



# The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

[www.sevolusiaaudubon.org](http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org)

March 2011

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

## Prez Sez

*It's that time again.*

We are again looking for folks to help us out. All of the people currently serving on the executive committee have agreed to stay another year. But we still need help. It would be nice to have a vice-president and even more than nice to have a conservation chair. With all that is happening and will happen in the politics of our state and country, it is nearly a necessity that we have someone focused on these issues and who can communicate them to the membership and our readership. Those of us who have been in office for years put in a lot of time for the club. A few more volunteers would reduce our burden and spread out the work. We could even get more done.

As an example of issues we need to work, last week House Republicans passed spending legislation that would, among many other things:

- ♦ Strip the Clean Air Act of its ability to reduce dangerous carbon dioxide pollution;
- ♦ Grant Shell and other polluters a free pass to drill in the Arctic; and
- ♦ Remove Endangered Species Act protection for the iconic gray wolf.
- ♦ Scrap plans for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to create a "climate service."
- ♦ Zero out U.S. funding for the Nobel-Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- ♦ Stop the EPA from even collecting data on sources of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas pollutants.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, the bill would also:

*"Undo progress made to curb destructive mountaintop-removal mining by stopping the EPA from developing standards that list toxic coal ash as hazardous waste, reviewing water pollution issues, completing rules to protect streams from coal waste, and enforcing the Clean Water Act that governs required dredge and fill permits."*

I urge you to go to their website and send a message to your senators asking them to reject this bill. Forty years of protection is too much to lose in one fell swoop.

[http://action.biologicaldiversity.org/p/dia/action/public?action\\_KEY=5966](http://action.biologicaldiversity.org/p/dia/action/public?action_KEY=5966)

## Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesdays  
Sept. thru April 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 16, 2011**

Speaker - **Tad Fyock**

*Bird Sculptor-Photographer*

Slideshow: **Galapagos Islands**

*see March Speaker p.*

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.

**Sat, Mar 5, 2011 (3) Orlando Wetlands Park -7 a.m.**

**Sat, Mar 19, 2011 (1) Peacock Pocket ( MI NWR) - 8 a.m.**

*A complete list of field trips is available on the SEVAS website.*

[http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org/field\\_trips.htm](http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org/field_trips.htm)

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.

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.

Additionally, Audubon of Florida has asked all chapters for a "go to" person for their climate and renewable energy work. This person would be the liaison between the AoF and the chapter. I would love to have help here.

Please lend your support to these important issues, and while you are at it, step up and volunteer to help your chapter.

—Don Picard

## Conservation Notes

### Disappointing Top Ten

I was disappointed by the Associated Press list of the top ten US newspaper stories in 2010 selected by editors and news directors.

All top ten 2010 subjects were important, but global warming and worldwide violent weather were omitted. Many thousand nameless men, women and children died in record-breaking heat, drought, fires, floods and landslides. Millions lost homes and possessions, but no prominent people or celebrities suffered.

Meanwhile scientists keep warning that irreversible climate change may arrive soon if our greenhouse gas emissions continue unabated. The last decade was the warmest ever measured worldwide, while 2010 was virtually tied for the warmest year. Record summer heat occurred in several US regions. Canada set new high temperature records, notably in the Arctic.

Since 1975 Alaska has warmed three times faster than the continental US, according to the EPA. Warming has hurt several Alaskan National Parks. In Denali, thawing hillsides are causing mudslides that impede the park's scenic road. Glaciers are retreating out of view from several parks' facilities.

Greenland ice sheet melting continues accelerating. Complete melting would raise sea level around 23 feet.

The New York Times reported last summer that a sea level rise up to six feet could occur this century. A six-foot rise plus our usual storms would severely damage or destroy Florida's ecology and economy in coastal counties where 77 percent of Floridians live and work. Many scientists fear that a six-foot rise is a minimum estimate.

Violent weather continues this year. Tornadoes struck our nation on New Year's Day, an unprecedented shock. Australia suffered record-breaking floods and a monster cyclone. Brazil lost 600 people in record landslide damage from torrential rains. Severe drought threatens wheat-growing Chinese northern regions, while heavy snow and freezing rain may hurt their southern crops. Food crops worldwide are being damaged by flooding, droughts and extreme temperatures. Most seafood is threatened by carbon dioxide emissions that are acidifying the seas.

