

# The BROWN PELICAN



**SARASOTA  
AUDUBON  
SOCIETY**

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## **SARASOTA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Sixty-two bird counters and twelve backyard bird recorders racked up 28,676 birds and 158 separate species on their annual Christmas Bird Count, December 17. There were 1,046 more individual birds than last year and 7 additional species.

Fifteen teams battled early morning rain and pushed on through the day in the Sarasota 7.5-mile radius circle (epicenter at Bee Ridge and Beneva). Here are the highlights:

*Team 1: John Ginaven, Peter Rice, David Manchester* found a surprise pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers on Longboat Key.

*Team 2: Rick Greenspun, Jonathan Shagrin, Bryan Fleuch* turned up a wintering Baltimore Oriole and the only Peregrine Falcon for the count on Siesta Key.

*Team 3: Charlie & Sandy Everly, Carolyn Primus, Barbara Covey* lucked out on a Yellow-throated Vireo and one of only two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers.

*Team 4: Lynn & Jake Jakubowicz, Irene Hernandez, Jeanne Dubi* found the only Fulvous Whistling Duck hiding in a flock of Black-bellied Whistlers.

*Team 5: Edith Miller, Ruth Ellen Peipert, Janet Carlock, Barry Rossheim* hit pay dirt with a pair of Nashville Warblers in Arlington Park.

*Team 6: Ellen Richardson, Steve Petruniak, Kathy Meaux, John Lo-Corto* turned up one of the few Brown Thrashers for the day, a bird traditionally hard to get.

*Team 7: Paul Lewis, Jane Shannon, Mark Leggett* slogged through the rain and recorded a healthy 52 species in their landlocked patch.

*Team 8: Bill & Margaret Dunson, Tommy Elliott, Nancy Edmondson, Greg & Lisette Voigt* got many one-only species: Sora, Chuck-will's-widow, Stilt Sandpiper, Common Ground Dove, Barn Owl and Ovenbird.

*Team 9: Tina Mossbarger, Joni Bos, Julie Byrne, Julia Burch* got the day's only Northern Parula.

*Team 10: Alison Bishop, Lori Muldowney, Mary Jane Hartenstine, Terri Callendar* turned up the only Chipping Sparrow.

*Team 11: Wade Matthews, Nancy & Jim White, Joe and Rob Polidoro* spotted two American Oystercatchers, the only ones found for the day.

*Team 12: Alec & Karin Rooney, Colin Gjervold, Matt Massey* got many single species: Lincoln's Sparrow, Purple Gallinule, Least Bittern and two Eastern Bluebirds.

*Team 13: Harriet Siegel, Ken Pearlman, Sue Hamilton, Virginia Tarika, Sharon Stewart, Jane Brandborst, Sheila Markin* toughed it out riding round on golf carts at Prestancia and clocked up 41 species.

*Team 14: Jeff Palmer* tore all over the circle racking up 80 species all on his own.

*Team 15: Karen Jensen, Penney Rist, Russ & Carol Hoffman, Susan Henry, Phoebe Falese* managed to find 50 species in their in-town territory.

As usual backyard counters contributed hugely to the effort: Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Painted Buntings, House Finches and more. A big thank you to *John Cisler, Stu Hills, Don Hayward, Paul Hardin, Tami McNally, Terry & Charlene Proeger, Frances Rice, Elaine & Henry Tobler, Joanna Bear and Beverly Zimmer*.

## **COMING SPECIAL EVENT**

An exciting event is planned for Wednesday, February 22 at 2 PM. Michael J. Good, MS founder and president of Down East Nature Tours, Bar Harbor, Maine will present a slide show entitled, "**The Maine-Florida-CUBA Connection: Neotropical Migrants, Micro-habitat and the Politics and Business of Land-use Practices Along the East Coast Flyway.**"

The isolation of the Caribbean Islands has led to the evolution of unique Cuban endemic birds rarely seen by Americans because of recently imposed US government travel bands. Many of these Cuban endemic species have been captured on film by Michael Good during educational bird study programs designed to survey bird populations from the Zapata south of Havana to the western hills of Vinales. Cuban author of the "Birds of Cuba", Orlando Garrido and Michael Good led

**Second Monday • October-May • 7 PM social period, followed by meeting and presentation.**

Our Meeting Place—Fellowship Hall, First Congregational Church, 1031 South Euclid, Sarasota *Directions:* US 41 to Bahia Vista. If coming from the south, turn right on Bahia Vista; if coming from the north, turn left.

Take Bahia Vista to Euclid, then north on Euclid to the church.

members of the *Sarasota Audubon Society* through the Cuban underbrush, forests and swamps in search of anything with wings. Several important sightings were documented including the third record of an American Bald Eagle flying over native Cuban lands in the western mountains. Learn about the ecological significance of CUBA to neotropical migrants and learn about the Florida connection along the east coast flyway to Maine.

