



# The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

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November, 2010

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

## Prez Sez

As I write this, the elections have not been finished. I am sure that most of you would like them to end. The constant commercials, the spam in our emails, and the junk in our mailboxes are causing me to say: "Enough, already!" It is so hard to believe that lies and misrepresentations in political ads are covered in the First Amendment right of Free Speech.

By the time you read this, the elections will be over. And regardless of whether or not the candidates or causes we voted for actually won, it is incumbent on us to keep our elected officials informed on the issues important to us. Many of the environmental groups and other activist organizations maintain "action alerts" to alert subscribers to impending votes or decisions being conducted in Washington or Tallahassee. If you want your voice heard by the people making these decisions, you should subscribe to these alerts. Some of the ones on which I am active include National Audubon, Audubon of Florida, Earthjustice.org, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, and Defenders of Wildlife. All you have to do is access their websites and sign up for their alerts.

I hope to see you at the next meeting and field trip.

—Don Picard

## Fall in the wildflower garden

by Claudia Larsen

All Florida gardeners look forward to fall – we're tired of sweaty, humid days and ready for the season's invigorating cool breezes and bright skies. It's also one of the best times to observe our beautiful Florida wildflowers. Take time to enjoy your garden up close and watch the changes of fall! In your wildflower garden, the butterflies, bees and wasps are still busy gathering nectar and preparing for migration or dormancy. Goldenrods, asters, dotted horsemint, liatris, meadow beauty and Indian paintbrush are in their glory now. Native grasses also peak this time of year, exploding with displays of white to pink seed heads. At different times of day the sunlight makes these grasses take on a special glow,

**See Wildflowers p.2**

## 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 November 17, 2010**

Speaker - **Dr. Terence Farrell**

Stetson University

***Herpetology for the Ornithologist***

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, Nov 5, 2010. (3) Smyrna Dunes Park - 8 a.m.**

**Sat, Nov 20, 2010. (3) Lake Woodruff NWR - 7 a.m.**

See Field trips p. 3

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.

## Of Interest

*Sites to visit online:*

**Florida Bluebird Society**

<http://www.floridabluebirdsociety.com/blitz.htm>

**Florida Wildflower Foundation**

<http://www.floridawildflowerfoundation.org/>

## Wandering Members

### Panama Trip

On October 13, Beth and I took a one-week vacation in Panama with friends from our Venezuelan days.

We spent Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday morning at Canopy Tower (where Fern Murphy and I went with David Hartgrove last year). We were the only guests due to a late cancellation.

The first afternoon, as we were sitting outside the entrance watching seven hummingbird species argue over four feeders, we got a frantic call from the top deck. We rushed up the (very) many flights and found ourselves directly under a few hundred migrating Swainson's Hawks. What a spectacle! Cooks, gardeners, maids and waiters all rushed up and shared binoculars. But it was surpassed Friday morning by a flight of over a thousand. Wow again! Panama's program, Raptors Ocean to Ocean, counts over 3 million birds each fall, with Broad-winged the most numerous, then Swainson's and third Turkey Vultures. This year they look to exceed all previous totals and so far Swainson's are most numerous.

We started each morning on the top deck, listening to Howler Monkeys and watching honeycreepers, tanagers, dacnis, euphonias and manikins feed on two fruiting Melastoma trees. A flock of Collared Aracaris and one of Scarlet-rumped Cacique showed up every day, as did two to three Keel-billed Toucans. We were also treated to at least one good look at a Violaceous Trogon and to each of the four parrot species in Central Panama. All this beneath an aerial display of swallows, swifts and vultures.

We took two walking tours on Thursday, one down the mountain from the tower and one around Gamboa, where the Chagres River feeds into the Panama Canal. We saw Geoffroy's Tamarin, two squirrel species, both sloth species, a Rufous Tree Rat nesting, numerous Agoutis and were scared out of our skins by a Howler Monkey suddenly letting out a deafening roar immediately above our heads. Of course, the birding was wonderful too and on the way home from the second trip, Beth, a dedicated non-birder, asked if I might find someone to make the trip with us again next year.

Saturday we traversed the Panama Canal which I will write about next month.

Saturday night we travelled to Canopy Lodge, in the mountains two hours to the northwest. Again we had the place to ourselves and again the birding and atmosphere was terrific. Staff kept four feeders primed with bananas just feet from the deck chairs.

