natural gardens. Natural vegetation ranges from mosses and ferns to woody shrubs and hardwood forest. During the peak blooming season from January through April, the park burst into color from thousands of Azaleas, chicksaw plums, dogwoods and camellias. There are extensive trails that lead around the ravine and along the spring fed stream.

There is a \$5.00 per vehicle entry fee so plan on car pooling. Bring a lunch, water etc. as there are ample picnic facilities.

Sat March 20, 8 a.m. Merritt Island (1)

Drive the Peacock Pocket road at Merritt Island looking for migrating shorebirds.

note time change from 7 am to 8 am.

Fri. April 8, 7 a.m. Tiger Bay State Forest (1)

Fri. April 16, 7 a.m. Washington Oaks State Gardens (2)

Sat. May 8, International Migratory Bird Count

http://www.sevolutiaaudubon.org/field_trips.htm

—Gail Domroski

Wandering Members

Winter in Alberta

I flew to Calgary, Alberta the evening of February 18 arriving at midnight. I spent the night in Calgary, then went out to our cabin, about 50 miles west, the next morning.

One of the first things I noticed when I arrived at the cabin was that the bird feeder, which we keep active all winter, was barely holding together. The sunflower seeds were staying put only because of a generous application of tape. When Ross, the neighbor who looks after the place when we are away, came down to update me, he said, "I've had a terrible time with squirrels. They have learned to walk along the wire" (from which the feeder is suspended) "and have torn up the bird feeder. I had to tape it up to keep it together." It was true there were tooth marks around the openings but I thought they were there when I left last fall and I had trouble believing squirrels could make their way over 15 feet of very thin gauge wire. However, I had no other explanation, so I replaced the damaged feeder with one which is more squirrel-proof.

Next morning, I found the real reason for the damage. While I was working in the dining room, I looked up to see a total of eight Mule Deer walk into the yard. With no hesitation, the largest doe walked over to a position under the feeder, raised up on her hind legs and proceeded to butt the feeder, knocking seeds to the ground. An innovative way to feed herself and her friends but not good for feeders. Fortunately, this feeder is sturdier than the original and apparently holds seeds better as few bounced out. Now, a week later, it appears the deer have given up on the feeder and returned to more normal fare.

There were a couple of quite severe cold spells this winter and they may have caused some of the winter birds to seek less harsh climes. In the open, I only have seen Ravens and Magpies. When visiting the farm where I keep some of my horses, I saw several House Sparrows and they were actually using nest boxes for shelter. In my yard I have only seen Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees. I have just spent three days at the cabin but I have not seen any sign of the juncos, which are generally around, nor the pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches, who have lived here year-round for the three years we have owned the place. I hope they are all right.

Over the next month, we should start seeing the hardest of the migrants start to straggle in. I am looking forward to the arrival of the pair of Varied Thrushes who stop here on their way farther north. They beat the robins by a mile and always look like they wished they hadn't. They fluff up their feathers and dig down into the snow and pine needles and look downright miserable – every year.

—Ken Gunn



March Speaker

Dr. Debra Woodall

Our March speaker will be Dr. Debra Woodall, of Daytona State College and her subject will be **Ocean Currents 101– the Good, the Bad and the Ugly!**

First, we will be led through the basics of ocean currents - where they are and how they develop. We will then explore their 'Good' side - how the dynamic powers of ocean currents sustain life on this planet; the 'Bad' side - an example of a time in our geologic past when it is believed that Earth's main ocean current actually **stopped** and the resulting impacts (and the question - could this happen again?); and finally, the 'Ugly' side - we visit the central gyres of the ocean and view the unfortunate impacts by humans!

Dr Woodall begins her bio with the statement "I was born and raised in Louisiana so I'm first and foremost an LSU Tiger and New Orleans Saints fan!!!"

Dr. Woodall was awarded an M.S. in Oceanography by LSU in Baton Rouge, then earned a PhD in Oceanography with a minor in Geology at Florida Tech. She has conducted ocean research from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. She has been at Daytona State Collage for two years and is currently an Associate Professor of Oceanography/Geology there. Research interests include oil and gas environmental impact, pollutants, and ocean water light attenuation.

She and her husband, Paul, maintain feeders in their backyard in New Smyrna Beach. Her favorite visitors are the Painted Buntings that frequent their yard each spring.

—K.G.



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