## **BIRDS NEED YOUR HELP - BEACH MONITORING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

SAS is participating in a major conservation program on behalf of the US Fish & Wildlife Service. We need volunteers to walk a stretch of beach on a regular basis (we are aiming for 2 or 3 times a month). We are on the lookout for Piping, Snowy and Wilson's Plovers and Red Knots. If you can't recognize these birds, don't be put off, we will walk with you a few times to teach you how to ID them. Why not combine your walking exercise with bird watching? Ask a non-birding neighbor or friend to go with you. Assisting in a conservation project such as this gives a sense of satisfaction while contributing to a nationwide effort and the overall benefit of birds.

For more details, contact program coordinator Bonnie Samuelson at [bluemrble9@aol.com](mailto:bluemrble9@aol.com) or Jeanne Dubi at 355-1709.

## **SAS RECEIVES GRANT FROM WILSON CONSERVATION TRUST**

Many thanks to the Wilson Conservation Trust for a \$1700 grant to pay for two information signs at the Celery Fields.

## **TRIPS 2006**

All day trips meet at McDonald's (Bee Ridge/Cattlemen) unless otherwise noted. Field trips are open to anyone interested in birding, wildlife watching or exploring Florida's natural areas. **Donation of \$2 for members, \$4 for non-members will be accepted.**

**Saturday, Jan 14: Celery Fields Walk:** Join a different leader each month while exploring one of Sarasota's best birding spots. Meet at the gazebo (Raymond & Palmer Blvd) at 8 a.m. Coordinator: Mark Leggett, 925-7220.

**Saturday, Jan 21: Phosphate Mines, Polk County:** Privately-guided tour of the phosphate reclamation ponds near Lakeland with Paul Fellers of Lake Audubon. A rare opportunity to see

Short-tailed Hawks, wintering warblers and thousands of shorebirds. Leave McDonald's at 7 a.m. Leader: Rick Greenspun, 346-8535. **BRING LUNCH AND SNACKS FOR AN ALL-DAY OUTING.**

**Tuesday, Jan 24: Sarasota Water Treatment Facilities:** Check out the birds at our local water treatment plants with Jeanne Dubi, 355-1709. Leave McDonald's at 8 a.m.

**Tuesday, Feb 7: Venice Rookery & Shamrock Park :** Mark Leggett, 925-7220, will lead us to the rookery and then on to Shamrock Park. Leave McDonald's at 8 a.m. **BRING LUNCH.**

**Saturday, Feb 11: Celery Fields Walk:** Join a different leader each month while exploring one of Sarasota's best birding spots. Meet at the gazebo (Raymond & Palmer Blvd) at 8 a.m. Coordinator: Mark Leggett, 925-7220.

**Friday, Feb 17: Le Barge Cruise:** Rick Greenspun, 346-8535, will coordinate this 2-hour cruise on a large chartered boat to view the egret, heron, and other water bird breeding colonies. Reservations NOT required. Just come to the Le Barge moored near Marina Jack's at the Bayfront Marina, by 9:15 a.m. for a 9:30 a.m. departure. Fare is \$18. No organized lunch.

## **TWO-NIGHT TRIP TO WAKULLA SPRINGS AND TALLAHASSEE, APRIL 2-4, 2006**

This trip replaces the Hatchees trip that was cancelled for various reasons, one of which was lack of subscribers. North Florida in April, what could be better? (See insert for more details).

## **PINE CRAFT POTATO FEST & CLEAN UP SATURDAY, FEB 18, 9 TO NOON**

Join SAS volunteers, the Ridin' Rednecks 4H Club, students from School In The Park and Pine Craft area neighbors for an air potato collection and garbage clean up. We'll award prizes to kids for the roundest, oddest, most, heaviest, smallest, and ugliest air potato they can find. Refreshments will be served. We also need prizes for middle and high school kids and some for younger ones. Please bring new, not used, items to the February general meeting.

We need your help to make this a success for Pine Craft Park, one of the birdiest places in Sarasota. Please support this SAS effort in any way you can. For more information, call Jeanne Dubi at 355-1709.

## **BIRDING HOTSPOTS**

The new revised *Birding Hot Spots of Sarasota and Manatee Counties* is available! It includes an updated checklist of area birds and provides explicit descriptions of, and directions to, good local birding spots. Several new spots have been added. *Hot Spots* is available at meetings, on day trips, and by mail. Cost \$6 (add \$1.75 for mail). Send to Sarasota Audubon Society, P.O. Box 15423 Sarasota, FL 34277-1423. **Please mark your envelope "Hot Spots"**

## CONSERVATION NOTES

**CELERY FIELDS:** A newspaper article describing the proposed Florida Institute for Integrative Land Use, an ecological research collaboration between the University of Florida, New College, Sarasota County, State and Federal governments and private donors gave the mistaken impression that this would involve construction of buildings and other diversion of part of the Celery Fields natural and flood control area that SAS has helped protect. It would not. The proposed building would be on land fronting Fruitville Road between the library and the Southwest Florida Water Management District office that was never intended as part of the Celery Fields preserve. It is part of the current visionary plan for a so-called ecological park of business, other private and public entities concerned with "green" development that would occupy both public and private land east of I-75 and north of the Celery Fields.