As global temperatures continue rising, shrinking glaciers reduce essential freshwater sources for over a billion people in nations such as Chile, China and India.

The World Bank reported that global food prices increased almost 30 percent in 2010, driving about 44 million more people into poverty. Wheat prices have doubled and corn prices are up 73 percent. Despite the worsening crisis in food shortages and higher prices, our government continues subsidizing ethanol motor fuel produced from corn.



Rising food prices and clean water shortages probably contributed to the Egyptian uprising and often bloody unrest in eight other countries.

Nature has a climate wild card: An estimated 1.1 trillion tons of frozen methane, a greenhouse gas around 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide are buried under warming Arctic seas. In the dim geologic past, sudden methane releases may have triggered extreme global temperature and sea level rises within decades. Frozen methane is now leaking about 8 million tons annually. Thawing tundra is beginning to emit methane.

Amid pessimism about severely worsening climate change, there are encouraging signs.

Feed-in Tariff (FIT) systems have been widely adopted, fostering global renewable energy gains far exceeding all other approaches. Worldwide solar power installations doubled in 2010 compared with 2009.

Despite outstanding FIT success in Gainesville, our Legislature and new governor continue ignoring this proven path to clean renewable energy and more jobs. Perhaps they don't understand the threat of rising seas or maybe they expect to move someday into luxurious second homes nestled in the mountains.

We must demand that state and federal politicians respect science and rapidly cut greenhouse emissions effectively. We should lead and inspire other nations to restrain climate change.

Otherwise Florida may be condemned to slow death by gradual submersion. If a sudden methane outburst occurs, submersion could be swift, but not merciful.

—Lee Bidgood

*Lee Bidgood, Conservation chair, emeritus writes on a variety of topics.*

*Lee lives Gainesville, FL with his wife Catherine.*

Please forward this  to friends.

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## Wandering Members

### Owling in Houston



Houston Audubon sponsors an owl prowl at their Edith L. Murphy Nature Sanctuary monthly over the winter. This past year our daughter gave Beth and me tickets to the December 17 event as a Christmas present.

The program started inside an on-site log house with an hour long presentation by their Education Director, Mary Anne Weber. There were about 30 of us with an age spread of six years old to me. Ms Weber did an excellent job of keeping it interesting for the youngsters while not boring the adults. The fact that she had three non-releasable owls from their rehab center no doubt helped. I personally learned a great deal about owls, an order about which I knew remarkably little.

I learned that owls swallow food whole. The soft parts of the food are stripped out in the gizzard by muscle contractions. The other parts, such as bones, teeth, fur and feathers are compressed into a ball, regurgitated and expelled as owl pellets.

I learned that the ears of an owl are different sizes and the one on the left side of the head is smaller, lower and slightly forward of the one on the right – she pulled the feathers back on Tskili, the Great Horned Owl and lugged him around the room so we could see for ourselves. Tskili is a jewel and was unfazed by the ordeal. Owls have extremely sensitive hearing and can hear a mouse under a foot of snow from a mile away. The asymmetric configuration of their ears allows them to then use triangulation to zero in on the prey.

An owl can rotate its head up to 270 degrees which he may do to increase his vision field, as the eyes are in the front of their head rather than to the side, but also to aid in the triangulation process when locating prey. Owls are very far sighted and cannot see their prey even as they snag it, again relying on triangulation.

They have three forward facing claws and one backward claw but one of the front claws articulates so when carrying prey the bird can have two claws forward and two claws backward.

Finally, the feathers of an owl are soft as silk (she passed around samples) which allow it to fly much more quietly than other birds.

After the presentation, we split into two groups and went out onto the property to look for Eastern Screech Owls, which were just starting to establish their breeding territories. The other group wasn't lucky but, just before we returned to the house, someone at the back of our group called "There's one!" Sure enough, sitting on a low branch, not twenty feet away was a beautiful, female Eastern Screech Owl, my nineteenth life owl species. She was extremely cooperative and posed for several minutes in the light of a dozen flashlights, then flew about fifteen feet farther away and posed again.

—Ken Gunn

## Of Interest

### Links



### Conservation Lands Outreach Outdoor Learning Adventures - Bonnie Cary

Here's the schedule:

<http://www.volusia.org/growth/learning.htm>

### SJRWMD - Ed Garland

<http://www.floridaswater.com/> Our home page includes the video "Simple Truths About Water" which you can view on your computer.