A beautiful and colorful variety of birds was a constant.



White-tipped Sicklebill Photo by Gale Yarrow

We made three more birding safaris plus helped the local economy considerably by attending Sunday Market in the adjacent village.

We left at 4:00 AM Wednesday to catch our flights back to reality.

Our Count was 170 bird species and 8 mammals. Some 35 of the birds were Central American firsts for me and 16 were lifers.

Of those, the last was the best as we saw a White-tipped Sicklebill near the end of our last walk.

—Ken Gunn

### Wildflowers from p. 1

and a gentle breeze is all it takes to create a dancing, swaying motion in the garden. Ironweed blooms early in



Ironweed seed heads (*Vernonia gigantea*) ripen in the fall. Photo - Claudia Larsen

fall with its bright purple flower heads. Later, the flowers form seed heads that expand into white puffs. Look closely to see the feathery white pappus that will carry small, dark seeds to new homes in the dirt. There are many such interesting seeds dispersal mechanisms to be seen in the fall – exploding capsules, interesting pea-like pods, papery husks and spiny seed globes. Think about what the flower looked like prior to forming its seed, and you will truly marvel at nature. To collect seed from your wildflower garden, check the flower stalk for seed development. Seeds are mature when they become dark brown and hard or are easily removed from their seed vessel. Dry seeds for several days in paper bags before sowing or storing.

Claudia's wildflower garden is in Micanopy, where she grows many North Central Florida wildflowers.

This article is from the Florida Wildflower foundation newsletter the *Wildflower Gazette*, Fall 2010  
here's a link: <http://floridawildflowerfoundation.org/index.html>

## From the Field

### Sat Oct 9 — Lori Wilson Park

Our first field trip of the season was to Lori Wilson Park in Brevard County. Although there were few warblers it was a beautiful day to enjoy the boardwalk and beachfront. We did find an active bee colony in an old tree along the boardwalk. From there we went a few miles inland to Rotary Park on Merritt Island where we added a few more species. Rotary Park does have a very nice boardwalk/nature trail that would be worth checking in early morning or late afternoon. After lunch part of our group returned home via Biolab Road. On highway 3 a Bobcat casually crossed in front of us. We watched an American Eagle steal a fish from an Osprey, then return to catch his own fish.

All in all a lovely day with a total of 64 species.

### Sat Oct 30 — Princess Place Preserve

Nine hardy souls left Edgewater at 7 am to arrive early at Princess Place Preserve in Flagler County. This beautiful park has several different eco systems - salt marsh, oak hammock, pine forest, scrub habitat and fresh water marsh. There are 6 well marked trails through most of these systems. The Green Trail, about a ½ mile loop, takes you through an oak hammock then around a fresh water pond fed by an artesian spring. Around the pond we sighted many Yellow-rumped Warblers feasting on the plentiful myrtle berries. There were also Gray Catbirds, Common Yellowthroat Warblers, White-eyed Vireos, Carolina Wrens, Northern Mocking Birds, Northern Cardinals, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Eastern Phoebes and a possible Vermilion Flycatcher.

On the Island Trail, walkable at low tide, we heard and saw a Marsh Wren. On the Blue Trail we added Carolina Chickadee, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Yellow-throated, Pine, Palm and Black-and-white Warblers. Also sighted from the park were Peregrine Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk, American Eagle and White Pelican. We covered only a small portion of the park and saw 48 species.



The group birding from the porch of the Princess Place home.  
Photo - Don Picard

## NOVEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Friday November 5<sup>th</sup> – 8 am -Smyrna Dunes Park  
Saturday November 20<sup>th</sup> – 7 am – Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge.

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)

**NOTE:** 111<sup>th</sup> Ponce Inlet Christmas Bird Count will be Sunday January 2, 2011. Please call Gail @ (386) 428-0447 if you can help.

## Helping Injured Beach Birds in Volusia Country

The NSB Water taxi has closed down and opened a HUGE void in injured bird transportation to the Marine Science Center bird rehabilitation hospital <http://marinesciencecenter.com/>.

We are trying to help fill that void by finding possible transport volunteers that can pick up injured birds in NSB (at the Flagler Beach Patrol Station) and bring them to the Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet. Birds will be contained in a carrier or box and will simply need to be driven over to the hospital. No handling of the bird is required.

