**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!

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**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 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

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

—Gail Domroski
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 hardiest 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.