<http://www.floridaswater.com/recreationguide/index.html>

This is a direct link to our online Recreation Guide.

<http://www.floridaswater.com/waterconservation/index.html>

This is a direct link to all of our water conservation information.

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## Native 'n' Nice

### Red cedar

Past columns have focused on the smaller natives: flowers and shrubs. This month's subject, the stately red cedar, is a departure. Scientifically known as *Juniperus virginiana*, the red cedar—or juniper—is a common sight in our area. Evergreen red cedars are easy to grow in poor, sandy soil; they tolerate both salt and drought. Seedlings sprout readily and are easily transplanted. Their growth is slow, but over time they become massive specimens, reaching 30 feet or more. In winter, female red cedars produce bluish berry-like cones. Combined with the fresh cedar fragrance, the branches with their showy cone clusters make an ideal holiday decoration.

Native red cedars' cones provide abundant food for scores of species of wildlife and their dense branches offer protected habitat. Mockingbirds and other songbirds often shelter their nests deep inside these conifers; cedar waxwings get their name from their fondness for this tree.

During the warmer months, look closely and you will sometimes see thumbnail-sized butterflies resting on the branches of native red cedars. Called juniper hairstreaks, these mint green to brownish butterflies seek out juniper for their larval food plant. One subspecies, called Swadner's juniper hairstreak, lives only in Florida, common only in coastal hammocks. Its numbers are dwindling rapidly because of habitat loss.

*Credit note: Some information was taken from Doreen Cubie's "Backyard Habitat" article that appeared in the Dec/Jan 2006 issue of National Wildlife Magazine.*

—Donnadine Miller

Donnadine Miller was an active member of SEVAS and wrote this column for years for *The Skimmer*.

She passed away April 7, 2008.

This archived article is from *The Skimmer*, March 2006

## From the Field

### 2011 Winter Shorebird Survey and International Piping Plover Census

This is the fourth year that this area and the third year that Volusia County has participated in the Winter Shorebird Survey. Southeast Volusia Audubon surveyed the beach from Smyrna Dunes Park to Canaveral National Seashore and put boats in the water to cover part of Mosquito Lagoon and the Intracoastal Waterway from Edgewater to Port Orange.

This year we had 22 counters in the field and Ken Parks and Don Picard volunteered their boats. Because of the number of participants we were able to not only cover the beach, Mosquito Lagoon and the Intracoastal, but also covered the inland water within New Smyrna Beach, including both causeways and the upper part of Turnbull Bay.

We counted 6371 birds in 43 species. Unfortunately we only counted one target bird. Nancy White tallied a Wilson's Plover. Don Picard, in the lagoon, saw a Glaucous Gull, an uncommon sight in Central Florida. We saw bands on gulls and terns but none were reported on the shorebirds seen. Also we encountered no American Oystercatchers, a species which was often seen five years ago. The two highest species counts were Laughing Gull at 1659 and Ring-billed Gull 1454. As I have mentioned before, our directions on counting birds not enumerated on the species



Don's Boat Crew

photo - Don Picard



Wilson's Plover photo-Nancy White

list is very vague. This year I elected to not count anything not on the list except for Mottled Ducks, Green Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron. We have several excellent photographs which Don will have on the website over the next week or so.

Thanks to everyone who participated. Special thanks to non-members who stepped in to help out and to Don and Ken for making their boats available. One of the great things about these counts and the outside help we get is the opportunities it provides to develop new acquaintances and friendships. That was certainly the case again this time. The following are parts of emails I received since the survey.

*"Just wanted to write and say how much I enjoyed my time birding with you all yesterday. Everyone was so welcoming and nice."*

*"Thanks again for taking us – it was fun."*

*"I enjoyed the shorebird survey. We saw greater numbers of birds than I expected given the haze."*

*"Just wanted you to know how much we appreciated being asked to participate in this year's survey. We really enjoyed being out with Ken and Jackie. Thanks for thinking of us."*

Aren't birders the nicest people!

—Ken Gunn

### VIERA WETLANDS

Saturday morning, February 5, following Friday's Shore Bird Survey, six members of our chapter traveled to Viera Wetlands. Although it was overcast and became windy in the afternoon, the lighting was very good for both birding and photography. There were many visitors to the wetlands including an Audubon group from Palm Beach County. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the day and sharing what they had seen. On most trips, we are lucky to see a Bittern or Limpkin. On this trip we had great views of two American Bittern, and the Limpkin were boldly walking the berms and patrolling the shorelines for snails. Several Limpkin even walked within 10 feet of us. We saw a total of 67 species and almost beat the rain home.