**VOTER APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS REFERENDA: WHAT NEXT?:** Sarasota County voters did themselves proud in November in voting to approve funding and extending our environmentally sensitive lands purchase program and expanding it to include neighborhood parklands. SAS is already represented by individual members on the ESLOC, which is considering additional property in the environmentally sensitive category. The County plans to appoint a new committee to help select lands under the new \$100 million parklands program. If you have experience or strong interest in adding to our parklands and water access, largely in urban areas, and ensuring that preservation of trees, nature and bird habitat is given proper emphasis along with recreational use, keep alert to notice of the establishment of a parklands acquisition advisory committee and submit an application for membership for County Commission consideration at the appropriate time.



**CONSERVING OUR PUBLIC LANDS NATION-WIDE:** Environmentally sensitive public lands nationwide are under attack from those in Congress who want to exploit them for mining, oil drilling, and other private development. Deadlines to respond to attacks are often too short to alert SAS members through the *Brown Pelican*, but we have an e-mail alert list for those who have are interested. You can all read the

latest news from National Audubon about bills and amendments. Issues presented include drilling in the eastern Gulf off the coast of Florida and in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, through allowing private takeover of public land through an archaic system of filing mining claims. A telephone call or letter (faxed if urgent) to our local Congressperson or Senators is usually the most appropriate action (e-mails are often ignored). If you would like to be included in our Chapter e-mail alert system, please send an e-mail request with your name and e-address to [wade@sarasotaudubon.org](mailto:wade@sarasotaudubon.org). *Wade Matthews, Conservation Chair*

## SAS BACKS ANTI-SPRAWL REFERENDA

Sarasota Audubon's Board on December 5 endorsed two referendum items for the November '06 election to help stop sprawl and congestion in Sarasota County. For the last nine or so years the Sarasota County government has, through a professional polling institute, asked a scientific selection of residents what is the most important issue facing the county. In 2005, as in almost all prior years, more than double any other concern was population growth and new development, with closely related traffic and transportation in second place and for the first time a majority feeling that the quality of life in Sarasota County is declining.

These concerns are shared by Sarasota Audubon and other environmental and neighborhood groups devoted to protecting and preserving our natural environment and its birds and other wildlife. A local non-partisan political action group has now been formed to act on those concerns through getting two amendments to the County Charter on next November's ballot. One would require voter approval before expanding the county's urban service boundary into rural areas and the other would require a super majority (four out of five) County Commission vote before changing the county's Comprehensive Plan to increase density or intensity of land use. Obviously, these amendments would not absolutely prohibit the paving over of our county we have seen in recent years, but they would allow it only with a broad consensus, which the opinion polls clearly show hasn't been the case in recent years.

To get these amendments on the ballot, we need about 13,000 signatures on each of two petitions that can be downloaded from [www.sarasotacitizens.org](http://www.sarasotacitizens.org) and mailed in or picked up at an early Sarasota Audubon meeting. We urge you to help preserve our natural environment and to help stop the perceived decline in our quality of life by filling out and sending in both petitions so you can vote for the amendments in November. *Wade Matthews, Conservation Chair*

*Thanks David Munro for your work  
on our website:*

**WWW. SARASOTA AUDUBON.ORG**

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The  
BROWN  
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★ Welcome to the following new members: ★

★ Robin Bongiovi	★ Shannon Ivey	★
★ Jessica Breeden	★ Arlene Juvinall	★
★ Dr. Stanley Brown	★ Dara Machotka	★
★ Peter Brulatour	★ Rose MacKenzie	★
★ Loretta Castonguay	★ Carolyn McMurray	★
★ Neil Croom	★ Fred Mintz	★
★ Joan Dalmas	★ Elizabeth Moore	★
★ Patricia Delp	★ Bette Nichols	★
★ July Felts	★ Robert Norton	★
★ Dean Fritz	★ Vincent Pagnucci	★
★ Mildred Headdy	★ Mr. and Mrs. Louis Paige	★
★ Charlotte Higgins	★ Marie Martinez Reira	★
★ Karen Holman	★ Steven Schaefer	★
★ Ruth Hubbard	★ Nancy Slobodnik	★

★

For Membership information, email  
lynn@sarasotaudubon.org or  
leave a message at 364-9212

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### SAS NAME TAG

If you are a new member or do not have an official SAS NAME TAG, you can get one delivered right to your door. Send your name, full address and telephone number, along with your check for \$4.50 made out to: Michael Fox, 2749 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34237. For an extra \$2 (total of \$6.50) you can get a badge that attaches by magnet—no pinholes!

*Be sure to identify yourself as a member of Sarasota Audubon Society.*