If you or anyone you know might be interested, please forward me your best contact number and days of the week that you are (or aren't) available (for example, weekends only). If an injured bird needs to be transported, Beach Patrol staff will go down the list of possible volunteers available for that day that may be able to move the bird.

Please let me know if you are interested!

Thanks!

Stacey Bell  
County of Volusia Environmental Management  
Sea Turtle HCP Field Manager  
440 South Beach Street  
Daytona Beach, FL 32114  
(386) 238-4716  
(386) 238-4772 (fax)

If you'd like to have **The eSkimmer** emailed monthly, contact us at [the.skimmer@yahoo.com](mailto:the.skimmer@yahoo.com)

Please forward this **eSkimmer** to friends.

## November Speaker

Dr. Terence Farrell

Our November speaker will be Dr. Terence Farrell of Stetson University in Deland.

Dr. Farrell was born in Morristown, New Jersey, and grew up there. Catching ringneck snakes and redback salamanders in his backyard obviously planted the seeds for his subsequent career choice.

Dr. Farrell earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. He went on to graduate school at Oregon State University and was awarded a Ph.D. in Zoology, then did two years postdoctoral research at Stanford University. Since 1989 he has been a faculty member at Stetson University where he teaches Ecology, Biostatistics, Invertebrate Zoology and Environmental Biology. For much of the last two decades, he has studied the field biology of pygmy rattlesnakes and box turtles at Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge with Dr. Peter May and a dedicated group of Stetson students. Impressively, more than a dozen of these students have published their work. More recently, he has begun studying exotic catfish and aquatic turtles found in a local spring.

The title of his talk will be Herpetology for the Ornithologist.

Dr. Farrell feels that a deep understanding of Florida's birds must involve considering their interactions with reptiles. Many interesting aspects of avian behaviors, distribution, and nesting could well be a result of the great abundance and diversity of reptiles in Florida. He will ask you to consider questions such as these:

Why do burrowing owls occur in Florida?

Why do warblers in Florida create a variety of unusual nest types?

How do rattlesnakes benefit birds?

Why do great crested flycatchers use the shed skins of snakes as a nesting material?

Why do woodpeckers prefer to make their nests in dead pine trees without bark?

The answers to these questions and the explanation of many other features of avian life are explained by reptile-bird interactions.

—K.G.

### HELP WANTED

The Florida Wildflower Foundation is in need of volunteers to help at its booth at the Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival in DeLand on March 26, 2011. If you could spend a couple of hours lending a hand, please contact Lisa Roberts at 407-353-6164 or [lroberts@flawildflowers.org](mailto:lroberts@flawildflowers.org).

## Backyard Naturalist

### Wildflowers

Our October speaker, Lisa Roberts came in with a compelling presentation and a cause.

Lisa is the Executive Director of the Florida Wildflower Foundation whose goal, it seems to me, is to cover every square inch of the state with Florida native wildflowers. Pretty good idea. Really big chore. If Lisa, and her enthusiastic approach, is an indication, it looks like they may very well do it.

Her thorough Powerpoint presentation showed us step by step in under an hour how they were getting it done. From mass roadside plantings in Florida's 67 counties to an elementary school curriculum guide as well as research gardens, a wildflower center and a statewide wildflower festival to letting tourists know that Florida is to wildflowers what New England is to Fall foliage—and we've got ours just about year round.

She assured us that they have the staff and the gumption to get the job done. I believed her.

It's groups like this that keep the conservation movement going. Audubon, Florida Native Plant Society, Sierra Club chapters and others keep the public aware and interested in our "natural" world.

Folks, it's the only world we have.

And believe it or not, like it or not, we share it (not own it) with a wonderfully diverse group of living things.

By the time Lisa finished I had my checkbook in hand and in less than a minute I was a member of the Florida Wildflower Foundation. I hope they have pins.

I plan on getting the license plate.

Here's how you can get one too and find out more about the group: <http://www.floridawildflowerfoundation.org/>

—Gil Miller



### Officers & Chairs

President: Don Picard	<a href="mailto:president@sevolusiaaudubon.org">president@sevolusiaaudubon.org</a>
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Thanks to Fern Murphy for proofing this issue (in fact, every issue).