—Dick & Gail Domroski

### Bird list - Vierra Wetlands February 5, 2011

Mottled Duck	Wood Stork	Eurasian Collared-Dove
Blue-winged Teal	Black Vulture	Mourning Dove
Northern Shoveler	Turkey Vulture	Common Ground-Dove
Ring-necked Duck	Osprey	Belted Kingfisher
Lesser Scaup	Bald Eagle	Red-bellied
Hooded Merganser	Northern Harrier	Woodpecker
Red-breasted Merganser	Cooper's Hawk	Loggerhead Shrike
Ruddy Duck	Red-shouldered Hawk	Eastern Phoebe
Pied-billed Grebe	Crested Caracara	American Crow
American White Pelican	American Kestrel	Fish Crow
Double-crested Cormorant	Common Moorhen	Tree Swallow
Anhinga	American Coot	American Robin
American Bittern	Limpkin	Northern Mockingbird
Great Blue Heron	Sandhill Crane	European Starling
Great Egret	Black-bellied Plover	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Snowy Egret	Killdeer	Palm Warbler
Little Blue Heron	Greater Yellowlegs	Common Yellowthroat
Tricolored Heron	Lesser Yellowlegs	Savannah Sparrow
Cattle Egret	Wilson's Snipe	Northern Cardinal
White Ibis	Ring-billed Gull	Red-winged Blackbird
Glossy Ibis	Caspian Tern	Eastern Meadowlark
	Royal Tern	Common Grackle
	Forster's Tern	Boat-tailed Grackle
	Rock Pigeon	

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Type Subscribe in the subject line.

## Ed Garland Talks on Water

### *District expands Volusia Conservation Corridor*

Creating a corridor of undeveloped land in Volusia County has been a bit like building a jigsaw puzzle.

In February 2010, the St. Johns River Water Management District acquired the missing piece of an emerald-hued puzzle that stretches 41 miles across Volusia County when the agency's Governing Board voted to purchase a 4,708-acre tract for conservation.

The Board didn't consider the purchase lightly, as the purchase requires spending the remaining Florida Forever funds available to the District. Situated on the south side of State Road 44 and approximately 2.75 miles east of Interstate 4, the property has been a priority acquisition for the District and the purchase has been periodically negotiated since 2000.

The property is a critical connection in the Volusia Conservation Corridor Florida Forever Project, which consists of more than 79,000 acres of land, with approximately 55,000 acres of that land already in conservation. This project provides a continuous corridor of environmentally significant land from Relay Wildlife Management Area in Flagler County through the Tiger Bay State Forest in Volusia County to the central wetlands and flatwoods of Volusia County and the marshes of the St. Johns River.

"The Volusia Conservation Corridor Florida Forever Project has been the defining project for a strong partnership between the District and Volusia County," said Governing Board member Maryam Ghyabi of Ormond Beach. "This property purchase is a key step in implementing the vision that the District and Volusia County have worked for 10 years to accomplish."

Teeming with pine flatwoods and pristine wetlands, the property serves as part of an active corridor for black bears and is part of the Deep Creek Basin.

A combination of funds from the District, Florida Department of Transportation mitigation program and Florida Forever Program were used for the \$17.7 million purchase.

The purchase will be completed in two parts. A 3,200 acre-parcel was purchased this year for \$9.6 million, and the \$8.1 million purchase of the remaining 1,508 acres is contingent on the District receiving money from the Florida Forever program in the next two years.

*Ed Garland is a Communications Specialist with the Office of Communications and Govt. Affairs - SJRWMD*



## March Speaker

### *Tad Fyock*

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

Upon graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. 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. He 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.

Over the past several years, Tad has devoted more and more time to photography, again specializing in birds and nature.

Last November, Tad and his son-in-law visited The Galapagos Islands of Ecuador. He has developed an excellent slide show of his photographs from that trip and will further entertain us with comments on the flora and fauna being shown.

This is a great presentation and should also be of interest to your non-birder friends.

—Ken Gunn

## Officers & Chairs



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*Thanks to Fern Murphy for proofing this issue (in fact, every issue).*